

# Speak Up!

**Your Legal Rights in Foster Care**



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### Acknowledgments

This book was written by Attorney Martha Stone, Executive Director of the Center for Children's Advocacy, with the assistance of Attorney Stacey Violante Cote, Director of the Center's Teen Legal Advocacy Clinic, and former law students Francesca LeFante, Jeffrey Pease, Caroline Turcotte, Erica McKenzie and Peter Maher.

The Center for Children's Advocacy protects the legal rights of Connecticut's most vulnerable children, providing legal representation to children falling through the cracks of the child welfare, health, mental health, education, and juvenile justice systems. The Center has offices in Hartford, Bridgeport and Stamford, Connecticut; and operates satellite offices at schools, hospitals, and community sites to ease access for the children and families who seek support.

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### Contact Information

If you have questions about this book or want more information about your legal rights in foster care, please call the Center for Children's Advocacy at (860) 570-5327 or email [mstone@kidscounsel.org](mailto:mstone@kidscounsel.org).

The information in this book is based on the law as of December, 2012. It is not intended as legal advice for an individual situation.

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## How to **Speak Up!** and Advocate for Yourself

**To be a good advocate for yourself and get what you need, you should know how DCF works.**

Use this DCF Chain of Command list to know who to call if the first person you call doesn't help you.

1. Call your Social Worker
2. Call the Social Work Supervisor.  
This person's phone number should be on your Social Worker's voicemail.
3. Call the Program Manager.  
This person's phone number should be on the Social Work Supervisor's voicemail.
4. Call the Area Director. Call the main number at your DCF Office for this person's phone number.  
DCF Office phone numbers are on page 28 of this book.

You can also call the Ombudsman's Office at 860-550-6301.

If you still don't get what you need, call the Commissioner's Office at 860-550-6300.

You can also ask for a hearing. Call the DCF Administrative Hearings Office at 860-550-6300.

**Speak up and be persistent. You have the right to get an answer.**

## How to **Speak Up!** and Advocate for Yourself

### **Superior Court for Juvenile Matters**

These are the people who are involved in the Court's decisions:

- You
- Your Lawyer
- Your Guardian Ad Litem (if one was appointed for you)
- Your Parent's or Guardian's Lawyer
- Your Child's Lawyer or Guardian Ad Litem (if you are a teen parent)
- Your DCF Worker
- Assistant Attorney General (DCF's Lawyer)

If you have a Family with Service Needs (FWSN) case or a Juvenile Delinquency case, the people involved in the Court's decision are different.

**These people all give their reports to the Judge. The Judge makes the final decision.**





## How to **Speak Up!** and Advocate for Yourself

### When do I actually have the legal right to “Speak Up for Myself” and have my voice heard?

You have a lot of different legal rights to go to places where your voice must be heard. They are listed throughout this book and include:

- You have a legal right to get notice of and come to the Administrative Case Review (ACR) meetings held every 6 months if you are 12 or over. Your direct statements must be noted in the plan.
- You have a legal right to object to your case plan by writing a letter to the DCF Hearing Unit, and you have a legal right to participate in the hearing responding to your objection.
- You have a legal right to be at the Adolescent Transition Conference.
- You have a legal right to ask about what is happening to your case, your family, and your siblings.
- You have a legal right to ask the Judge if you can come to court.
- If you don't go to court, you have a legal right to have your lawyer tell the Judge what you want your permanent living arrangement to be.
- You have a legal right to see your Social Worker once a month and also call her with problems.
- You have a legal right to ask for more visits with your family.
- You have a legal right to object to the school DCF has placed you in.
- You have a legal right to make a formal complaint about the way your foster parents are treating you. If they are abusing you, call the DCF Careline.

**You have a voice.**

**Speak Up! and be a good advocate for yourself so you can get what you need.**

## Family and Community Contacts

### **Can I live with my brothers and sisters?**

In most cases, you have the right to be placed in foster care with your brothers and sisters.<sup>1</sup>

### **Can I visit with my brothers and sisters if we're not placed together?**

Yes, in most cases, you have the right to have visits with them.<sup>2</sup>

### **Can I call my brothers and sisters on the phone?**

Yes, you can have a schedule where you can call them or they can call you.<sup>3</sup>

### **Can I visit my parents?**

Yes, in most cases, you have the right to visit your parents.<sup>4</sup> The number of times and the place where you can visit will be written in your case plan.<sup>5</sup> (see page 14)

### **Can I call my parents on the phone?**

Yes, in most cases, you can call your parents.<sup>6</sup>



## Family and Community Contacts

### What if I want to see my family more often?

You need to tell your DCF worker and your lawyer. Depending on how well your parents are doing and what your needs are, you might be able to see them more often.<sup>7</sup> You have to speak up and ask for this to happen.

If your DCF worker doesn't do this for you, your attorney can go to court for you and ask the court for this to happen. You can also request an administrative hearing.

### Can I see my friends?

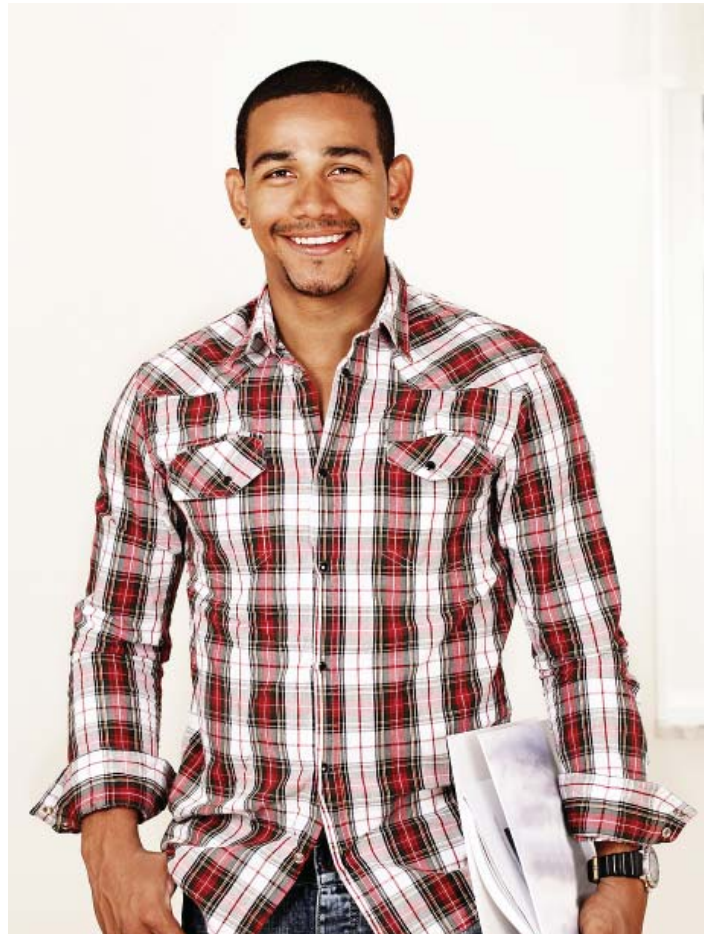
You have the right to have visits with people who are "significant" in your life. If you have friends who are important to you, you should tell your foster parents, social worker, or lawyer that you would like to see them.<sup>8</sup> These visits can only be denied if they think the visits are not in your best interest. If this happens, talk to your lawyer and see if there is anything your lawyer can do to help you.

