

Rights of Children in Care

Under section 70 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, children in care have the following rights:

- To be fed, clothed and nurtured according to community standards and to be given the same quality of care as other children (including the caregiver's children) in the placement;
- To be informed about their plans of care;
- To be consulted and to express their views, according to their abilities about significant decisions affecting them;
- To reasonable privacy and to possession of their personal belongings;
- To be free from corporal punishment;
- To be informed of the standard behavior expected by their caregivers and of consequences of not meeting their caregiver's expectations;
- To receive medical and dental care when required;
- To participate in social and recreational activities if available and appropriate and according to their abilities and interests;
- To receive the religious instruction and to participate in the religious activities of their choice;
- To receive guidance and encouragement to maintain their cultural heritage;
- To be provided with an interpreter if language or disability is a barrier to consulting with them on decisions affecting their custody or care;
- To privacy during discussions with members of their families, subject to any court order made after the court has had an opportunity to consider the question of access to the child;
- To privacy during discussions with a lawyer, the Child, Youth and Family Advocate, the Ombudsman, a Member of the Legislative Assembly or a Member of Parliament;
- To be informed about and to be assisted in contacting the Child, Youth and Family Advocate;
- To be informed of their rights under the act and the procedures available for enforcing their rights

Rights of Foster Parents

To help ensure that children and youth in care receive the best possible care, foster parents have the following rights:

1. The right to continuing professional development opportunities with respect to caring for children, and to participation in professional foster parent associations.
2. The right to be consulted and be able to have meaningful input into decisions affecting the foster parents home, family and other placements in the home.
3. The right to be involved in the development of the child's Plan of Care and informed of changes to the plan.
4. The right to limit access to private spaces within their own home, to special possessions, and to private or personal conversations, in the same way their own children are limited.
5. The right to refuse a placement if they feel they cannot meet the child's needs regardless of the home level.
6. The right to be able to continue to participate in cultural, social and religious activities of their choosing, while honoring rights, values and beliefs of the foster child.
7. The right to be considered as a permanent family for a child, along with all other suitable homes if the Director determines that a permanent plan is in the child's best interest.
8. If requested and permitted by legislation, the right to be provided with notification of the serious illness, injury, or death of a former long-term placement, when this information is known.
9. The right to receive available information for the care of the child, including, but not limited to, any history of violence or illegal activity, as well as medical, educational, behavioral, personal care and relevant family information in addition to guardianship, custody and access arrangements. In the case of an emergency placement, information is received as soon as possible.
10. The right to be provided as soon as possible with reasons when a child is removed from a foster parent's home.
11. The right to be informed of standards expected by ministry staff and consequences of not meeting the standards.
12. The right to access information contained in any and all documents related to themselves which are held in the Director's custody, subject to all relevant legislation.
13. The right to access support of their choosing, and the right to be assisted in contacting the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations, the federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents, or any other support provider or agency on any issues concerning, but not limited to, Child in Care Standards and Conflict Resolution.
14. The right to be provided with reasons an agreement is terminated or suspended and the right to appeal the decision.
15. The right to be treated with consideration, trust, honesty, respect, acceptance, and fairness in all circumstances by ministry staff and community service providers and the right to request the ministry's assistance when situations arise that involve verbal or physical abuse of the foster parent by a child or youth in care or their family members.
16. The right to be informed of their Rights and the regional process or protocol for resolving differences or disagreements between the ministry and foster parents.
17. The right to receive services to support and stabilize a placement.
18. The right to be provided with access to support services when placements are terminated to minimize the foster parents' feelings of disruption and grief.