



**Every young adult  
is unique**

BROTHERS AND KEEPERS CORP.

# Youth Handbook Guide

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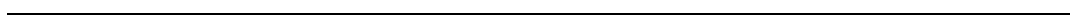
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## About the Handbook

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This handbook is for youth placed in foster care through Arizona Department of Child Safety and Department of Child Protective Services. The handbook was written for youth entering foster care for the first time as well as youth already in foster care. We hope that whether you are about to be placed or have been in foster care for a while, you will find the information helpful.

The handbook describes your rights and responsibilities while you are in foster care. It also describes what happens when you are older and leave

foster care. It represents minimum Arizona State requirements. The handbook covers lots of topics, but it is important to know where you can get more help if you need it. Be sure to talk to an adult you trust if you have other questions or need more information.

“ ”

When you see big quotation marks . . .

You will know that those are the words of a youth in foster care just like you.



# Chapter

# 1



# Being in foster care

## *What, How, Where*

**F**oster care is a place to live while you and

your family can get the services and support you need. Foster care is meant to take care of children and

Youth when their parents can't, and to provide a safe home.

“Foster care is a place you go to be safe and protected, a place where you can work out family problems..”

## **Why Are You in Foster Care?**

Young people come into foster care for different reasons. Sometimes parents abuse or neglect their children. Other parents know they can't care for their children and ask for help.

Some youth enter care because they need help with behaviors that are getting them into trouble.

You have the right to know why you're in foster care. Ask your case manager if you don't know.

## **What are my Grievance Rights?**

**A** *Grievance* is defined as an official statement of a complaint over

something believed to be wrong or unfair. If you are feeling troubled over something that you believe is wrong or unfair, towards your personal care, treatment or other services, you have the right to file a Grievance. At the back of the handbook is a page that list Arizona Foster Children Bill of Rights.



# What is Expected of me?



## E<sub>x</sub>pectations

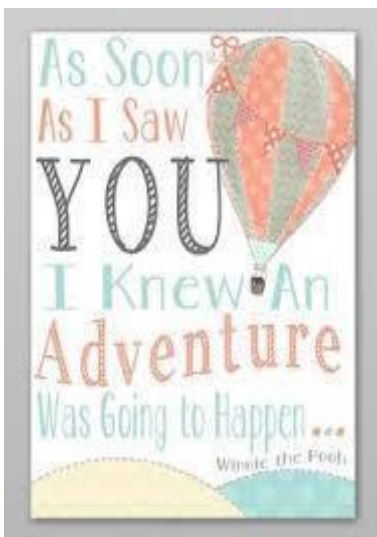
- It is expected that you can participate in after school extracurricular activities as long as your grades are satisfactory and the activities do not create any trouble for you regarding your behavior or following rules.
- It is expected that you participate in the development of your service plan and sign the document indicating that you have reviewed it.
- It is expected that if a therapist or psychiatrist sees you and you are referred for therapy sessions that you keep the appointments and participate in the sessions.
- It is expected that if you are scheduled for court, or have appointments for medical or therapy sessions that you keep the appointment or notify your foster parent, group care staff or case manager before the appointment date, if you are unable to keep the appointment.
  - It is expected that when you are away from home that you provide a telephone number for your case manager or foster group care staff.
    - The case manager and foster group care staff are responsible for your safety and you need to make sure they know how to reach you.
  - It is expected that if you want to work, you can, as long as you are of legal age and your grades are not affected by working.
  - It is expected that if you want to open a bank account to save your own money that you may do so.

do  
THE RIGHT  
THING...  
EVEN WHEN  
no one  
IS LOOKING.

- It is expected that if you attend independent living classes, that you arrange your extracurricular and work schedules so that you can attend those classes.
- It is expected that you may participate on your local youth advisory board.
- It is expected that when you leave foster care you leave a telephone number and keep in touch with the case manager every two (2) months, so that the case manager can know how you are doing and if you need assistance.

## You and your Care Provider

## Residential Youth



## Your Residential Youth Care Provider's role is to...

- Know you and your family.
- Protect your safety.
- Protect your rights.
- Help provide a safe and comfortable place for you to stay.
- Help provide you care, food and clothing.

- Help you get transportation to your doctor, dentist, optometrist, counselor and court appointments.
- Help get your medication and supervise you in taking them properly.
- Help ensure you are getting along well with everyone.
- Help your Case Manager arrange a Visiting Plan for you and your family.
- Help teach you Independent Living Skills and good Teamwork skills.
- Help you open a bank account, save money, and balance your checkbook.
- Help you with homework and school lessons. Help maintain better grades and work towards an educational goal such as college and vocational training.
- Help you discover more interests and hobbies.
- Help you get involved in extracurricular activities such as fun sport activities and rewarding volunteering opportunities.
- Help you learn how to find a job and work towards a career.
- Help answer your questions.

## The First Few Days in Care...

Help your Residential Youth Care Provider get to know you. *Having a good relationship will help build TRUST.*

**W**hen you come to a new place...

On your first day someone should and tell you the *rules*. You will room is and where you will eat and shower.

At first, you may feel scared, You may feel like you can't That's normal. To help questions.

- You should be



I long, as does every human being, to be at home wherever I find myself.

*Maya Angelou*

show you around find out where your where you will

nervous, and upset. trust anyone. yourself, ask

introduced to

your care providers and all the other people who live there.