### Can I call anyone I want?

You can make and receive phone calls to anyone at reasonable times.<sup>9</sup> These phone calls can only be denied to you if it is determined they would not be in your best interest. Call your lawyer if calls are being denied to you and you think this is unfair.

### Can I write to anyone I want?

Yes, you can send and receive your own mail.<sup>10</sup>



## Rules in the Foster Home

### **What kind of rules can there be at the foster home? What if the rules are too strict?**

Foster parents can set rules that are appropriate for kids your age.

They cannot be physically or verbally abusive toward you and they cannot threaten you, frighten you, or swear at you.<sup>11</sup>

They have to give you some privacy, appropriate to your age.<sup>12</sup>

If their strict rules violate these guidelines, or they hurt you in any way, you should contact your DCF worker and your lawyer. If you are being physically harmed or abused, you should also call the DCF Careline at 1-800-842-2288.

### **What is expected of me at the foster home?**

You should follow the rules, exercise good judgment and self-control, and be responsible for your own actions.<sup>13</sup>

### **Can I go to my own church, synagogue, or mosque?**

Yes.<sup>14</sup>

### **Can I speak Spanish or some language other than English if I want?**

Yes.<sup>15</sup> Foster families are required to accept your language, heritage, and culture.<sup>16</sup>



## Rules in the Foster Home

### **What if my foster family doesn't eat the same kind of (Spanish) food I'm used to? Do I have a right to have the food that I like to eat?**

You can ask for different food, but foster families are normally required to provide you with healthy food, not necessarily the food that you like to eat.<sup>17</sup>

### **Can I keep and save the money I earn by myself?**

Yes.<sup>18</sup>

### **Do I have a right to get the money my foster parents are paid to care for me? What if I think that the money paid to my foster parents is not being used for my care?**

The money goes directly to foster parents to pay for your housing, food, clothes, family recreational activities, transportation, and child care. But foster parents are expected to give you a reasonable allowance.<sup>19</sup> You should talk to your foster parent about this and negotiate a suitable amount. Sometimes, you will need to help out with family chores to get an allowance. If you feel you are being treated unfairly, tell your DCF worker or your lawyer.

### **Can I get and keep my own clothes?**

Yes.<sup>20</sup>

### **Can I keep my stuff in a safe storage space?**

Yes,<sup>21</sup> there must be a safe place for you to keep your clothes and other personal items.

### **Do I have a right to a clothing allowance?**

Your foster parents receive a clothing allowance for you. The first one they get is called an "initial clothing voucher" and can be up to \$300. After that, they receive a monthly payment from DCF and part of this must be used for appropriate clothes for you while you are staying there.<sup>22</sup> You may also be able to get an additional clothing voucher if you ask your DCF worker to assess your immediate needs depending on your growth, the seasons, etc., through a request for some additional funding for you.<sup>23</sup>

## Rules in the Foster Home

### **Who is supposed to know about my past?**

#### **Is there any way to keep information about me confidential?**

In most cases, you have the right to have all the information about you and your family kept confidential. There are some exceptions though, where information can be disclosed by DCF without your consent, such as to anyone who is taking care of you, including doctors and foster parents.<sup>24</sup> If you think people are telling others confidential things they shouldn't, tell your lawyer and your social worker.

### **Can my foster parents say they don't want me anymore and make me move to another home?**

Yes, your foster parent can request your removal, but this doesn't happen very often unless there is a problem in the foster home. When this happens, your DCF worker will meet with you and your foster parent within 5 days (or on the same day in emergency situations). At this meeting, everyone needs to say what the reasons are for the removal, the effects on you if you stay there, what services have been used, how willing your foster parent is to continue your placement, and what new services would help continue the placement.<sup>25</sup> If it can't be worked out, you will be moved to another placement.

### **Can I get my driver's license?**

Yes, if you get DCF's permission. DCF will pay 50% of the cost of the driver's education program for the initial course. In order to drive a car, the owner of the car must carry the required insurance and assume responsibility for your driving.<sup>26</sup>



## Rules in the Foster Home

### **Do I have a right to money for high school activities like the prom, class ring, and graduation clothes?**

Yes, DCF must give you 50% of the following school expenses for your junior/senior year, up to \$500, to pay for the following:

- yearbook
- yearbook pictures
- prom expenses (tuxedo or dress, tickets, pictures, flowers, transportation)
- junior/senior class dues
- class ring
- class trip(s)
- graduation cap and gown<sup>27</sup>

Any other school-sponsored activity may also be covered on a case-by-case basis. Ask your DCF worker about this.

Also, the Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Families (CAFAP) has a fund for foster youth activities, called the “Children’s Integration Fund.” You can call CAFAP at 860-258-3400.

If you are turned down for any funds, you have a right to an administrative hearing.<sup>28</sup> Ask your lawyer to help you with this.

### **What should I do if I have a problem in my foster home?**

You should call your DCF worker, or if you can’t reach her, call her supervisor. If you can’t reach the supervisor, call her boss and go up the chain of command. The DCF chain of command and DCF telephone numbers are on page 28. You should also tell your lawyer what is happening in your foster home.

**If you can’t reach anyone, and you have a serious problem at night or on the weekend, call the DCF Careline at 1-800-842-2288.**

## Contact with your DCF Worker

### How often is my social worker expected to come to see me?

Your social worker is required to see you once a month.<sup>29</sup>

### What if my DCF worker doesn't come to see me and keeps canceling the appointments?

If your DCF worker doesn't come to see you regularly, you can contact her supervisor. And, if you don't get anywhere with that person, you can go up the chain of command and call her supervisor. See the Important Resources page 28.

You can visit, write, or call the DCF ombudsman<sup>30</sup> at 860-550-6301 and you should also call your lawyer.<sup>31</sup>

### What if I don't like my DCF worker? Can I get a new worker?

Generally, you can't change your worker. If there are real communication problems between you and your worker, you need to tell your lawyer or call your social worker's supervisor.

### What if my DCF worker doesn't do what I ask?

You need to speak up for yourself and tell your lawyer or your foster parent.

### Can I call my DCF worker on the phone?

Absolutely. Your social worker should give you her telephone number the first time she meets with you. If you don't have your DCF worker's phone number, ask your foster parent to give it to you.

Write your DCF worker's phone number on the "Important Contacts" list so you will have it when you need it.

### What if I keep calling my social worker and I always get voice mail?

For all of these issues with your social worker, you can do the same thing — call her supervisor, then the Program Manager, then the Area Director, etc.

You can get the telephone number of your DCF worker's supervisor by calling the main DCF Area Office. The telephone number is on page 28. Usually, your social worker will give her supervisor's number on her voice mail.

DCF's Central Office phone number is 860-550-6300.

