

Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
Rights of Youth in Foster Care

1. I have the right to fair and equitable treatment by the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), foster parents, and other partners in the care of children in foster care;
2. I have the right to information regarding my heritage and cultural background;
3. I have the right to be safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation;
4. I have the right to know why I am in the child welfare system;
5. I have the right to have my educational needs met;
6. I have the right to have my health needs met;
7. I have the right to family and community connections, including visitation, telephone calls, etc.1;
8. I have the right to have regular, ongoing opportunities to engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities as defined in O.C.G.A. Section 49-5-3;
9. I have the right to have intensive, ongoing efforts made to reunify me with my birth family (i.e. parents or relatives) or to secure a safe, permanent home;
10. I have the right to participate in the development of the case plan and to review sign, and receive a copy of the case plan²;
11. I have the right to choose up to two members of the case planning team who are neither my foster parent nor caseworker³;
12. I have the right to participate in Juvenile court proceedings regarding my family;
13. I have the right to receive the services needed to help me transition to adulthood;
14. I have the right to receive a free copy of my consumer credit report;
15. I have the right to receive an official or certified United States birth certificate, Social Security card, driver's license or identification card, health insurance information, and medical records upon exiting foster care at age 18 or above⁴; and
16. I have the right to receive an age appropriate description of my rights and a personal copy.
17. I have the right to have a personal advocate to support me through the grievance process.

Responsibilities of Youth in Foster Care

1. I have the responsibility to treat myself and others with dignity and respect.
2. I am responsible for my own choices, decisions, actions and behaviors.
3. I have the responsibility to try to learn from my mistakes so I can make positive choices in my life.
4. I have the responsibility to try to the best of my ability in school, to take full advantage of educational opportunities and achieve my educational goals.
5. I have the responsibility to cooperate with services recommended to meet my health needs.
6. I have the responsibility to set and keep safe boundaries with family members, friends, acquaintances, and others with whom I maintain connections.
7. I have the responsibility to do my best to communicate openly with others when I have a problem.
8. I have the responsibility to ask for help when I need it, even when I have trouble asking for help.
9. I am responsible for making amends if my actions harm others.
10. I am responsible for making every effort not to cause harm to myself or others and to speak up when I feel my rights have been violated.

1 Unless the court determines unsupervised visitation is not in the child's best interest (O.C.G.A 15-11-112)

2 One member of the case planning team may be designated to be the youth's advisor/advocate, with respect to the application of the reasonable and prudent parent standard to the youth.

3 DFCS may reject an individual selected by a youth if it has good cause to believe that individual would not act in the youth's best interest.

4 This right applies only to youth who have been in foster care for at least six months prior to their exit.