- You should find out about the *rules*.
- Make sure you know the name, address, and telephone number of where you live and who to contact in an emergency.
- Find out how to get information when you need it.
- If something is bothering you, tell your care provider.

“Avoid negativity, go in with an open mind, watch how things go down, and formulate your own opinions. At first everything is really hard, but as you adapt, it can be a good experience. It’s not about the big things that people do for you that matter the most – it’s the small things.”

# Seeing Your Family...

## V isiting Plan



### The visiting plan includes...

- How often visits will be.
- How long each visit must last.
- Where visits will take place.
- Whether the visits are supervised by someone from the local DCS or foster care agency.
- Who will be present during the visits?
- Your visiting plan may stay the same for a long time. It may change often.
- How often the plan changes will depend on things like how your family is doing, your safety during visits, and your behavior.
- Visiting plans cannot be changed without permission from the Case Manager.  
**Care providers cannot allow visits that the case manager has not approved.**



## Your case manager is required to ...

- Talk to you, your family, and your care providers about visits and is the one responsible for setting up the Visiting Plan.
- Include you, your family, and your care providers in making a plan for visits.
- Write down the plan. Give a copy of the written plan to you, your family, and your care providers.
- If you can't make a visit for any reason, call your case manager to plan a different time. Don't just "not show up." You wouldn't want your parent to do that.

*If you don't feel comfortable visiting your family, tell your case manager. Tell your care provider (Residential Youth Care Provider).*

### **Sisters & Brothers**

Your case manager is required to try hard to place you and your sisters and/or brothers (siblings) together if they need to be in foster care too. If there are no safety or other issues about being together, your case manager should try to keep you together. If you and your siblings are placed separately, ask your case manager why.

**Your case manager is required to arrange for visits with your siblings at least every 2 weeks.**

### **Exceptions**

Youth who are at least 13 years old and placed by the court as a PINS (person in need of supervision) or JD (juvenile delinquent) in an institution have the right to have visits with their families at least every 3 months (if visitation with the family every other week is impossible). If the institution is more than 100 miles away from the youth's home, there is no legal requirement for the amount of family visits. But if you are in this situation, talk to your case manager about how you can visit your family. If the plan is not for you to return home after foster care, the number of visits and who you visit may be different. If your plan is another planned living arrangement with a permanency resource) or adoption, you and your case manager will work out an individual plan for visits.





**Chapter**

**2**

# Everyday Life...

## First Things First



### Privacy

Everyone has a right to privacy. *You have the right to be given space that is private and to store personal things safely and securely.*

**Other people have a right to their privacy too.** *You do not have the right to get into their things without permission.*

If your Residential Providers have reasonable cause to believe you have something dangerous, illegal, or stolen, they are **required** to call your case manager or someone else at the agency. Your property may be searched only when there is reasonable cause to suspect that you have something dangerous, illegal, or stolen. Reasonable cause is based on specific information, not just a hunch or feeling.

Your body, wallet/purse, and clothes may be searched by your case manager and care providers only if they have reason to believe there is a risk of serious harm to you or others from your use or distribution of something dangerous, illegal, or stolen. When there is a reasonable “doubt” you may be asked to empty Backpacks or Pockets to address any suspicions.

## When to get permission

You must ask your providers for permission for things *like...*

- Going to school games, dances, and club meetings.
- Having friends over.
- Spending the night at a friend’s house.

- Going somewhere with a family, a friend, or friend's family.
- Playing sports.
- Going to the movies.



# Daily Stuff

## Where You Sleep...

You will share a comfortable room with other boys. You will have your own bed, dresser and closet space to put your belongings.

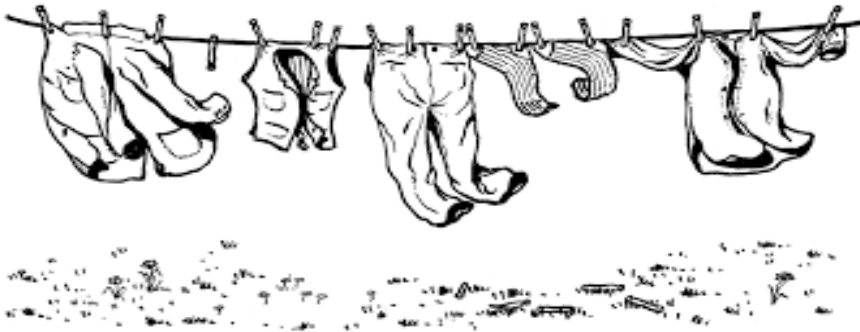
## Clothes

Your provider will give you clothing and can help buy you clothing, or you may get a clothing allowance directly from your case manager. You have the right to help shop for your own clothes. You will have a limited budget. Your local DCS will give you a **clothing allowance of \$1.02 a day**. Allowances come in between the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of following month.

*There's also an Emergency Clothing Allotment of \$150.00 per year.*

Your clothes should be...

- Appropriate for school, weekends, and dressing up.
- Appropriate for the season, like a winter coat.
- Kept clean and in good condition.
- Ask how to do laundry so you can take care of your own clothes.



*We also get very special clothing donations from Helen's Closet and other organizations.*



## Meals

We enjoy making homemade meals at our Satellite homes. We provide a monthly menu that we post in the kitchen wall to let you know the meals for the day. We accommodate your food likes, dislikes and allergies.