You should call your lawyer if your DCF worker isn't getting back to you.<sup>32</sup> If it is a real emergency, in the daytime you should call your DCF Area Director. DCF phone numbers are on page 28.

At night or on the weekend, you should call the DCF Careline at 1-800-842-2288.



## Decisions about Where I Can Live

### **Who decides where I am going to live?**

A judge decides if you cannot live with your parents.<sup>33</sup> DCF decides the particular foster home you will live in.<sup>34</sup>

### **Can I live in my own town?**

DCF will try to place you in or near your own home town.<sup>35</sup> If DCF wants to place you somewhere else, DCF will have to explain its reasons in writing to the court.<sup>36</sup>

### **Can I go to court and tell the judge what I want?**

Yes, if you tell your lawyer that you want to go to court, in most situations you will be able to, depending on how old you are.<sup>37</sup>

### **Can I be told ahead of time when the next court date is?**

Yes. Your worker is required to let you know about your case planning.<sup>38</sup> Your lawyer should also let you know when the court dates are.

### **Can I live with another relative instead of in a foster home?**

Yes. DCF must give preference to one of your relatives or to a member of your extended family if they pass all the requirements to be foster parents and have an appropriate home for you.<sup>39</sup>



### **What if I want to live somewhere else instead of the foster home they put me in?**

You should contact your DCF worker and lawyer to tell them that you want to move and why. You should have a full discussion with them about your desire to move and the positives and negatives about the move. You have a right to live in the least restrictive, most family-like setting as close to your home as possible.<sup>40</sup>

### **How does DCF pick a foster home for me?**

DCF must put you in a foster home that is in the least restrictive, most family-like setting and is as close to your own home as possible.<sup>41</sup> Sometimes there aren't enough foster homes to be able to do this.

If you are unhappy with your foster home for whatever reason, don't be afraid to speak up and tell your DCF worker and your lawyer.

### **Can I be placed in a home that is the same race or has the same culture or religion as I do?**

DCF may try to match you with a home with your same background, but they don't have to do this.<sup>42</sup>

If you are in a home that is of a different race, culture, or language, they do have to make arrangements so you can participate in appropriate cultural and educational events and help your foster parent develop positive connections with other people of your same race and ethnicity.<sup>43</sup>

### **What if they keep moving me from one foster home to another?**

You should not have to move a lot of times from one home to another.

Any time you are moved, unless it is an emergency or your foster parents request your move, DCF has to give 14 days notice to your lawyer and your Guardian Ad Litem (if you have a separate Guardian Ad Litem), and give the reasons for moving you from one foster home to another.<sup>44</sup>

Your lawyer can argue against moving you too much. If this is happening, call your lawyer immediately.



## Decisions about Where I Can Live

### **If I don't want to live in a foster home any longer, can I live in a group home?**

You may be able to live in a group home for adolescents. These homes are called PASS (Preparing Adolescents for Self-Sufficiency) Group Homes. Ask your DCF worker and your lawyer about this.<sup>45</sup>

### **How do I get adopted?**

DCF has to have a permanent plan for you.<sup>46</sup> If your parents can't take care of you anymore and there aren't any relatives available, DCF has to make every effort to find an adoptive family for you.<sup>47</sup> If you are 14 years old or over, DCF may not move forward with an adoption plan without your consent.<sup>48</sup>

### **What is a case plan? Can I participate?**

A case plan is a written record of what the plan is for you and your family, what services you and your family will be getting, who will be responsible for getting you those services, and what actions your parents have to take to get you back.<sup>49</sup> Your case plan will also include a plan for your health care and for visits with your family.<sup>50</sup> Your social worker must complete a draft of your first case plan within 45 days of when you came into DCF care.<sup>51</sup>

DCF must invite you to every conference, which is called an Administrative Case Review (ACR), if you are twelve years old or over.<sup>52</sup>

Your case plan is reviewed and updated every 6 months.<sup>53</sup>

### **Can I object to the case plan?**

If you think DCF has treated you unfairly, you can object by writing a letter to the DCF Hearings Unit, 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT, 06106, explaining what is wrong. If you are under 16, you have to have your parent, foster parent, guardian or lawyer write the letter for you.

You will then have a meeting that is called a Treatment Plan Review Hearing. You have a right to bring a lawyer or anyone else to help speak for you, and you will get a hearing within thirty days of the date the letter is received by the Hearings Unit.<sup>54</sup>

If you object to your treatment plan, you can participate in the hearing.<sup>55</sup> You should contact your lawyer to help you with this process.

### **What extra provisions need to be in my case plan when I am thirteen or older?**

If you are 13 or older, your case plan will include provisions relating to education/vocation, employment, Life Skills, housing, and finances.<sup>56</sup>

## Decisions about Where I Can Live

### What is a Transition Plan?

If you are 16 or 17, DCF must do an individualized transition plan for you, which must include specific options for your housing, health insurance, education, mentors, and jobs.<sup>57</sup>

### Is DCF required to tell me everything that is going on?

Your worker is required to keep you informed about what is happening with your case, your family, and your brothers and sisters. You should also be able to talk to your worker about anything else that is bothering you.<sup>58</sup>

### How long will I stay with DCF? When does my commitment end?

If you get “committed” to DCF, it means DCF is your legal guardian for a period of a year, but this can be shortened or lengthened by going back to the Judge.

You have a right to be heard on this and you can ask the court to end your commitment or extend it.



## Decisions about Where I Can Live

### How do I get to live on my own or be emancipated?

Emancipation is a legal process that gives a 16 or 17 year old legal independence from his or her parent/guardian. You must be 16 or 17 years old to request emancipation.<sup>59</sup>

### What rights will I have if I become emancipated?

An emancipated minor has most of the rights of an 18 year old.

If you are emancipated, you don't need your parent/guardian's consent to:

- sign a lease
- get a driver's license
- get married
- register a car
- enroll in school or college
- see a doctor, dentist, or therapist
- sue someone

### What responsibilities will I have if I become emancipated?

If you become emancipated, you will be responsible for supporting yourself. Your parent/guardian will not be responsible for giving you food, clothing, or shelter. This means you have to pay your own rent (or get a free place to live), pay all your bills and pay for your groceries. You are also responsible for any contract you sign, and you can even be sued by someone.

### What is the process to get emancipated?

In Connecticut, you or your parent/guardian must file a form with the juvenile or probate court to request that you be emancipated.<sup>60</sup> In some courts, a judge will assign someone to investigate your situation. Then, you will have a hearing before a judge. At the hearing, you will have to show one of the following:

- you have a valid marriage; or
- you are in the military; or
- you live apart from your parent/guardian and are managing your own money; or
- it is in your best interests to be emancipated.<sup>61</sup>

## Decisions about Where I Can Live

### What is the Independent Living Program? How old do I have to be to participate?

Your DCF worker has to recommend you for Independent Living. The Independent Living Program has four parts. You may qualify for different parts of this program depending on how old you are.

