

Section 1.7: Information for Youth in Care Handbook

1.0 CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW

1.7 Information for Youth in Care Handbook

Policy

Children and youth will participate in all decisions that affect them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

Children and youth must be heard and encouraged to participate when planning is taking place in regard to themselves and/or their family. Young persons must be advised of their rights and responsibilities while in care.

Every child and youth in out-of-home care is to be given a copy of the **Information for Youth in Care**. The handbook should be reviewed and explained to the child or youth.

The **Information for Youth in Care** handbook is meant to provide some basic information that will inform, and encourage young people to openly discuss issues and plans with their Social Worker. It is intended for use with youth in care who are 12 years of age and older, and should also be used with younger children when it is appropriate.

Procedures

The Social Worker responsible for Out of Home care and planning will:

FOR CAREGIVERS:

- ensure that all caregivers (foster parents, room and board providers, etc.) have a copy and are familiar with the information in the handbook within 30 days of a placement in their home;
- document in the Foster Home file that the handbook information has been explained to (or reviewed with) the Foster Parents;
- review the handbook on an annual basis with caregivers (i.e. with foster parents, as part of the annual review).

FOR YOUNG PERSONS IN CARE:

- review the handbook with the young person within 30 days of the youth coming into care to ensure the youth understands the information contained within the handbook;
- assist the young person to complete the information on page 15 of the handbook;
- assist the young person to make changes to the information on page 15 of the handbook as appropriate (i.e. change of Social Worker, Supervisor, etc.);

Original Date:

October 2001

Revised/Approved:

Page 93 of **744**

Section 1.7: Information for Youth in Care Handbook

- document in the young person's file that the handbook information has been explained to the youth in care.

Practice Guidelines

The **Information for Youth in Care** handbook provides an outline of rights and responsibilities of youth in care.

Youth in care have the right to:

- be informed of their right
- be treated with dignity and respect
- be listened to
- privacy
- inclusion and involvement in all decisions that affect the young person including knowing and understanding the care plan;
- have as much stability as possible and have input in placement plans (i.e. where the young person will live)
- be able to speak privately with family and relatives (if the young person wishes and it is safe), social workers, justice personnel, advocates, etc.
- have a caring, safe and nurturing environment with adequate food, clothing and shelter. Also, when a young person is placed in a new residence, steps should be taken to familiarize him/her with the routine of the home and the basic house rules.
- have possession of personal belongings
- receive available allowances
- receive medical and dental care
- have freedom from mental, physical, and sexual abuse
- have access to personal information about themselves and their family's circumstances
- have their comments and opinions documented on their file
- expect that their religious, cultural and linguistic heritage be respected, encouraged and maintained

Young people in care have responsibilities in accordance with their age and level of maturity. These responsibilities include:

- to know and gain understanding of their rights
- to treat others with dignity and respect
- have discussions with their social worker. This can include participation in the case plan, talking about issues involving family, school, placement, etc.
- ask questions if the youth is unsure of something or needs advice

Original Date:

October 2001

Revised/Approved:

Page 94 of **744**

Section 1.7: Information for Youth in Care Handbook

- respect their place of residence, the rules of the residence, and the caregiver or landlord, provided the youth's rights are not being violated
- respect the rights, privacy and property of others
- respect for differences in culture, race, religion or abilities of others
- tell someone if they have been abused
- plan with the social worker for future (i.e. what the young person plans to do after reaching 18 years of age)

The above are not exhaustive lists of rights and responsibilities. The handbook provides more detail and should be referred to.

Original Date:

October 2001

Revised/Approved:

Page 95 of **744**