

CHARTER OF RIGHTS

for
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE
in
OUT OF HOME CARE IN THE ACT

What is the Charter of Rights?

The Charter outlines how children and young people can expect to be treated by the people caring and working with them. All of these rights are important but some might be viewed as being more important than others.

Who is the Charter of Rights For?

The Charter of Rights is for children and young people who are living in short term or long term Out of Home Care in the ACT.

What is Out of Home Care?

Out of Home Care is when a child or young person lives with someone they know within their family or community or lives with another family in Foster Care or lives with other children in Residential Care. Children and young people come into Out of Home Care for many different reasons.

What are The Rights of Children and Young People?

1. The right to be safe and looked after

For example, children and young people can expect to:

- feel safe and well cared for by workers and the people caring for them
- have someone they trust to talk to if they are unhappy, worried, or feeling unsafe
- have their needs met

2. The right to be respected

For example, children and young people can expect to:

- be accepted for who they are
- be treated the same as others
- be treated according to their age and where they are at in life and not expected to do things that may be too hard for them

3. The right to be treated fairly

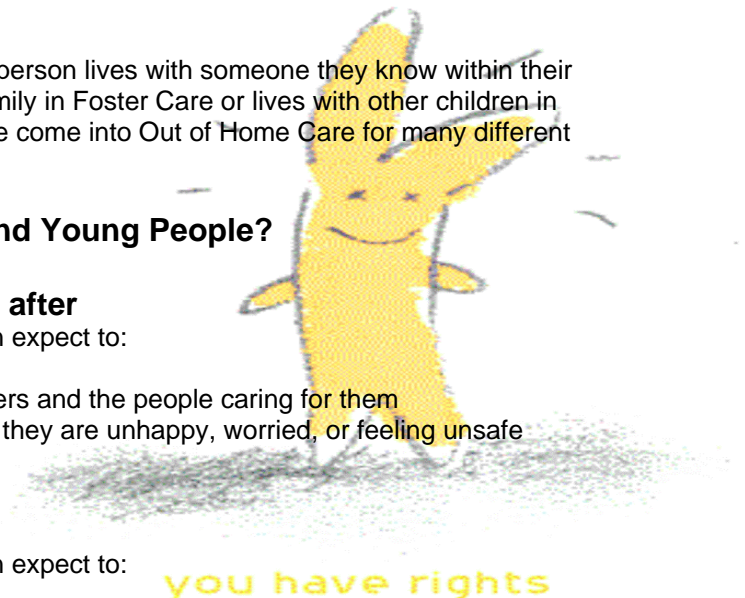
For example, children and young people can expect to:

- be treated as an individual
- be able to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings without being judged
- be treated the same as all other children and young people

4. The right to have fun, play and be healthy

For example, children and young people can expect to:

- see a health worker (i.e. a doctor, nurse, dentist, counselor or social worker, or be taken to hospital) as needed, to help their body and mind stay healthy and well.
- be able to relax, play and have fun
- have the choice of participating in recreational activities (i.e. sport or learning an instrument or another activity) that are safe and affordable.



5. The right to be heard

For example, children and young people can expect to:

- be able to share their views and be listened to about subjects like where to live, where to go to school or what sport or activity to take part in.
- have their thoughts and views considered when decisions are made about their care
- have decisions and outcomes that affect them explained in language they understand

6. The right to privacy and have their own things

For example, children and young people can expect to:

- have information about their life shared only with people who are involved in providing care and support for them.
- have their own things such as a bed, clothes, toothbrush, bath towel and private space when they feel the need to be alone.
- not have to talk about things they don't want to talk about

7. The right to ask questions about what is happening to them

For example, children and young people can expect to:

- know why they are in Out of Home Care
- be told about any planned changes or decision about them or their care, making sure they have the opportunity to ask questions
- have access to support, services and information as needed
- participate in planning when leaving care and be provided with support, information, and help in accessing services, to make the transition to independence or going home

8. The right to have contact with the people they care about and know about their family and cultural history.

For example, children and young people can expect to:

- be encouraged and supported in understanding and taking part in activities that are culturally important (i.e. language, religious beliefs, ceremonies, or artistic and cultural activities)
- be told about their life story, family history and cultural heritage
- have contact with the people they care about and who are special to them, when it is safe and in their best interest (i.e. their mum, dad, brother, sister, grandparents, uncles, aunts, a special family friend, a member of their community or their own friends)

9. The right to go to school

For example, children and young people can expect to:

- be able to attend school and be assisted in learning
- be provided with somewhere quiet to study and encouraged to do the best they can
- have assistance in continuing their education, gaining a part-time job or training as they get older

10. The right to talk to people about things they don't like or don't understand

For example, children and young people can expect to:

- be listened to and have their concerns taken seriously
- know who they can talk with and assist in sorting things out.
- have access to carers, workers and also independent individuals who will provide confidential help in resolving concerns.