Our meal times are opportunities for us to get together to get to know you.

Meal times are also a fun time to gather around as one big family to get to know one another. Sometimes, the other Youth help prepare the meals together as a fun way to learn independent learning skills.

We also understand how difficult it is to eat meals when you're feeling sad or upset. It matters a lot to us that you eat well. We like to track how much you eat per meal using our **Meal Logs**.

**The state does provide free school meals for your convenience.**

## Hygiene



Keeping clean is part of staying healthy. You have the right to take a shower or bath every day and to be given soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush, and toothpaste specific to your needs. Be sure to ask for supplies and products based on your own needs if you don't have them. Although you may not always get the brand you prefer, you will be provided with these supplies.

### Hair...Styling, Length, Color

Your hairstyle must be appropriate to represent the agency.

### Piercing & Tattooing

If you are thinking about piercing or tattooing any part of your body, you **must** talk to your case manager first. Since you are in foster care, you may have to get consent from your parents or the agency. The agency does not permit facial, lip or tongue piercing.

### Going Places & Seeing Friends

You may want to go places with friends and visit them at their homes. Providers are required to know where you are and what you are doing. It is their job to help keep you safe. They may want to meet your friends and talk to their parents. If they have concerns about your safety, they may restrict your activities. If you want to visit with an old friend from home, your case manager must give permission. Providers may give permission when your friend is new and lives in the same area where you live. We keep track of who picked you up and where you are going with our **Activity Tracking Log**.

## Using the Telephone & Computer



Ask your Residential Care Staff if there are rules about using the telephone and computer where you live. You are allowed half hour (30 minute) intervals for both home phone and internet use to allot enough time for everyone to use. There is a **Cell Phone Agreement** that will be

explained in Chapter 3.

If you want to make a long distance call, ask about the rules where you live. If you want your own e-mail, try to work out the best way to do that. There are free e-mail accounts you can use if your foster home is already hooked up to the Internet. *For your protection, your providers are required to have your passwords for your email and social media accounts like Facebook and Twitter, etc.*

You have the right to call your case manager, lawyer, or counselor *whenever* you need to. *Your case manager will determine when you may call your parents, brothers and sisters, and friends from home.*

## Money and Allowance





**Y**ou will receive an allowance from the agency. *The local*

*DCS decides when you get it and how much it is. DCS will give you a personal allowance of \$0.72 per day. Allowances come in between the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of following month.* If you are entitled to an independent living stipend, that amount is determined once you prepare to live independently.

You have the right to open a savings account, no matter how old you are. *We will help you open an account with Wells Fargo.* Because you are a minor under Foster Care, they will require us to be your *cosigner*. When you are discharged from foster care or transferred to the care of another agency, this money is to be turned over to you or the other agency. You may decide how to spend and save your own money. We use an *Allowance/Purchase Ledger* to keep track of your purchases.

Youth who turn 18 in foster care may receive money from any trust funds or guardianship accounts that have been established for them. Your case manager may assist you with that.

Do not save what is left after spending, but spend what is left after saving

- Warren Buffet

www.tortajamutni.com.au

*DCS gives you a education. If you expenses, like fees, camps, field dues, class ring, and art supplies.*

Quotes Love and Life .com

#22

If you want to feel rich, just count the things you have that money can't buy.

*\$82.50 a year for have school books, activity trips, school club yearbook pictures,*

# Chores



You may be asked to do some household chores like setting the table, taking out the trash, or folding laundry.

This is a normal part of family life, and chores like these will help you gain skills and a sense of responsibility. You shouldn't expect pay for this kind of work within the foster home.

## 5 REASONS KIDS NEED TO DO CHORES

- 1.** They contribute to the household, feel the sense of community & team work.
- 2.** They learn important skills that they will use throughout their lives.
- 3.** They learn to be responsible.
- 4.** They learn the value of work.
- 5.** They start to have an understanding of what earning and wisely spending means.

THIRTYHANDMADEAYS.COM

# Extracurricular Activities

## Sports



We encourage everyone to play different sport activities with one another. We go to the gym together and plan weekend games together whenever we can. We will have you sign a *Sports Consent form* so you can play with us.

### Top 5 Reasons Children should play sports:

- Active children get better grades
- Children are taught lifelong skills through sports
- Exercise promotes well-rounded health
- Sports boosts self-confidence
- Exercise lessens stress



## Volunteering



The world is not a perfect place, and many people, animals, places, and communities need help. Governments and professionals try to meet everyone's needs, but it's impossible for them to do it all.

This is why people become volunteers: because they can make a difference where someone or something needs help. If people never help each other and only care about themselves, the world becomes a crueler, sadder place. But when we volunteer our time, money, or talents, we help make our planet a better, happier home where people work together to make life easier for all.

