

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

PRESENTS

~~COMPOSITION BOOK~~

What to expect
when you enter
foster care



**EmbraceSM
Families**

Building Stronger Communities



What is foster care?

Foster care is a temporary arrangement in which adults provide for the care of a child or children whose birthparent is unable to care for them.

It is where children go when their parents cannot, for a variety of reasons, care for their children.

Mainly, youth come into foster care to be kept safe.



Just because
you're in foster
care, doesn't
mean you did
anything wrong.

Terms to Know

Case Plan The court document that your parents or caregivers must follow before you can go home. **Case plans** have goals for your parents and even you so that your parents can safely care for you again.

Case Manager The person that will follow-up and review your safety and well-being while you are in foster care. Your case manager will visit you at least once a month, and they will also work with your parents and your current caregivers to determine your best interests.

Guardian ad Litem A volunteer advocate that will help you in court. This advocate is represented by an attorney and speaks to the judge on behalf of you. They will also visit you and talk to your current caregivers regularly.



Visitation Planned contact between you and your family. Visits may be with parents, grandparents, siblings, or other important people in your life. Your case manager will set these visits up for you.

Termination of Parental

Rights This is a court decision made if your parents have not completed the case plan to show they will be able to safely care for you.

Adoption If your parents' rights are terminated, you can be adopted. You can be adopted by a relative, an adult friend or your foster parents. If those people are not good matches for you, then your case manager will help find other families that match you better. You may be able to go to matching events to talk to families that want to adopt. These events are a lot of fun and usually have planned games and activities so you don't feel uncomfortable.

START

REMOVAL
from your
parent's home

CASE PLAN

1 year plan that allows
your parents to work
with case manager.
Move to Reunification.

REUNIFICATION

Have you been reunified?
If yes, move to house.
If no, move to Adoption.

ADOPTION

Found a forever family?
If yes, move to house.
If no, move to
Guardianship.

GUARDIANSHIP

Found a forever family?
If yes, move to house.
If no, it's time to start
adulting! Move to
Road to Independence.

*During this time, you will be in a group
home, foster home relative placement
or non-relative placement*



Community Resource Cards

**COMMUNITY
RESOURCES**
Embrace
Families

Need help?
Contact
your case
manager, GAL,
foster parent,
or group home
staff

Helpful Tip

If reunification or adoption takes
too long, Embrace Families will help
you transition to adulthood.
But they will still help you go
home or find a forever family
if that's what you want!

ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE



Different Types of Placements

GROUP HOME A group home is a home for several foster children that is licensed by the state. Group homes are run either by house parents, who live with the children, or by shift staff, who transfer in and out during every 24 hours.

Group Home 101

- Every group home is different, but each group home is also very similar. Your group home may not always look like a home, but that doesn't mean it's not your home. Here are some tips to get comfortable and make it your home:
- Be respectful of other people and their belongings
- Speak to people how you would like them to speak to you
- Keep your personal area clean and tidy
- If you have good behavior, it can get you many rewards
- Make friends with other kids or staff, someone that you can talk to and that will listen



Different Types of Placements

NON-RELATIVE PLACEMENT A family friend or

another person you knew while growing up that will let you live with them until your parents are ready for you to go home.



FOSTER HOME A foster home is a family that has opened their home and agreed to take care of kids that have been removed from their parents. They are temporary parents but they will treat you like you are a part of their family while you are there.

Getting to Know Your Foster Family

Moving into someone else's home can be weird.

Getting to know your foster family – and letting them get to know you – is an important way of making this easier. Here are some questions that you can ask your foster family and that they can ask you:

- What is your home like?
 - Why do you want to have foster children in your home?
- Where will I sleep?
 - What are some of your rules?
- What kind of food does your family eat?
 - What kind of music do you listen to?
- Will you make some of my favorite foods?
 - Can I listen to my music?
- What does your family do together for fun?
 - What TV programs and movies do you watch?
- What are 3 activities your family did last month?

You Have the Right to:

- Communicate with your case manager and see them at least once a month
- Go to your court hearings and speak to the judge and speak up in court
- Visit and/or communicate with your family members and your siblings while in foster care
- Obtain your driver's license while in care
- Practice your own religion
- Get a job while in care
- Get healthcare and see a healthcare professional regularly
- Participate in activities that you would enjoy and your friends get to do with permission from your foster placement

"Adulting" the Right Way



Starting at age 16, you will have an independent living (IL) case manager. This person will help you prepare for adulthood. You will need to learn different life skills to function as a responsible, respectable adult once you grow up.

If you have any questions about what life skills you need to learn contact your IL case manager or email independentliving@embracefamilies.org.

My Jump Vault

Are you trying to get a job
and need certain documents?

Do you need your medical records?

Not sure how to keep your important
information safe from identity theft?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions,
you need to be registered in "My Jump Vault". Talk to
your case manager or email mjv@embracefamilies.org



What is the Youth Advisory Board?

The Youth Advisory Board is a youth-run advocacy group in Central Florida that is composed of current or former youth in the foster care system.
It's your chance to be heard!



Seminole County - I've been in foster care for 2 years... Everyone's experience is different, as well as their situation. As for me, entering foster care changed my life for the better. I hope you will attend Youth Advisory Board to help you grow, be a self-advocate, and build yourself up to be the person everyone said you couldn't be. - Jasmine P.



Orange County - I am 18 years old, and I entered care when I was 16. I felt like I had done something wrong coming into care. I became accustomed to the "foster care lifestyle". But I started growing and using my resources such as my case manager, therapist, mentors and those around me. - Esperanza H.



Osceola County - The first night will be the hardest. Always remember even if you feel alone, you're not alone. I had a first night in care too. Nine years later, I realized that everyone else at the homes I've stayed at, had their first night too. - Lisa J.

