

A Bill of Rights for Maryland's Children and Youth in Children's Residential Facilities

The RIGHT to be Respected and Treated Fairly

All children and youth have the right:

- To be treated with fairness, dignity and respect; and
- Not to be discriminated against because of disability, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, whether they or their parents are married, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or if they are pregnant or have a child.

The RIGHT to Guidance Care and Supervision

All children and youth have the right:

- To receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support, and supervision, consistent with the child's or youth age, level of development, maturity and ability to be responsible; and
- To ask questions and receive explanations about the guidance, support and supervision they receive.

The RIGHT to Education

All children and youth have the right:

- To an appropriate education, including educational supports, help with homework, afterschool activities, summer enrichment opportunities, and employment skills training; and
- To receive their education in the least restrictive setting based on their individual best interest.

The RIGHT to Be Protected

All children and youth have the right:

- Not to be verbally abused, mistreated, threatened, or harassed; and
- Not to be hit, slapped or otherwise physically abused or subjected to physical punishment or to other unusual or extreme methods of discipline.

The RIGHT to Be Heard

All children and youth have the right:

- To have their opinions heard and to be included, as much as possible and consistent with the child or youth's age and level of development, when decisions which affect them are made, including decisions about long term goals, placement, and educational settings; and
- Not to be punished or disciplined for exercising their right to be heard.

The RIGHT to Communicate in Their Native Language

All children and youth have the right:

- To receive services in a language they understand and to receive translation and interpretation services when needed; and
- To speak in their mother tongue or home language.

The RIGHT to Visit and Correspond with Family and Others

All children and youth have the right:

- To reasonable visits, mail, and telephone communication with relatives, friends, attorneys, social workers, therapists, CASA's and guardians ad litem; and
- Not to have limitations imposed on Court ordered visitation.

The RIGHT to Health Care

All children and youth have the right:

- To timely, appropriate and regular medical, dental, vision and mental health care including the right to receive appropriate medication.

The RIGHT to Receive Information

All children and youth have the right:

- To have their relatives (and any other person who has been approved by the placement agency) communicate with the program, ask questions and receive answers promptly.

If Your RIGHTS Are Not Respected

All children and youth have the right:

- If you believe that your rights or your child's rights are being violated, you can tell the caseworker, therapist, CASA, attorney, and/or any Juvenile Court Judge or Master involved with the child's case.