#### **Community Life Skills Programs**

Community-based life skills education and training programs are available from age 15 until your 21st birthday, if you reside in an out-of-home placement within the community (except if you are residing in SWETP or a group home).<sup>62</sup>

#### **SWETP (Supportive Work, Education and Transition Program)**

Transitional living apartment programs (called TLAP) are available if you are 16 or over and your case plan goal is not reunification with your parents or transfer of guardianship.<sup>63</sup> You will have a DCF specialist to help you plan your education or employment opportunities. You will also be assigned a mentor.

#### **CHAP (Community Housing Assistance Program)**

CHAP is available if you have graduated from high school or have a GED, and are currently in or have completed the life skills program, and your worker thinks you are ready for less supervision and more independence.

You will receive a monthly stipend for rent, food and other living expenses for an apartment. You will also receive case management services, and payment for college expenses or a vocational or training program. You will also receive a one-time stipend for furniture, household items (pots, pans, towels), a vacuum cleaner, moving expenses, and storage.<sup>64</sup>

#### **Other Services**

You are also entitled to other services, such as a mentor, if you are participating in the Independent Living Program and are 14 or older.<sup>65</sup>

### If I am a teenage parent, can DCF help me with the care of my child?

If you are in SWETP or CHAP, and you are under 18 and have your baby or child living with you, the TANF program (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) at the Department of Social Services (DSS) will pay for your daycare and medical coverage, and will give you financial payments for your child.<sup>66</sup>

If you are in one of these programs and you are over 18, DCF will provide financial payments for you, for your child (up to \$100 per month), and for licensed daycare, if you are in school or working.

If you have another child, DCF will not give you more than the \$100 per month for both children.

DSS will pay for the medical care for your child(ren).

DCF will pay on a one-time basis only for a crib, stroller, car seat, and diaper bag.<sup>67</sup>

## Transitioning Out of DCF Care

### How long can I stay in DCF custody?

You can be committed to DCF until you are 18. After 18, you can stay under DCF's care voluntarily until you are 21 if you are in high school or some other educational or vocational program.<sup>68</sup> You may even be able to stay in DCF until you are 23.<sup>69</sup> (see Education section on pages 25 - 27 for more information about this)

When you are about to turn eighteen you must decide whether you want to stay in DCF care.

Before you turn 18, DCF must develop a Transition Plan for you. This Transition Plan will be discussed at an ACR (Administrative Case Review) that DCF must hold before you turn 18 or on the date you are to be discharged, whichever is sooner.<sup>70</sup> You should attend this meeting so you know what DCF is planning for you.

### How can I get out of DCF Custody? Can I sign myself out?

**If you are under 18**, you cannot sign yourself out of DCF care.<sup>71</sup> In order to get out of DCF care, you must ask your lawyer to go to court and file a motion for you, and a judge must give an order revoking your commitment before you can get out of DCF custody; or, you must be emancipated.

**If you are over 18**, you can sign yourself out of DCF care. Ninety days before your anticipated discharge from DCF care, there must be an updated adolescent transition plan for you.<sup>72</sup> You may still be eligible for medical help until you are 21.<sup>73</sup>

### What happens when I want to be discharged after I turn 18?

When you decide you want to be discharged, you will attend an Adolescent Transition Plan Conference. The Adolescent Transition Plan Conference is different from other meetings you might attend about your case plan because it focuses on you and your needs, not those of your parents. The plan will include: contact information for at least three significant adults in your life, plans for your living arrangements, a budget plan for you, sources of income you will have, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentoring, support for services, work force supports, employment services, immigration services, and any other needs.<sup>74</sup>

### If I sign myself out of DCF custody, what if I change my mind and want to get back into DCF's Adolescent Services Program?

You may be able to re-enter if you were committed as abused, neglected, or uncared for when you left DCF, and you are not yet 21. You should call the DCF Careline at 1- 800-842-2288 to see if you can re-enter DCF care.<sup>75</sup>

### Can I be in DCF care if I am married or in the military?

No. DCF may ask a court to emancipate you if you get married or are on active duty in the military while you are in DCF care.

### **What if I am physically hurt while I am in a foster home?**

Your foster parents are NOT allowed to physically or emotionally abuse you.<sup>76</sup> If they hit you or touch you inappropriately, immediately call your social worker or her supervisor and your lawyer. (DCF telephone numbers are listed on page 28 of this book).

If you can't reach your DCF worker or your lawyer, call the DCF Careline at 1-800-842-2288.

### **Can they use physical punishment?**

DCF prohibits physically abusive or frightening punishment.<sup>77</sup> Call your DCF worker and lawyer or the DCF Careline if you are physically hurt.

### **What if I get teased or they are mean to me in the home?**

You have a right to be safe. Foster parents cannot be physically, sexually, or verbally abusive to you.<sup>78</sup> You should tell your DCF worker and your lawyer right away.

### **What if I don't like the way my foster parents punish or discipline me?**

You should tell your DCF worker and your lawyer. It is important that you try to talk about your concerns with your foster parent to try to reach a suitable solution.





## Abuse in Care

### **What if someone in my foster home (like other foster kids or the foster parents' own children) touches me in an inappropriate sexual way?**

If anyone touches you in an inappropriate way, talk to your foster parent immediately, and call your social worker and your lawyer. If you can't get in touch with them, call the DCF Careline at 1-800-842-2288 at any time, day or night.

### **What if my foster family or someone from DCF doesn't like me and treats me badly because I am a different race or ethnicity from them, or because I'm gay or lesbian?**

Your foster parent (and anyone else with DCF) is required to respect your cultural and social differences, and cannot discriminate against you because of your race or ethnicity, or because you identify yourself as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning or Intersex (LGBTQI).<sup>79</sup>

If your foster family or any DCF person does not respect your differences and you continue to feel disrespected, you should tell your DCF worker and/or your lawyer.

### **Can I make a formal complaint against my foster parent if they are not treating me right?**

Yes, in addition to telling your social worker and your lawyer, you can also make a formal complaint about your foster parent by calling the DCF Careline at 1-800-842-2288. DCF must investigate your complaint, file a report, and make a decision about what action will be taken.<sup>80</sup> This report will be filed in your foster parent's file.<sup>81</sup>



## Right to a Lawyer

### **How do I get a lawyer?**

Every child or youth in foster care has a lawyer who is assigned to his or her case. The Office of the Chief Public Defender will assign you a lawyer.<sup>82</sup>

### **How do I find out who my lawyer is?**

Your DCF worker or your foster parent must tell you your lawyer's name, address, and telephone number. The lawyer should call you. If you still can't find out, call the Office of the Chief Public Defender at 860-566-1341.

### **Can I choose my own lawyer?**

Yes, but not all lawyers represent children, and some charge a lot of money.<sup>83</sup> At the beginning, the Office of the Chief Public Defender will appoint a lawyer for you, free of charge. He or she will be your lawyer throughout the whole case.

### **What can my lawyer do for me?**

Your lawyer can make sure you are safe, don't move around a lot, get back to your family as soon as possible if that is the best plan for you, make sure you have good medical and mental health care, listen to what you want, answer all of your questions, and tell the judge what YOU want.

### **What if my lawyer doesn't call me or come to see me?**

First, call or write to your lawyer. If that doesn't work, tell your DCF worker to get in touch with your lawyer for you. If you still don't hear from your lawyer, call the Office of the Chief Public Defender at 860-566-1341 to complain and tell them you would like a new lawyer appointed to represent you.

The Office of the Child Advocate may also help you contact your lawyer. Their telephone number is 860-566-2106. You can also call the Center for Children's Advocacy at 860-570-5327.

### **What is the difference between a lawyer and a Guardian Ad Litem (GAL)?**

In very simple terms, your lawyer represents you and advocates for what YOU want when he speaks to DCF and to the Court. A GAL tells the Court and DCF what the GAL thinks is in your best interests, even if it might not be what you would want.<sup>84</sup>

### **What if I get sick? What doctor will I go to?**

Your foster parent and your DCF worker are responsible for arranging your medical care. Your foster parent may choose a doctor for you.<sup>85</sup> If you want to go to the same doctor you had before, tell your foster parent, social worker, or lawyer.

If you are under 12, either your foster parent or your parent, caretaker, legal guardian, or DCF must accompany you to the doctor's office. If you are between 12-15, you don't need an adult to accompany you as long as your parent, foster parent, or DCF consents. If you are over 16, you can definitely go to the doctor's office without an adult.<sup>86</sup> You may still need the consent of DCF to get certain kinds of treatment, except as provided by law.

### **Will my foster parents provide special care for my ethnic skin and hair if it needs it?**

Yes, your foster parents will work with DCF to get you the necessary products that you need to take care of the special needs of your ethnic skin and hair.<sup>87</sup>

### **Can I talk to a counselor or a therapist if I want to, without anyone's knowledge or permission?**

Yes, you can have at least six visits with a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or family therapist without getting anyone's consent or telling anyone.

You may do this only if having to get consent would cause you to reject the treatment, it is clinically necessary, failure to receive it is not in your best interests, you knowingly and voluntarily ask for the treatment, and the provider thinks you are mature enough to participate.<sup>88</sup>

If you want to continue to see a counselor or therapist after the six visits, the provider must tell your legal guardian (parent or DCF) and get his/her permission, unless the provider thinks that telling your legal guardian would seriously harm you.<sup>89</sup>

### **If I have drug or alcohol problems, do I need the permission of my parents, foster parents or DCF to go get help?**

No, you can arrange for help without permission.<sup>90</sup> You can also have your lawyer arrange help for you.<sup>91</sup> It may be helpful for significant adults in your life to know about your efforts toward recovery so they can support those efforts, but you can seek help on your own.



### **Can I get birth control without the permission of my parents, DCF, or my foster parents?**

Yes, you have a right to get birth control or emergency contraception without permission. Some doctors or clinics may ask you to inform your parent or DCF worker but this isn't required by law.<sup>92</sup>

### **What if I am pregnant? What are my options?**

You can have an abortion. You can also have the baby and you may be able to have the baby placed with you or a relative, or you can place the baby for adoption.<sup>93</sup>

### **Can I get an abortion without permission?**

Yes. If you are under 16, a doctor or clinic may counsel you about the possibility of involving your parent or some other adult, but the final decision is yours and will be kept confidential.<sup>94</sup>

### **If I decide to have the baby, can I keep my baby with me if I am in foster care?**

If you have the baby, DCF may be able to find a placement where you and your baby can live together.<sup>95</sup>

Because you are in foster care, it does not mean your baby is also automatically under the custody of DCF. If DCF has not filed any neglect or abuse petition, you can place the baby with other responsible adults of your choice or keep the baby with you.



### **Can I get tested for HIV/AIDS confidentially and without permission?**

Yes, you have the right to be tested for HIV/AIDS confidentially and without the permission of your parent or DCF.<sup>96</sup> A doctor can warn your partner if you test positive, but only if your partner also has the same doctor, the doctor believes that your partner is at risk of becoming infected, and the doctor believes that you won't tell your partner on your own.<sup>97</sup>

### **Can I get treated for HIV/AIDS without permission?**

If you are under 18, the doctor will have to get your legal guardian's permission to treat you unless the doctor thinks you would not get treatment if your legal guardian found out.<sup>98</sup> Your legal guardian is either your parent or DCF, depending on whether you have actually been committed to DCF.

### **Can I get tested or treated for a sexually transmitted infection (STI or STD) confidentially?**

Yes, if you are 13 or older, you can get tested and treated for a sexually transmitted infection by your doctor or clinic without asking or telling any parent, foster parent, or DCF.<sup>99</sup> If you are 12 or under, you can still get tested or treated without asking permission, but the doctor or clinic has to report your name, age, and address to DCF.<sup>100</sup>

### **Do I have to take psychotropic medication if I don't want to?**

If you are 14 or older and it is not an emergency situation, and you are not committed to DCF, you do not have to take the medication against your will. If you are committed to DCF, and you refuse medication, in some instances, you will still need to take the medication if doctors believe it is "medically necessary" and in your "best interests."<sup>101</sup> In any event, you should contact your attorney if you do not want the medication and DCF believes you should have it.



## Disability Benefits

### What are disability benefits?

Children and youth who have certain disabilities may be entitled to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) from the federal government. These benefits can provide money each month for your living expenses.<sup>102</sup>

### Why should I apply for disability benefits if I'm in foster care?

You should apply for disability benefits even if you are in foster care now because when you are no longer in care, the benefits will go directly to you. It is best to apply for this as soon as possible.<sup>103</sup>

### Who gets the money if I get disability benefits?

While you are in foster care, the disability benefits (SSI) will go to DCF. Once you turn 18, the money will go directly to you, unless you are unable to take care of yourself.

If you are not able to care for yourself once you leave foster care, your SSI benefits will be sent to the person who is chosen to help care for you.<sup>104</sup> This person is called your "representative payee."

### How do I apply for SSI benefits?

To receive disability benefits, you have to fill out an application. Ask your DCF worker to do this for you.<sup>105</sup>

### How long will it take to get benefits?

It may take a long time to get these benefits, and you should fill out the application as soon as possible. Ask your DCF worker to do this for you.<sup>106</sup>



### **Can I stay at the same school?**

You can stay in the same school, even if your foster home or emergency placement is in a different town, unless DCF determines that it is not in your best interest to remain in that school. DCF has to make this determination immediately when it places you, and DCF must assume that it is in your best interest to stay in the same school.