Volunteers and volunteer groups can:

- Bring food to hungry people
- Find homes or clothes for those who need them
- Make neighborhoods safer and more beautiful
- Protect wildlife and natural areas
- Help care for pets and other animals
- Bring comfort and happiness to lonely people
- Care for people who are sick, or help find cures for diseases
- Help people learn to read or do better in school

### Volunteering is good for YOU

Are you thinking, "What's in it for me?" The answer is, plenty! Here are some of the things you might get in return for your giving:

- Making new friends
- Gaining important skills and experience that will help you later in life
- Making connections that can lead to a job or career
- Seeing more of your community and world
- Building confidence and self-esteem
- Exploring what you want to do with your life
- Feeling needed and important
- Feeling satisfaction at getting things done and helping others
- Meeting people who could be role models
- Using your mind, body, and creativity
- Getting active and healthier
- Relieving stress
- Fighting boredom
- Spending time doing what you really care about
- Gaining an edge on getting into college
- Feeling like you're part of a community
- Having fun!

Here are some organizations we volunteer for:



# Fundraising



Fundraising teaches a child how to responsibly raise money. You are giving your time and talent to a *special cause*. Through fundraising, we can acquire the monetary means necessary to begin the process of change. The profits you make can help pay for trips and things. Fundraising can also involve greater goals such as supporting a mission in another country you believe in.

Fundraising is common from sports and other activity clubs to schools and churches. For example, The Boys Scouts of America, which is also partially funded by fundraising of its members, collected hundreds of thousands of pounds of disaster relief good for the victim of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. **As an organization, we can also help one another make a difference. Our youth held car washes to aid the victims of Hurricane Sandy.**

**THE PERFECT  
FUND RAISER!**

When you are feeling low...





We understand that there are different feelings you may have: scared, nervous, sad, alone, mad, and maybe hopeful. Although it may feel as though no one can understand what you're feeling or going through, we encourage you to be honest with yourself about what you are feeling, and talk to someone you trust about these feelings. This could be your Youth Care Provider, care provider, case manager, parents, a relative or close family friend, a teacher, your attorney, your counselor and your church pastor. Your emotional health is important to us, and we can only help you if we know what you are feeling and thinking.

### Running Away...

If you are having a problem where you live, **don't run away!** It is better to talk to an adult who will help you than to run away and get into the hands of the wrong people. Out there there are predators- who want to use you and wrong friends- who will get you to hurt yourself. **Keep talking until you get help.** If you run away, there will be consequences...

- You may need to return to setting.
- You could be placed in a other setting.
- You could be placed in a facility. Or you could get hurt
- If your provider believes that they must call the local police AWOL and notify your case to always tell your provider where you will be.
- If you're gone too long, you might lose the "Foster Child "benefits such as a free four year college education to any of three universities in Arizona, subsidized Housing benefits and much more.



the same foster care  
different home or  
juvenile detention  
or killed.  
you've run away,  
and report your  
manager. **Remember**



### Things to Consider Before Running Away...

According to NRS (National Runaway Safeline Org), many people tend to think of various youth populations as separate, the fact is that issue areas such as *bullying, abuse, youth violence, human trafficking, LGBTQ, foster care, substance abuse, and the juvenile justice system*, are often interconnected. If leaving the home seems like the only answer to your current situation, ask yourself the questions below. If you're still not sure what to do next, talk with a friend, call us at 1-800-RUNAWAY or go to <http://www.1800runaway.org>

• What else can I do to improve my home situation before I leave?



- What would make me stay at home?
- How will I survive?
- Is running away safe?
- Who can I count on to help me?
- Am I being realistic?
- Have I given this enough thought?
- If I end up in trouble, who will I call?
- When I return home, what will happen?



# Chapter

# 3

# Arizona Curfew Law

Teenagers in the City of Phoenix, Arizona should know that there are city ordinances that define what hours a minor may be outside within the City of Phoenix boundaries without adult supervision. Parents of teenagers who violate the Phoenix curfew law may be held responsible.

The Phoenix City Code, Chapter 22, covers curfews in Phoenix.

- Minors under 16: may not be outside unsupervised between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. the next morning.
- Minors 16 to 18: may not be outside unsupervised between midnight and 5 a.m. the next morning.
- Curfew violations are misdemeanors and a fine may be imposed. Other cities within the greater Phoenix area also have curfews, and they may be different from the strictions in Phoenix, Arizona.



# Cell Phone Agreement

During your first few days, you will be given a Cell Phone agreement.

***You are required to read it and sign in.*** It will help you understand that a cell phone is a privilege and in order to have one, you have to follow the Agency and State of Arizona Cell Phone Policies. Below is a snapshot of what the agreement looks like:

## ***Group Home/Shelter Cellular Phone Agreement for Young Adults***

**I understand that the cell phone is a privilege and in order to have one I understand that I must follow the below policies:**

Youth shall be 16 years old to be considered for a cell phone.

Youth shall meet with the CPS Specialist to discuss the reason, source of funding, and obtain approval, which will be written in the case plan.

Youth shall have savings equal to the termination fee and 3 months payment. If a family member pays for the service, no savings is required. Youth may also have a pay as you go phone,

Youth shall obtain permission from the placement agency as well as the CPS Specialist.

Youth shall be stable and responsible to have a cell phone. This is demonstrated by no major violations of group home/shelter policy.

Youth shall not let others use their phone.

No internet will be allowed on the phone as well as no sexting, inappropriate photos, music, ring tones, etc. Should the youth receive an inappropriate text or photo, s/he shall report this to the group home/shelter staff.

At any time the group home/shelter manager or administration may request to see and view recent calls, texts, inappropriate photos or search to see if the phone has internet capability.

