

Regarding access to records, you have the right:

- ⇒ To have access to your mental health records if you are over age 14.
- ⇒ To control the release of records of substance abuse treatment or treatment of a STD.
- ⇒ To control the release of records related to HIV testing and treatment.
- ⇒ To see your children and youth family case records if 14 or older.
- ⇒ To permanent documents such as birth certificate, social security card, health and educational records when discharged at 18 or older.

In legal proceedings, you have the right:

- ⇒ Attend all your court hearings
- ⇒ To be represented by your child advocate attorney (GAL).
- ⇒ To meet with your attorney before the court hearing (but YOU may have to call and ask for this).
- ⇒ To have your GAL advocate for you.
- ⇒ To ask the judge to appoint a new attorney for you if you do not think the attorney is doing his/her job.
- ⇒ To call witnesses, to present evidence and to ask questions of people who speak about you in court.
- ⇒ To speak to the judge directly about your accomplishments, problems, and requests.

If you think your rights have been violated or you feel that something is wrong, you can:

1. **Talk** with you caseworker and supervisors.
2. **File a grievance or complaint** with the private agency or children and youth agency.
3. **Contact your child advocate** (GAL)
4. **GO TO COURT** and speak with the judge directly
5. **Join the Regional and State YAB** and make positive change in the whole system.

INFORMATION TO HELP YOU ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF

Caseworker: _____
Phone: _____

Supervisor: _____
Phone: _____

IL Worker: _____
Phone: _____

Provider Caseworker: _____
Phone: _____

Attorney (GAL): _____
Phone: _____

Next Court Date: _____

A safe place I can go if I need to:

Someone I can call in an emergency:

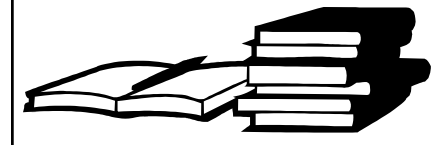
Phone: _____

State Youth Advisory Board:
www.independenlivingpa.org

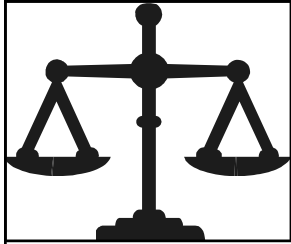
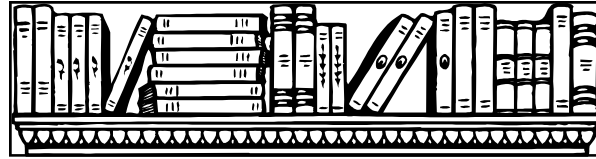
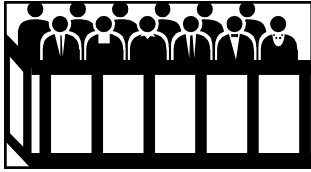
Know Your Rights!

A Guide For Youth In Substitute Care

If you have any questions about your rights or the information in this brochure, call your Guardian Ad Litem. You can also call the Juvenile Law Center at 1-800-875-8887 or KidsVoice in Allegheny County at 412-391-3100. Everyone's situation is unique so talk to people who know the law. Always remember that you are your best advocate.



Special thanks to the PA Youth Advisory Board



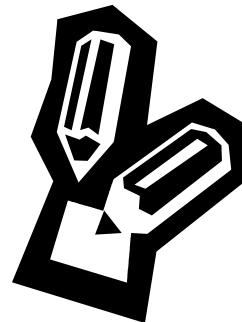
RIGHTS are things that are guaranteed to you by law. That means that a judge can make sure that you get what the law requires.

In substitute care, you have the right:

- ⇒ To be represented by a child advocate attorney (GAL) in court.
- ⇒ To services that will help you stay with your family.
- ⇒ To the most family like and least restrictive placement.
- ⇒ To be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- ⇒ To be free from discrimination based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, or sex.
- ⇒ To be in an appropriate placement where you are safe and protected.
- ⇒ To be placed with your own child if you are a teen parent (unless a court has determined otherwise).
- ⇒ To stay in care until age 21 if you are in an educational program or treatment
- ⇒ To only be discharged from care if you have a discharge plan that includes at least: a place to live, a job or source of income, health insurance, and community resources.

In a placement (group home, foster home), you have the right:

- ⇒ To save any money you have earned.
- ⇒ To talk on the phone (reasonable rules may apply).
- ⇒ To visit with family at least once every two weeks.
- ⇒ To send and receive mail.
- ⇒ To communicate and visit privately with your attorney (GAL) and clergy.
- ⇒ To practice or not practice any religion.
- ⇒ To appropriate medical, dental, and behavioral treatment.
- ⇒ To be free from excessive medication.
- ⇒ To appropriate clothing and food.
- ⇒ To be free from corporal punishment (punishment that uses physical force), threats or verbal abuse
- ⇒ To file a grievance or complaint.
- ⇒ To independent living services if you are age 16 or over until you turn age 21.



This Brochure is for information purposes only, and is not intended as legal advice.

Regarding medical care, you have the right:

- ⇒ To prompt medical and mental health treatment.
- ⇒ To consent to your own medical, dental, and health care if you are age 18 or over.
- ⇒ To consent to mental health treatment and medication (14 +).
- ⇒ To consent on your own to substance abuse treatment at any age.
- ⇒ To obtain contraception on your own at any age.
- ⇒ To consent on your own to all medical care related to pregnancy, except abortion.
- ⇒ To consent on your own to testing and treatment related to any STD at any age.
- ⇒ To consent on your own to testing and treatment for HIV at any age.
- ⇒ To consent on your own to all medical care if you have been pregnant