This means that DCF cannot move you to a different school without a good reason, and it must give you written notice of its decision within three business days of making the decision. In this notice, DCF must identify why it decided to put you in the school it did.<sup>107</sup>

### **What if I don't like the school DCF decides I can go to?**

You can object. Tell your lawyer immediately. You have to object within 3 days of getting the notice. You have the right to stay in the same school you went to before your DCF commitment until the disagreement is settled.<sup>108</sup>

**You should call your lawyer immediately if you don't want to go to the school DCF is telling you to go to so he/she can help you.**

### **Can DCF make me go to a different school after my initial placement?**

Yes, if circumstances change and DCF decides that it is no longer in your best interest to go to the school they first put you in, DCF can change your school. Like before, DCF has to give you written notice of why the change is being made within 3 days of deciding to change the placement. You can also object to the change, but you must do so within three days of receiving notice. You can stay in your same school until the issue is decided.<sup>109</sup>

### **If I move out of the district my school is in, who will provide the transportation?**

DCF must work with the school board to come up with an appropriate transportation plan, and DCF has to pay any costs to get you to school outside of what it would normally cost to get you to school.<sup>110</sup>

### **If DCF places me in a new school, do I have to wait before I get to start the new school?**

There is no waiting period. The new school must take you immediately, even if they don't have all your paperwork.<sup>111</sup> DCF has to work with your old school and your new school to get you enrolled. Your old school has to transfer all of your most important records to your new school within a day of DCF informing the school that you are being transferred.<sup>112</sup>

## Education

### **If I was a “special education” student before, will I still get a special ed program at the new school?**

Yes, you will remain special ed until and unless the team that reviews your individualized education plan (IEP) determines that you are not eligible anymore.<sup>113</sup>

### **Will anyone from DCF help me with the special education process?**

If you are a special education student or may need special education services, or early intervention services, and you are committed to DCF, a “surrogate parent” will be appointed for you. This is a person who is appointed by the Connecticut State Department of Education to act as an advocate for you.<sup>114</sup>

### **Will DCF pay for college or other post high school education?**

Yes, DCF will pay for your educational expenses through the end of the school year that you turn 23 as long as you meet the DCF requirements, such as voluntarily agreeing to remain with DCF, being enrolled in a college, technical school or state-accredited job training program, and you maintain compliance with your post-majority contract.<sup>115</sup>

You are also responsible to pay \$500 per year. You must also apply for scholarships and financial aid.<sup>116</sup>





## Education

### **If I go to college or some other educational program after high school, do I have to move out of my CHAP apartment?**

No, you can stay in that program while you are attending school, as long as you comply with the CHAP Program guidelines.

### **When do I need to start planning, if I want DCF to help me with my education expenses after I turn eighteen?**

If you are interested in this program, then you need to start planning in your junior year of high school. Discuss your options with your foster parents, guidance counselor, and DCF social worker.<sup>117</sup>

### **Do I have to start school right away?**

You are required to be enrolled as a full time student the first semester after high school. In order to continue to receive funding, you have to commit forty hours a week to classes, studying, part-time work, or other school-related activities.<sup>118</sup>

### **How much will DCF pay for?**

DCF will pay up to what it costs for any undergraduate, in-state, full-time, on-campus student at Central Connecticut State University. This includes money for tuition, equipment, books, miscellaneous personal expenses such as a computer, allowance for transportation, room and board, child care expenses (if you have a child), and accommodations for any disability you have.<sup>119</sup>

### **Can I lose my funding?**

Yes, if you do not maintain a 2.0 GPA or better for 12 course credits per semester for a year, then you have one opportunity to re-enroll or select and enroll in a new program before DCF withdraws funding. If during that second year you do not maintain a 2.0 GPA or better, then you will not be able to receive funding anymore.<sup>120</sup>



## Important Resources

### DCF Offices

Bridgeport	203-384-5300
Danbury	203-207-5100
Hartford	860-418-8000
Manchester	860-533-3600
Meriden	203-238-8400
Middletown	860-638-2100
Milford	203-306-5300
New Britain	860-832-5200
New Haven	203-786-0500
Norwalk	203-899-1400
Norwich	860-886-2641
Stamford	203-348-4294
Torrington	860-496-5700
Waterbury	203-759-7000
Willimantic	860-450-2000
<b>DCF Commissioner's Office</b>	860-550-6300
<b>DCF Ombudsman's Office</b>	860-550-6301 or 1-866-367-4737
<b>DCF Careline</b>	1-800-842-2288
TDD number	1-800-624-5518

For more information about DCF offices, go to [www.ct.gov/dcf](http://www.ct.gov/dcf) and click on "Office Directions and Phone Numbers"

### DCF Chain of Command

Use this list to know who to call for help with questions you have. Call your Social Worker first. If she/he cannot help you, call the next person on this list. Usually, their phone numbers will be on the voice mail of the last person you called.

1. Social Worker
2. Social Work Supervisor
3. Program Manager
4. Program Director
5. Area Director
6. Regional Director
7. Commissioner's Office

## Important Resources

### Organizations that Can Help

**Center for Children's Advocacy**  
860-570-5327

**Office of the Chief Public Defender**  
860-566-1341  
330 Main Street, 2nd floor  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents**  
860-258-3400

**Info Line**  
211

**Office of the Child Advocate**  
860-566-2106

**True Colors** (for LGBTQ youth)  
1-888-565-5551 or 860-649-7386



## Important Resources

### Juvenile Courts

#### **Bridgeport**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
60 Housatonic Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06604  
203-579-6544

#### **Danbury**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
71 Main Street  
Danbury, CT 06810  
203-797-4407

#### **Hartford**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
920 Broad Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
860-244-7900

#### **Middletown**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
One Court Street  
Middletown, CT 06457  
860-344-2986

#### **New Britain**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
20 Franklin Square  
New Britain, CT 06051  
860-515-5165

#### **New Haven**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
239 Whalley Avenue  
New Haven, CT 06511  
203-786-0339

#### **Rockville**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
25 School Street  
Rockville, CT 06066  
860-872-7143

#### **Stamford**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
123 Hoyt Street  
Stamford, CT 06905  
203-965-5708

#### **Torrington**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
410 Winsted Road  
Torrington, CT 06790  
860-489-0201

#### **Waterbury**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
7 Kendrick Avenue  
Waterbury, CT 06702  
203-596-4202

#### **Waterford**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
978 Hartford Turnpike  
Waterford, CT 06385  
860-440-5880

#### **Willimantic**

Superior Court Juvenile Matters  
81 Columbia Avenue  
Willimantic, CT 06226  
860-456-5700

#### **Child Protection Session**

One Court Street  
Middletown, CT 06457  
860-343-6456

## Important Resources

### Books about Foster Care

#### **100 Prize-Winning Essays by Teens in Foster Care**

Rachel Blustain and Kendra Hurley, Youth Communication, 2005. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **Always on the Move: Changing Homes and Staff**

Teens in Foster Care, Youth Communication, 2005. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **Analyze This!**

Teens in Foster Care, Youth Communication, 2006. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **At Home in the Group Home? An Insider's Look at Congregate Care**

Al Desetta, Keith Hefner and Laura Longhine, ed. Youth Communication, 2009. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **Do You Have What It Takes? A Comprehensive Guide to Success After Foster Care**

Kendra Hurley and Teens in Foster Care, Youth Communication, 2006. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **Everything You Need to Know About Living in a Foster Home**

Joseph Falke, Rosen Publishing Group, 1995.

#### **Finding Our Way Home: Teens Write About Separating from Family and Reconnecting**

Keith Hefner and Laura Longhine, ed, and Teens in Foster Care, Youth Communication, 2010. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **Foster Care Odyssey: A Black Girl's Story**

Theresa Cameron, University Press of Mississippi, 2002.

#### **The Heart Knows Something Different: Teenage Voices from the Foster Care System**

Al Desetta, ed, Youth Communication, 2008. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **In the System and in the Life: A Guide for Teens and Staff to the Gay Experience in Foster Care**

Al Desetta, ed, Youth Communication, 2003. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **Keeping it Secret: Teens Write about Foster Care Stigma**

Teens in Foster Care, Youth Communication, 2005. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **The Lost Boy: A Foster Child's Search for the Love of a Family**

David J. Pelzer, Health Communications, 1997.

#### **A Man Named Dave**

David J. Pelzer, Plume/Penguin Putnam Inc., 2000

#### **A New Beginning**

Teens in Foster Care, Youth Communication, 2006. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **A Sad Goodbye**

Teens in Foster Care, Youth Communication, 2005. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **Seeing It from the Other Side: Conflicts in Foster Homes**

Teens in Foster Care, Youth Communication, 2005. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **The Struggle to be Strong**

Al Desetta, ed, and Teens in Foster Care Youth Communication, 2000. [www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **They Cage the Animals at Night**

Jennings Michael Burch, Signet, 1985.

## Important Resources

### Newsletters and Magazines about Foster Care

#### **Represent**

Bimonthly magazine written by and for youth in foster care  
[www.youthcomm.org/Publications/FCYU.htm](http://www.youthcomm.org/Publications/FCYU.htm)

#### **Mockingbird Times**

Mockingbird Society of Washington State  
[www.mockingbirdsociety.org/the-mockingbird-network/the-mockingbird-times/earlier-mockingbird-times-archives/](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org/the-mockingbird-network/the-mockingbird-times/earlier-mockingbird-times-archives/)

### Websites about Foster Care

#### **Casey Family Programs**

[www.casey.org/Youth/](http://www.casey.org/Youth/)

#### **DCF (Connecticut Department of Children and Families)**

[www.ct.gov/dcf](http://www.ct.gov/dcf)

#### **Foster Care Alumni**

[www.fostercarealumni.org](http://www.fostercarealumni.org)

#### **Foster Care Youth United**

[www.youthcomm.org](http://www.youthcomm.org)

#### **Foster Club, the National Network for Youth in Foster Care**

[www.fosterclub.org](http://www.fosterclub.org)

#### **Foster Youth, Involved, Informed, Independent**

[www.fyi3.com](http://www.fyi3.com)

#### **Healthy Foster Care America**

[www.aap.org/fostercare/specialplace.html](http://www.aap.org/fostercare/specialplace.html)

#### **Mockingbird Society**

[www.mockingbirdsociety.org](http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org)

## Footnotes

1 DCF Policy Manual § 41-19-2 (“Siblings shall be placed in the same foster home unless the documented special needs of one or more siblings preclude placing them together. In a conflict between proximity of the foster home to the child’s parents and keeping siblings together, the principle that siblings should be placed together takes precedence, and DCF shall ensure visitation with the biological family.”); See also DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-6.

2 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-1.5 (“The foster parents shall . . . support and facilitate visits for the child with the birth family and siblings.”); DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-7 (“Written visitation plans shall be developed and immediately implemented for all siblings not placed in the same foster care setting unless a written and signed statement from a professional (e.g., psychologist, psychiatrist) states that visiting is not in the best interests of the sibling needing special care.”); DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-1.2 (“The Social Worker shall . . . ensure the child’s visitation with parents, siblings and significant persons according to the Service Plan.”); DCF Policy Manual § 34-10-7.1 (“visits be of sufficient number and duration to ensure continuation of the relationship . . .”). Public Act 12-71 (Beginning 10/1/14, you may have weekly visits if sibling is in-state within 50 miles unless documented otherwise.)

3 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16(c)(1)

4 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-1.5 (“The foster parents shall . . . support and facilitate visits for the child with the birth family and siblings.”); DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-1.2 (“The Social Worker shall . . . ensure the child’s visitation with parents, siblings and significant persons according to the Service Plan.”)

5 DCF Policy Manual §§ 36-5, 36-6; 36-55-1 (“All of the following elements shall be included and discussed in the child’s Case Plan: . . . rationale for placement; visitation of/with siblings; visitation with parents and others who have a significant role in the life of the child.”)

6 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16(c)(1)

7 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-1.2 (“The Social Worker shall . . . ensure the child’s visitation with parents, siblings and significant persons according to the Service Plan.”); CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16(e)(1) (“Each child or youth shall be permitted to receive visitors subject to reasonable restrictions consistent with the child’s or youth’s treatment objectives.”); DCF Regs § 17a-145-149(b) (“Foster parents shall accept, cooperate with and support arrangements made for the child to have contact including visits and correspondence with the child’s biological family in keeping with the frequency indicated by the treatment plan.”); DCF Policy Manual § 34-10-7.1 (“Visits must be of sufficient number and duration to ensure continuation of the relationship”).

8 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16(c)(1) (“Each child and youth shall be permitted to communicate with any individual, group or agency, consistent with his treatment objectives as determined by the Commissioner of Children and Families.”)

9 Id.

10 Id.

11 DCF Regs. § 17a-145-151(c).

12 DCF Regs. § 17-145-139 (c).

13 DCF Regs. § 17a-145-151(b) (Foster families “shall be a positive role model to the child and instruct the child in appropriate behavior. They shall establish limits and assist the child to develop self-control and judgment skills. Children in the home shall be encouraged to assume age-appropriate responsibility for their decisions and actions.”)

14 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-1.2 (“The Social Worker shall . . . ensure that arrangements are made for the child to attend church and receive religious instruction in his/her own faith.”); DCF Regs. § 17a-145-151(a)(8) (Foster parents shall assure “an environment of tolerance and sensitivity to a child’s religion through providing adequate opportunity for religious training and participation appropriate to the child’s religious denomination, and not requiring any child to participate in religious practices contrary to the child’s beliefs.”)

15 DCF Regs. § 17a-145-151(a)(7) (“Children who do not share the same language, as their caretaker shall be provided with opportunities to practice their native language as they become bilingual or multi-lingual.”); DCF Policy Manual §36-7; DCF Policy Manual 31-8-6 (can communicate with parents and others in preferred language)

16 Policy Manual § 36-55-1.5.

17 DCF Regs. § 17a-145-151(a)(5) (Foster parents shall provide for the child’s needs, “including adequate hygiene, nutritional meals and snacks prepared in a safe and sanitary manner, readily available drinking water.”)

18 DCF Policy Manual § 50-4 (“The worker and foster parents encourage the youth to take on financial responsibility for himself/herself in as constructive and supportive a manner as possible. In so doing, the youth becomes accustomed to the use and budgeting of his/her time and money . . . . When a youth is earning money, he/she is encouraged to set aside some of the balance as savings. . . . Savings accounts should be in the youth’s own name and control.”)

19 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-25.4.

20 DCF Regs. § 17-145-139(b) (“Provision shall be made for the safe storage of the child’s clothing and personal possessions.”)