Youth shall turn the phone off during house activities including study time. The phone is to only be used during the youth's free time at the group home/shelter

# Working

## Arizona Employment Law for Youth



First, talk with your case manager and provider about what you would like to do and if this is a good time to have a job. If you are 14 or older, you may be able to have a part-time job.

Arizona State has laws about minimum ages:

- **Under age 14** you may not be employed (except in jobs like delivering newspapers, babysitting, shoveling snow, yard work, caddying, etc.).
- **14 & 15 year olds** may work after school part time.
- **16 year olds and up** may work. Children under the age of 16, who are employed in non-farm employment, can work a maximum of 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week during the non-school day period. During the school day, children under 16 years of age, they can only work 3 hours per day and 18 hours per school week. It is unlawful for a child under the age of 16 to work between the hours of 9:30 p.m. and 6 a.m. If the child is working in door-to-door sales or deliveries, they may not work between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.

All employment requires permission of your care provider and case manager. Special permission from your local DCS is required for jobs using power-driven machinery.

☞ *Be ready to talk about schoolwork and your grades, and also about your behaviors. You will need to plan for transportation to and from the job.*

What you will need to work

- Your birth certificate. You have the right to have a copy of your birth certificate – your case manager should be able to assist with this.
- A copy of your Social Security Card.

You may also need the signature of your parent or legal guardian. Check with your case manager.



# Medications



As your care providers, we are here to help take care of you when you are not feeling well.

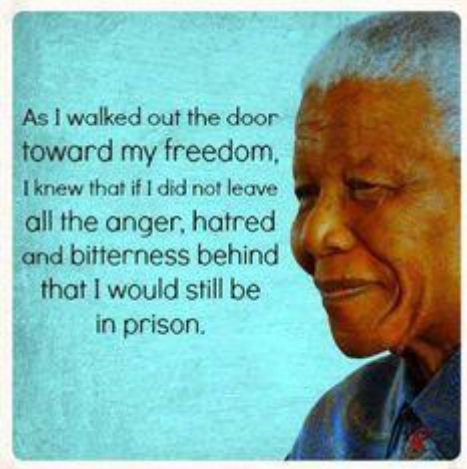
We will bring you to your doctor appointments, dental appointments and vision appointments.

We will pick up your medication for you and make sure you are taking your medication in a timely fashion.

To ensure you're taken care of properly; we are required by law to supervise you when you are taking your medications. We will provide you with a *Medication Consent Form* when you first check in.

Then we can help you take your medication by supervising you. We use *Medication Flow Sheet log* to make sure you are taking your medication as prescribed by your doctor.

## Incidents and Unusual Incidents



No matter how awesome we think you are, there will be times when we will need to write an incident report, when something out of the ordinary happens. So it is not who you are but what you did that needs to be corrected. We are here to guide you and remind you that you are a precious child that is still loved.

Incident Reports is a form that is filled out in order to record details of an unusual event that occurs in the home.

When we write an incident, the goal is to resolve it immediately. We write the reason for the incident and the solution that resolved the incidents so it will never happen again.

**Here are a few reasons when we are required by law, to write an Incident Report:**

- Fighting
- AWOL (Running Away)
- Property Damage
- Bullying
- Abusive Language
- Physical Abuse to Staff

We keep all your incidents *confidential* in the privacy of your File. Our goal is to help you minimize the number of incidents as a way to show you are improving. The lesser the incidents, the better you are feeling about yourself. Our goal is to help you feel better about yourself.

An **Unusual Incident Report** is written when something *very serious* has happened. Here are some examples:

- unexplained marks or bruises

- an accident involving serious injury or trauma
- Death
- a child discloses or alleges sexual or physical abuse
- a child damages property or steals something of great value
- law enforcement is called

MAKE YOUR  
 ANGER SO EXPENSIVE  
 THAT NO ONE CAN  
 AFFORD IT AND MAKE  
 YOUR HAPPINESS SO  
 CHEAP THAT PEOPLE  
 CAN ALMOST GET IT  
 FREE.

## Case Notes



Case notes are notes we write when we want to understand how well you are doing in your new environment. How well you are adjusting. What things you have been doing and learning that shows you are happy here with us. We keep all your Case Notes *confidential* in the privacy of your File. Our goal is to monitor how you are feeling to ensure our relationship together is helping you.

## Progress Reports

*“Where there is no struggle there is no progress.”* Progress

Reports is a document that achievements during your complete a Progress days. We keep all your *confidential* in the privacy



records your stay with us. We Report on you every 30 Progress Reports of your File.



## Personal Inventory

A Personal Inventory is a form we, as your care providers, are required to fill out to list all your belongings, such as clothes, shoes, and special things that mean a lot to you. We fill one out to keep track what you have. We fill this out when you first come in so we know what else you might need like additional clothing, etc. Whenever you buy something new, we create another Personal Inventory. When you leave, we create another one as well. It is to protect you and others.



## Fire Drills



Fire drills are an important part of your fire safety procedures for many reasons. Not only do they ensure that all the youth, staff and visitors in your home understand what they need to do if there is a fire, but they also help you to test how effective your fire evacuation plan is and to improve certain aspects of your fire provisions.

**We are required to conduct fire drills every month.**



## If You Are an Immigrant



If you are an immigrant when you enter foster care, you can become a permanent resident of the U.S. and obtain a green card by applying for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. This special status allows an approved applicant to...

- Live permanently in the U.S.
- Work legally in the U.S.

- Get financial aid for college.
- Get some public benefits like Public Assistance, Medicaid, and Food Stamps.

**To be eligible for this status, you must be an immigrant who is...**

- Unmarried and under 21 years old.
- Placed in foster care before your 18th birthday due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment, as determined by a Family Court judge. In foster care when the application is filed and until you receive the special status.
- A youth who commits a crime may not be eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status.
- Also, a Family Court judge must decide that it is not in your best interest to return to your country of origin.

## How to apply...

An immigration lawyer will file the application to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS), which used to be the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Applying for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status can take a long time. If you are an immigrant when you enter foster care, it is very important that you speak to your caseworker about starting the application process. Your caseworker should be able to help you arrange a meeting with an immigration lawyer.

## NOTES...

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# Chapter

# 4

# Planning Your Future...

## Planning for Your Future



While you are in foster care, there is a plan for your future. The plan has a permanency goal for where you will live after you leave foster care.

These are the different goals...

- Return home to your family.
  - Live with a relative or friend.
  - Be adopted.
- Live in another planned living arrangement with a permanency



resource

the right to know your permanency goal. Your manager should talk to on-one and in Service

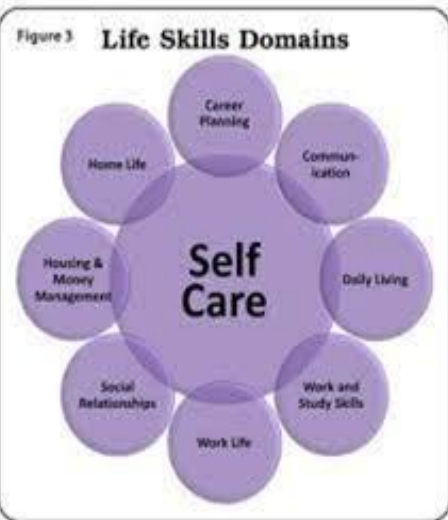
Plan Review meetings about your options when you leave

foster care.

You have case you one-Plan Review meetings about your options when you leave foster care.

- If your goal is to return home to your family, you are supposed to return as soon as possible but at least within 15 months of entering foster care. Sometimes this doesn't happen. You have a right to know why you are not returning home if that is your goal.

- Your goal may be to live with a relative or adult friend. A relative or friend may or may not be given legal custody or guardianship.
- Your goal may be adoption. If you are 14 or



older, you must give your consent to be adopted. But even if you have refused adoption in the past, your case manager may continue to talk to you about your interest in being adopted.

# Life Skills Services



**LifeSkills**  
achieve your personal best

- Preventive health and wellness.
- Education and supports.
- Vocational/career planning.
- Employment skills.
- Budgeting and financial management.
- Housing.
- Home management.
- Accessing community resources.

Developing life skills or skills in daily living, such as knowing how to cook, clean, and problem-solve, are important so that you can make a successful transition to adulthood. No matter what your permanency goal is, if you are 14 to 20 years old and in foster care, you must receive instruction in life skills.

## Life skills services give youth help in...

- Forming and sustaining positive relationships.
- Problem-solving/decision-making/goal-planning.



# Leaving Foster Care/ Preparing for self-sufficiency

## Planning for Discharge



To help plan for your discharge from foster care, the agency must send you a written notice 90 days before the planned date of discharge if you are being discharged to independent living.

- We will list the people, services, and agencies that can help you in your transition to self-sufficiency. We will help you make contact with them.

## What Needs To Be in Place When You Are Discharged?

To provide for your safety, permanency, and well-being after discharge, your caseworker will help you to...

- Have an adult permanency resource – a relative, foster parent, agency staff, teacher, or other adult – that you can go to for emotional support, advice, and guidance.
- Have sufficient money to pay for rent and other expenses, or have a referral to Temporary Assistance for an eligibility determination, if needed.
- Know that after discharge, until you turn 21, you can receive services – financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other support services that help you make the transition to self-sufficiency – and have the name/telephone number of the worker to contact if you need help after discharge.
- Have health insurance, including dental care, and insurance for mental health services and medications. Your eligibility for Medical Assistance will continue when you are discharged from foster care until you receive legal notice that your eligibility must be re-determined or has been discontinued.
- Have important documents, like your birth certificate, Social Security card, medical records, and education records, or have arrangements to receive these documents.
- Know ways to handle safety issues and situations.
- Have arrangements with community-based services.

- Turning 18 . Youth can stay in foster care until their 21st birthday. To stay in foster care after age 18, you must give your consent by signing a Voluntary Agreement to remain in foster care and you must be in school, or in college, or regularly attending a vocational or technical training program, or lack the skills or ability to live independently.
- The court will continue to hold permanency hearings for youth age 18-21 who remain in foster care.

## **Trial Discharge**

Before your final discharge from foster care, you will have a period of trial discharge. DSS must offer a trial discharge period for at least 6 months. Under certain circumstances, the trial discharge period may be extended until you reach 21. During the trial discharge period, even though you will be living on your own in the community, DSS will still have custody. The purpose of trial discharge is that if you become homeless, the agency has to find housing for you or give you the opportunity to re-enter foster care. If you are 18 or older and not on trial discharge, you cannot return to foster care.

# Housing Services



Youth being discharged to independent living with permanency resources may be eligible for the following housing services...

**Preventive housing subsidy services.** Youth who are being discharged to independent living may be eligible for a **preventive housing subsidy** if they are prepared for discharge and need assistance with

housing rent payments. They need to have been in foster care for at least 90 days.

**Chafee Room and Board Services.** Youth 18 through 20 years of age may be eligible for Chafee Room and Board Services. Under this program, youth may be eligible to receive funds for rent, utilities, furnishings, and/or money for security or utility deposits. There are rules related to supervision and sometimes school attendance and employment.

Chafee Room and Board Services may be available at the time of discharge from foster care or at a later time so long as the youth is still under 21 years old. Not all local DCS districts offer this program. Check with your case manager to see if it is available through your DCS.

**Section 8 housing.** Youth who are 18–21 years old and preparing for independent living may also qualify for a Section 8 rental assistance voucher. Your local Public Housing Authority (PHA) can give you information on this and other public housing assistance if you are eligible. Your caseworker, along with the PHA, should be able to help you fill out the applications to obtain these services.

# Going to College



Decide if you want to go to college. No matter how old you are, you can have the goal of going to college. Being in foster care should not change that goal. Make sure your caseworker knows that you want to go to college. Staying in school and seeking more educational or vocational training opportunities will help you achieve success and self-sufficiency.

1) Prepare yourself by taking challenging classes, studying hard, and getting involved in your school and community.

2) Talk to your school counselor to learn about colleges and what you need

to do to get in. Start during your sophomore year and continue to meet with your counselor.

3) Study for the exams you need to take, like the PSAT, the SAT, and ACT exams, and sign up to take them. Your school counselor will give you the information you need.

4) Apply to colleges. It is best to apply to several schools, not just the one you want to get into right now. You can get the application forms from the college websites or by writing for an application. Apply early. Make sure you know the deadline. Most colleges have a January deadline.

Find out about the costs of entrance exams and college applications. Some schools may waive the fees if you have financial need. Talk to your case manager about payment of fees.

5) Apply for financial aid as soon as you can (see below). Find information on the financial aid process at [www.fafsa.edu.gov](http://www.fafsa.edu.gov).

## Paying for College – Financial Aid

In June 2013, Gov. Jan Brewer signed legislation Thursday allowing Arizona’s foster children to qualify for free tuition at the state’s three universities. The new law establishes a five-year pilot program intended to more than double the number of Arizona foster youths who attend and graduate from college each year.

There are three basic types of financial aid: grants or vouchers, work-study, and loans.

**Grants** are like gifts because you don’t have to pay them back. Some grants, called **scholarships**, are based on grades, athletic skill, and other abilities. **Work-study** is a part-time job, usually on campus, that helps you earn money to pay for your college expenses. **Loans** must be paid back after you leave college.

Most students get a “package” mixing all three types of financial aid. Apply for financial aid as early as you can. You might miss out on getting money if you wait to apply.

### First, learn how to apply for financial aid.

- Get documentation that proves you are (or were) in foster care. This could be a letter from your case manager.
- Get a federal PIN number. This is your electronic Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID number, which allows you to sign your financial aid form electronically and update your application online. You will need your Social Security number, date of birth, and mailing address to get a PIN. You can get this number at [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov).
- Make sure you check the “ward or dependent of the court” box on the application (college or financial aid).
- Since you are (or were) in foster care, you are an “independent student.” Your foster parents are not your legal guardians for purposes of applying for financial aid.
- Skip the “parental income information” section.
- Ask your case manager if the agency will pay the application fees, or ask schools if they will waive the fees.
- Ask your case manager if you are eligible for the federal Education and Training Voucher program.
- You may be able to receive up to \$5,000 a year to attend a college or training program.
- Ask for help. Make sure that your agency knows you want to go to college. When applying for college, get to know people in the admissions office and financial aid office. If people know who you are, they are more willing to advocate for you.



### Education and Training Voucher

**Program.** The federal Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program was set up for youth who are aging out of foster care to help them get education and training. You may be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 a year in federal funds to attend a college or vocational training program.

Even if you were adopted from foster care after you turned 16, you may be able to get a voucher. If you receive a voucher when you are 21, you may be able to continue getting a voucher until you are 23.

The voucher money may be used to pay for costs like...

- Tuition.
- Academic support – mentoring, career counseling, tutorial services, exam preparation.
- Books, supplies, computers, fees, clothing, transportation.
- Room and board during school and school breaks.
- Child care for a youth who is a parent.

