

# **FOSTER YOUTHS RIGHTS**

## **Section 16001.9 Welfare and Institutions Codes**

- (a) It is the policy of the state that all children in foster care shall have the following rights:
- (1) To live in a safe, healthy, and comfortable home where he or she is treated with respect.
  - (2) To be free from physical, sexual, emotional, or other abuse, or corporal punishment.
  - (3) To receive adequate and healthy food, adequate clothing, and, for youth in group homes, an allowance.
  - (4) To receive medical, dental, vision, and mental health services.
  - (5) To be free of the administration of medication or chemical substances, unless authorized by a physician.
  - (6) To contact family members, unless prohibited by court order, and social workers, attorneys, foster youth advocates and supporters, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and probation officers.
  - (7) To visit and contact brothers and sisters, unless prohibited by court order.
  - (8) To contact the Community Care Licensing Division of the State Department of Social Services or the State Foster Care Ombudsperson regarding violations of rights, to speak to representatives of these offices confidentially, and to be free from threats or punishment for making complaints.

## **Section 16001.9 Welfare and Institutions Codes:**

- (9) To make and receive confidential telephone calls and send and receive unopened mail, unless prohibited by court order.
- (10) To attend religious services and activities of his or her choice.
- (11) To maintain an emancipation bank account and manage personal income, consistent with the child's age and developmental level, unless prohibited by the case plan.
- (12) To not be locked in any room, building, or facility premises, unless placed in a community treatment facility.
- (13) To attend school and participate in extracurricular, cultural, and personal enrichment activities, consistent with the child's age and developmental level.
- (14) To work and develop job skills at an age-appropriate level, consistent with state law.
- (15) To have social contacts with people outside of the foster care system, such as teachers, church members, mentors, and friends.
- (16) To attend Independent Living Program classes and activities if he or she meets age requirements.
- (17) To attend court hearings and speak to the judge.
- (18) To have storage space for private use.

## **Section 16001.9 Welfare and Institutions**

### **Codes:**

(19) To be involved in the development of his or her own case plan and plan for permanent placement.

(20) To review his or her own case plan and plan for permanent placement if he or she is 12 years of age or older and in a permanent placement, and to receive information about his or her out-of-home placement and case plan, including being told of changes to the plan.

(21) To be free from unreasonable searches of personal belongings.

(b) Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to require a foster care provider to take any action that would impair the health and safety of children in out-of-home placement

For more information regarding foster youth rights contact:

### **Public Counsel**

610 S. Ardmore Ave. LA, CA 90005  
213-385-2977 or 800-870-8090  
[www.publiccounsel.org](http://www.publiccounsel.org)

### **Alliance for Children's Rights**

3333 Wilshire Boulevard,  
Suite 550, Los Angeles,  
CA 90010-4111, 213-368-6010,  
[www.kids-alliance.org](http://www.kids-alliance.org)

### **Foster Care Ombudsman Program**

[www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov](http://www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov)