



**DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES**  
*Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities*



Vannessa L. Dorantes  
 Commissioner

Ned Lamont  
 Governor

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Licensed Caregivers  
 FROM: Pamela Kelly and Natalia Liriano, Foster Care Division Program Directors  
 CC: Tina Jefferson, Chief of Child Welfare  
 DATE: 10/17/19  
 SUBJECT: Child in Care/Sibling in Care Bill of Rights and Expectations

The 2014 Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act introduced standards requiring the involvement of children in the development and revision of their case plans. It requires that children in care know their rights with respect to education, health, visitation, and court participation and are provided with a birth certificate, Social Security card, health insurance information, medical records, an a driver’s license or a state identification care.

In 2015, the CT DCF Youth Advisory Board (YAB) approved and the Department adopted the Adolescents in Care Bill of Rights and Expectations. As the Preamble for that, Bill notes:

*The Department of Children and Families recognizes the importance of honoring and upholding the rights of youth in the foster care system. This Bill of Rights and Expectations is intended to guide the Department, foster parents, and care providers [;]as well as ensure that the permanency, safety, well-being and basic needs of all children in the foster care system are consistently met.*

The principles of the federal legislation and the aforementioned Bill of Rights were organized into CT law effective July 1, 2019, under **Public Act (PA) 19-44, An Act Concerning a Children in Care Bill of Rights and Expectations and the Sibling Bill Rights**. It outlines the basic rights for **ALL children in care**, expectations for DCF Social Worker AND **expectations for Licensed Foster, Adoptive & Kinship Caregivers**. The summary of the rights and expectations are on the next page. The department will insure that each child, whenever placed in out of home care will received a copy their rights. The social worker shall review the content, answer questions and provide contact information for questions. The child’s signature will indicate receipt of the document. Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Caregivers will receive a copy and their signature acknowledges receipt of the bill. [DCF780 Child & Sibling Bill of Rights](#) [Public Act 19-44](#)

### **Children in care have the right to:**

- 1) Develop and maintain the child's own values, hopes, goals, religion, spirituality and identity,
- 2) Visitation or ongoing contact with the child's parents, siblings, extended family and friends, and assistance in connecting
- 3) Be placed in a safe environment in the child's home community
- 4) Meaningful participation in the development of the child's case plan
- 5) Meaningful and regular in-person contact with the child's caseworker,
- 6) Academic stability and support

### **DCF Social Worker shall**

- 1) Share and review the Bill of Rights with the child
- 2) Whenever a child is placed in out of home care;
- 3) Whenever a child is moved to a new out of home placement; and
- 4) Annually with the child as long as the child is in an out of home placement

### **Licensed Caregiver shall**

- 1) **Maintain a healthy relationships with the child by emphasizing trust, understanding, empathy and communication**
- 2) **Set appropriate boundaries with respect to curfews, homework and household responsibilities in order to provide a stable living environment;**
- 3) **Assist the child in building life skills, including, but not limited to, grocery shopping and cooking meals, personal financial management and washing laundry;**
- 4) **Assist the child in obtaining legal documents and licenses,**
- 5) **Assist the child in participating in extracurricular and personal enrichment activities and obtaining networking and employment skills;**
- 6) **Apply the same age-appropriate household rules and provide the same opportunities to all children residing in the home, including, but not limited to, participation in family activities and vacations;**
- 7) **Participate in therapy sessions**
- 8) **Participate in additional foster parent training programs when possible; and**
- 9) **Permit the child to have age-appropriate personal privacy and privacy with respect to personal items and communications, including, but not limited to, journals, diaries, letters, electronic mail, telephone calls and text messages.**