

# OREGON FOSTER CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

## AS A CHILD OR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE,

# I HAVE THE RIGHT:

### TO HAVE WHAT EVERY CHILD NEEDS:

- ★ A permanent family
- ★ A home where I am part of the family and am treated as such
- ★ Nutritious food that meets my dietary needs
- ★ Clean and appropriate clothes that fit me and correspond to a gender identity of my choice
- ★ Safe housing
- ★ Free access to soap, shampoo, toothpaste and other hygiene needs that are necessary for my gender, age, individual health and ethnic needs
- ★ A safe and appropriate sleeping arrangement and adequate space for my personal belongings
- ★ To keep my belongings, including things I buy and gifts I receive, if I have to move
- ★ Access to a working telephone

### TO BE SAFE:

- ★ To be treated with respect
- ★ To be appropriately disciplined
- ★ To be protected from physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuse including exploitation and trafficking
- ★ To tell my caseworker, judge or the Foster Care Ombudsman when contact with someone is hurtful to me or inappropriate so that I can be protected without fear of retaliation
- ★ To be free from group punishment

### TO SEE AND TALK TO PEOPLE I CARE ABOUT:

- ★ To visit and communicate with a parent or guardian, siblings, members of my family, and other significant people in my life, knowing that reasonable limits may be set by DHS and the court
- ★ To visit and communicate with friends and other significant people except when DHS or the court determines that contact may be unsafe or emotionally harmful
- ★ To participate in age appropriate activities with my peers, so long as the activity is not restricted by DHS and the court

### TO BE HEALTHY:

- ★ To have routine check-ups to keep me healthy
- ★ To see a nurse or a doctor if I am sick and request medical attention
- ★ To have the medical, dental, and mental health care I need with a qualified appropriate provider
- ★ To be included in discussions and make decisions about my own body and my physical or mental health
- ★ To have or receive comprehensible information about me and my family's medical history as appropriate and authorized by law

### TO LEARN:

- ★ To be provided with age-appropriate educational opportunities and schooling to prepare me for adult life
- ★ To have the opportunity to participate in activities that interest me; including sports, art, music or others
- ★ To receive extra help and tutoring if I am struggling in my school or educational placement
- ★ To make choices about my classes (electives, advanced placement, or college prep) and schools when the law allows me to
- ★ To receive age-appropriate information and assistance with enrolling in college or vocational education

### TO HAVE MY RIGHTS PROTECTED:

- ★ To have an attorney if I want one, and to request the judge appoint a CASA to my case
- ★ To talk to my attorney in private
- ★ To talk to my CASA in private
- ★ To be notified of court hearings, reviews by the Citizen Review Board, and what is being decided about me and my family, taking into account my age and developmental stage
- ★ To be invited to and provided transportation to court, taking into account my age and developmental stage, and to be able to talk to the judge in court about what I want and need
- ★ To decide whether or not I want my attorney and/or CASA to speak for me
- ★ To call the Foster Care Ombudsman Office (free from retaliation from my foster parents or anyone else) if my rights are violated or my needs are not being met

### TO BE IN A PLACE THAT MEETS MY NEEDS:

- ★ To be in a foster care placement close to my family so that I can visit and maintain relationships important to me, if it's safe and in my best interest, and as deemed by my case plan, visitation plan, or the court
- ★ To have reasonable access to my bedroom in the house or residence where I am living
- ★ To have a curfew and house rules that are clear and fair and to have them explained to me from the beginning

### TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR MYSELF:

- ★ To tell the court where I want to live and whether or not I want to be adopted
- ★ To receive respect, be nurtured, and attend activities in accordance with my background, religious heritage, race, and culture within reasonable guidelines. To be allowed to dress and groom myself according to my culture, identity and within good hygiene standards for my health
- ★ To determine and express my gender and sexual identity for myself
- ★ To make major decisions that affect my life, in accordance with the law, my age and ability

### TO BE INFORMED:

- ★ About financial support available to me, including allowance, obtaining a bank account and getting a job
- ★ About services and programs within or outside of the Department of Human Services that can provide me with support
- ★ About where I can go for help
- ★ About how the child welfare system works
- ★ About how to access my case records at no charge
- ★ About documents I will receive upon leaving foster care regarding my education, health and employment such as my birth certificate, Social Security card (or number) driver's license or other form of state photo ID

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE ADULTS IN MY LIFE MAKE RULES AND SET LIMITS TO PROTECT ME AND HELP ME MAKE GOOD DECISIONS. WHEN I NEED TO, I CAN CONTACT MY ATTORNEY OR CASA ADVOCATE TO HELP ME AND TALK TO THEM PRIVATELY. IF I EVER NEED TO DO SO, I CAN CONTACT THE FOSTER CARE OMBUDSMAN AT **YOUTH, EMPOWERMENT AND SAFETY (Y.E.S.) 1-855-840-6036** OR **FCO.INFO@STATE.OR.US** AND TALK TO THEM ABOUT MY PROBLEM.

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