

POLICY ON ASSURANCE OF CHILDREN'S CIVIL RIGHTS

The civil rights and the following rights of children are respected and protected by the Trumbull County Children Services Board and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Pursuant to the Ohio Civil Commission, protection of a child's civil rights means the protection of the child against unlawful discrimination of the race, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, military status, national origin, disability, age, or ancestry. All children in Agency custody will be provided with a copy of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights as well as the Agency's complaint procedure. Additionally, all youth aged fourteen and older will be provided with a copy of the "JFS 01677 Foster Youth Rights Handbook". These will be explained to each child as developmentally appropriate.

Nothing in this policy prevents a foster caregiver or residential facility from providing care, supervision, and discipline to a child. It is recognized that some of these rights listed below may occasionally be restricted in order to protect the health, safety and rights of self and others. When these restrictions are made, the foster child is entitled to an immediate explanation. Additionally, the child's custodian will be notified within twenty-four hours of the restrictions that were made and provided with an explanation for the restrictions. All restrictions will be reviewed at least weekly. Restrictions and their review will be noted and documented in the child's record. Implementation of any restrictions of a child's rights will be included in the service and/or case plan and approved by the child's custodian. Should the restriction of a child's rights affect another individual, then this individual will be informed of the conditions and reasons for the actions taken, as appropriate. It is expected that any violation of these rights be reported immediately.

We are committed that we will NOT violate any of the civil rights or the following rights of any children or teenage mother:

1. The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or to abstain from the practice of religion.
 - a. The right not to be discriminated against or harassed on the basis of race, sex, ethnicity, age, color, religion, gender, gender identity, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, human immunodeficiency virus status, or in any manner prohibited by local, state, or federal laws.
 - b. The right to receive services in the least restrictive, feasible environment.
2. The right to reasonable enjoyment of privacy.
3. The right to have his or her opinions heard and be included, to the greatest extent

possible, when any decisions are being made affecting his life. As age and developmentally appropriate, youth will be invited to and prepared for meetings and court hearings, including information about their permanency options.

4. The right to receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support, and supervision from adults in their lives including parents, resource caregivers, agency staff, mentors, youth advisory boards, and others, as applicable.
5. The right to be free from physical, verbal, and emotional abuse and inhumane treatment.
6. The right to be protected from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.
7. The right to receive timely, adequate, and appropriate medical care, dental services, vision care, and mental health services. This includes the right to have appointments scheduled and be transported to these appointments and the right to be informed of one's own condition.
8. The right to freedom of unnecessary or excessive medication.
9. The right to receive timely and consistent access to housing that is a clean and safe living environment, free of infestation and contaminants. This includes the right to enter their housing at any time during their placement.
10. The right to receive timely and consistent access to adequate and appropriate food, clothing. This includes the right to have other special considerations regarding food as a result of trauma included in their service and/or case plan. Clothing should be appropriate to the child's age and gender identity. Children should participate and provide input regarding the selection of their clothing.
11. The right to his or her own money and personal property in accordance with the child's service plan. As age and developmentally appropriate, the right to earn their own money, open a bank account, and be provided with guidance on how to save and spend money. For youth age fourteen and older, this will be addressed as part of a youth's independent living plan.
12. The right to participate in an appropriate educational program. This includes the right to provide their input regarding school selection consistent with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the right to participate in educational and school related activities. Youth aged 14 and older have the right to have access to information regarding vocational and post-secondary programs and financial assistance for post-secondary education.
13. The right to visit and communicate with family, friends and "significant others" from

whom they are living apart, in accordance with the child's service plan or case plan. Youth have the right to communicate with these persons in private, unless they are restricted from doing so for the health and safety of themselves and/or others.

14. The right to contact, in private, their attorney, caseworker, custodial agency worker, probation officer, court appointed special advocate (CASA) and guardian ad litem (GAL), and any other professionals involved with the youth within twenty-four hours of the request. Phone numbers for each of these individuals, for the recommending agency, and for the custodial agency will be accessible to the youth.
15. The right to be taught to fulfill appropriate responsibilities to himself or herself and to others.
16. The right to life skills preparation.
17. The right to participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.
18. The right to have access to one's own record unless access to certain information is restricted for clear treatment reasons, as designated in the child's treatment plan.

Should the rights of youth, as outlined in Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-5-35, conflict with the rights of a resource family or caregiver, as outlined in Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-42-20, the rights of the youth will preempt the rights of the resource family or resource caregiver. Additionally, the rights established in this rule do not create grounds for any civil action against the department, the recommending agency, or the custodial agency.

Effective	February 2004	PJJ/RAS
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