**Youth are eligible for the program if they are:**

- Eligible for services under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (in foster care until age 18, or formerly in foster care and 18–21 years old).
- Adopted from foster care after the age of 16.
- Already participating in the ETV program on their 21st birthday, until they turn 23 as long as they are enrolled in a college or vocational training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completing the program.
- State grants
- **Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)**. TAP awards help pay for tuition if you attend a college in Arizona.
- Aid for Part-Time Study. This program gives grants to eligible
- Part-time students enrolled in college.
- AmeriCorps Education Award. This is for students who do community service in exchange for an education award.
- **Higher Equal Opportunity Program (HEOP)**. If you have had academic problems in high school, you may be eligible to receive help through this program. HEOP may help you with paying for college and tutoring, mentoring, and academic advising if you go to a public college. Ask colleges directly for an application.
- **Scholarships**. Arizona State has many different kinds of scholarships available, like veterans' awards, awards for academic excellence, health care opportunity awards, and others.
- Assistance under the Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (**VESID**) program if you are receiving Special Education services.
- **Federal grants**
- **Pell Grant**. The amount of this grant depends on whether you are a full-time or part-time student and how much it costs to attend the college. As a youth in foster care, you qualify for this grant.
- **SEOG Grant**. The federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity
- **Grant** is intended for first-time, full-time students with Exceptional financial need. As a youth in foster care, you qualify for this grant.
- **Federal Work-Study**. Money is earned while attending school. It does not need to be repaid. In most cases, jobs are on campus, and students are responsible for finding their own jobs.
- Federal loans. If you don't get enough money from grants to cover the cost of the college, you can apply for a student loan. You will have to repay the loan, but the interest rate is low.
- **Stafford Loan**. With a subsidized Stafford Loan, you will not have to pay interest while you are in school or for a "grace period" after you graduate. Then you will need to repay the loan at a low interest rate.
- **Perkins Loan**. You will need to repay this loan to the school at a low interest rate.



- Private scholarships. Many organizations like churches, civic groups, youth groups, and community foundations offer scholarships to students. Check with the public library and look in the telephone book for names of organizations. Ask your caseworker too.

# Joining the Military



- Youth age 17 in foster care need the consent of both parents and legal guardian to enlist in the armed forces. If you are 18 or older, you do not need consent.
- Almost all male U.S. citizens, and some noncitizens living in the U.S., who are 18 through 25 years old, are required to register with the Selective Service. See [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov) for information on registration.

## Arizona Foster Care Bill of Rights

Establishes a list of rights granted to all children in foster care, and additional rights for foster children older than age 16.

A. A child in foster care has the following rights:

1. To appropriate care and treatment in the least restrictive setting available that can meet the child's needs according to the best judgment of the foster parent.
2. To live in a safe, healthy and comfortable placement where the child can receive reasonable protection from harm and appropriate privacy for personal needs and where the child is treated with respect.
3. To know why the child is in foster care and what will happen to the child and to the child's family, including siblings, and case plans.
4. Whenever possible, the child should be placed with a foster family that can accommodate the child's communication needs.
5. To be disciplined in a manner that is appropriate to the child's level of maturity.
6. To attend community, school and religious services and activities of the child's choice to the extent that it is appropriate for the child, as planned and discussed with the child's placement worker and caseworker and based on care provider ability if transportation is available through a responsible party.
7. To go to school and receive an education that fits the child's age and individual needs.
8. To training in personal care, hygiene and grooming.
9. To clothing that fits comfortably and is adequate to protect the child against natural elements such as rain, snow, wind, cold and sun.
10. To have personal possessions at home that are not offensive to the foster family and to acquire additional possessions within reasonable limits, as planned and discussed with the child's foster parent, placement worker and caseworker, and based on care provider ability.
11. To personal space, in the foster home preferably, in the child's bedroom for storing clothing and belongings.
12. To healthy foods in healthy portions that are appropriate for the child's age.
13. To comply with any approved visitation plan, and to have any restrictions explained to the child in a manner and level of details deemed age appropriate by the foster parent in agreement with the caseworker and documented in the child's record.
14. If the child is six years of age or older, to receive contact information for the child's caseworker, attorney or advocate and to speak with them in private if necessary.
15. To participate in age appropriate child's service planning and permanency planning meetings and to be given a copy or summary of each service plan and service plan review. The child may request someone to participate on the child's behalf or to support the child in this participation.

16. To attend the child's court hearing and speak to the judge.
17. To have the child's records and personal information kept private and discussed only when it is about the child's care except the foster parent shall have full access to the records to determine if the child will be successful in the home. During the foster placement, if the foster parent requests to view the record upon experiencing problems with the child's adjustment, the full record shall be made available for viewing by the foster parent.
18. To be free of unnecessary or excessive medication.
19. To receive emotional, mental health or chemical dependency treatment separately from adults who are receiving services, as planned and discussed with the child's placement worker and caseworker, as is financially reasonable for the foster parent.
20. To report a violation of personal rights specified in this section without fear of punishment, interference, coercion or retaliation, except that an appropriate level of punishment may be applied if the child is proven to have maliciously or wrongfully accused the foster parent.
21. To be informed in writing of the name, address, telephone number and purpose of the Arizona protection and advocacy system for disability assistance.
22. To understand and have a copy of the rights listed in this section.



We recommend every child in Foster Care join this organization. Foster Care to Success is over 30 years old - we're the largest provider of college funding and support services for foster youth in the nation! Our work has been acknowledged by every White House Administration since that of George Bush, Sr. in 1989. Please go to website... <http://www.fc2success.org/>

## Famous Foster Care People

There is a huge list of famous people who were in Foster Care. Please see these websites and be amazed and inspired.

<https://www.fosterclub.com/category/article-type/foster-to-famous>

[http://www.americanadoptions.com/adoption/celebrity\\_adoption](http://www.americanadoptions.com/adoption/celebrity_adoption)

# Important Contacts

**County Case Manager** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Placement Agency Case Manager** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Law Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Health Care Provider** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Dentist** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Counselor/Therapist** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I agree I have read and understand this book.

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Printed Name

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Signature

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Youth Care Provider Signature