21 Id.

22 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-25.5.

## Footnotes

23 Id.; DCF Policy Manual § 36-100.

24 DCF Policy Manual § 31-8-5. See also, Public Act 11-167.

25 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-15.

26 DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-25.

27 DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-25.

28 DCF Regs § 17a-15-1.

29 Juan F. Exit Outcome Measure #16 [www.ct.gov/dcf/LIB/dcf/positive\\_outcomes/pdf/Outcome\\_Measure\\_Definitions\\_ExitPlan.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dcf/LIB/dcf/positive_outcomes/pdf/Outcome_Measure_Definitions_ExitPlan.pdf)

30 DCF Policy Manual § 2-4-1 (“The role of the Office of Ombudsman is to receive and investigate inquiries and complaints relating to Department services in an effort to bring about a resolution for the best interests of children. The Ombudsman shall make every attempt to maintain neutrality and promote harmony in sensitive situations.”)

31 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16(c)(3) (“A child or youth shall be permitted to make or receive telephone calls to or from his/ her attorney at any reasonable time.”)

32 Id.

33 DCF Policy Manual § 36-50-10.1.

34 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-1; DCF Policy Manual § 41-2.

35 DCF Policy Manual § 41-19-2 (“When a child is placed into foster care, the match shall be made to a foster home that is in the least restrictive, most family-like setting and in close geographic proximity to the child’s own home.”)

36 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 46b-129(b) (“The agency shall give primary consideration to placing the child or youth in the town where such child or youth resides. The agency shall file in writing with the clerk of the court the reasons for placing the child or youth in a particular placement outside the town where the child or youth resides.”)

37 Conn. Practice Book § 32a-5.

38 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-1.2.

39 DCF Policy Manual § 36-60 (“In considering foster care placement for a child, preference shall be given to placement with a relative or extended family.”); DCF Policy Manual § 41-19-2. See also Public Act 11-116.

40 DCF Policy Manual § 41-19-2 (“When a child is placed into foster care, the match shall be made to a foster home that is in the least restrictive, most family-like setting and in close geographic proximity to the child’s own home.”)

41 Id.

42 DCF Policy Manual § 41-19-5 (“When placing a child in foster care, the Department shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color or national origin of the foster parent or child.”)

43 DCF Policy § 41-25-15 (“When a child is placed with a family of a different race, culture or language, the Department shall provide the foster parents, children in placement, the family’s own children, and DCF staff with ongoing support and training for multiethnic awareness, parenting, and coping skills.”)

44 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-15.

45 DCF Policy Manual § 42- 2.

46 DCF Regs. § 17a-15-1; DCF Policy Manual §36-2

47 DCF Policy Manual 48-10-1

48 Id.

49 DCF Policy Manual §36-5.

50 Id.

51 See DCF Policy Manual § 36-6.

52 DCF Policy Manual § 36-11-4.

53 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-15(b)



## Footnotes

54 DCF Regs. § 17a-15-4.

55 DCF Regs. § 17a-15-9.

56 DCF Policy Manual § 36-5.

57 Public Act 12-53, effective October 1, 2012.

58 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-1.2 (“The Social Worker shall....keep the child informed about his/her case planning, family situation and siblings...allow the child the opportunity to express his/her anxieties, fears and other feelings, including conflicted loyalties.”)

59 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 46b-150.

60 Id.

61 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 46b-150b

62 DCF Policy Manual § 42-2.

63 DCF Policy Manual § 42-5-1.

64 DCF Policy Manual § 42-5-2.

65 DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-1.

66 DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-40. TANF provides daycare coverage only when you are attending high school. DCF is responsible for work-related daycare expenses.

67 DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-40.

68 DCF Policy Manual § 42-5-3.

69 DCF Policy Manual § 42-5-3; DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-20. 73 DCF Policy Manual § 42-10-4.

70 DCF Policy Manual § 42-10-3.

71 DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-30.

72 DCF Policy Manual § 42-10-3.

73 DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-30.

74 DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-50.

75 DCF Policy Manual § 42-5-2.

76 DCF Policy Manual § 36-55-1.5 (“The foster parents shall provide corrective life experiences in a safe, nurturing and stable family environment, free from abuse and/or neglect, where the child is respected, valued and accepted.”); DCF Regs. § 17a-145-151(c).

77 DCF Regs. §17a-145-151(c).

78 Id.

79 DCF Regs. §17a-145-151(c).

80 DCF Regs. § 17a-101(e)-3,4.

81 DCF Regs. § 17a-150-81(a)(4).

82 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16(g) (“Each child or youth under the supervision of the Commissioner of Children and Families shall have the right to counsel of his own choosing, and the right to receive visits from physicians and mental health professionals as may be arranged by his counsel.”); CONN. GEN. STAT. § 46b-123d.

83 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16(g).

84 See CONN. GEN. STAT. § 45a-132.

85 DCF Policy Manual § 44-4-1 (“The foster parent may use its own physician or dentist provided the doctor conforms to the fee schedules established by the Department of Social Services.”).

86 DCF Policy Manual § 44-4-4.1.1.

87 DCF Policy Manual § 31-8-12.1.

## Footnotes

88 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 19a-14c(b),(c); DCF Policy Manual 44-5-2.

89 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 14a-14c(b),(c); DCF Policy Manual 44-5-2.

90 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-688(d); DCF Policy Manual 44-5-2.

91 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16(g) (“Each child or youth under the supervision of the Commissioner of Children and Families shall have the right to... receive visits from physicians and mental health professionals as may be arranged by his counsel.”).

92 There is no Connecticut statute on this subject but the constitutional protections afforded minors on privacy grounds are controlling. See *Carey v. Population Service, Int'l*, 431 U.S. 678 (1977); *Bellotti v. Baird*, 443 U.S. 622 (1979).

93 DCF Policy Manual § 44-5-4.

94 *Id.*; CONN. GEN. STAT. § 19a-600 to 602.

95 DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-40.

96 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 19a-582(a); DCF Policy Manual § 44-5-5.1.

97 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 19a-584(b).

98 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 19a-592(a).

99 CONN. GEN. STAT. § 19a-216(a).

100 *Id.*

101 DCF Policy Manual § 44-5-2.2.

102 DCF Policy Manual § 45-12; CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16a.

103 20 C.F.R. § 416.926a

104 *Id.*

105 42 U.S.C. § 1381 et Seq./www.ssa.gov/ssi

106 20 C.F.R. § 416.1400

107 DCF Policy Manual § 45-12; CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16 a

108 *Id.*

109 *Id.*

110 *Id.*

111 42 U.S.C.A. § 11432(g)(3)(C).

112 DCF Policy Manual § 45-12; CONN. GEN. STAT. § 17a-16a.

113 20 U.S.C.A. § 1414 (c)(4)(B)(5).

114 DCF Policy Manual § 45-10; CONN. GEN. STAT. §§ 10-94f-k.

115 DCF Policy Manual §§ 42-20-20.

116 *Id.*

117 DCF Policy Manual § 42-20-20.

118 *Id.*

119 *Id.*

120 *Id.*

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