

# Court Orientation for Dependent Youth (CODY) Workbook

The Court Orientation for Dependent Youth or CODY is a court program that aims to empower dependent youth ages 12-17 to be self-advocates. It is focused on taking away the intimidation factor that the courtroom can have. At CODY, if in person, the youth receive presentations from all the parties that are present at a dependency hearing.

We have designed the virtual workbook where you are able to learn all the parts of CODY and use it to guide your experience in the courts.



## **COURT ROOM KEY**

**JUDGE:** Objective individual that makes the final decisions on the case, they are there to listen to all sides of the case, review evidence, and make decisions that are in your best interest while upholding the law.

**ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL (AAG):** The Lawyer for DCS (Department of Child Safety), advocates for what DCS believes is the safest permanency (home) option for you.

**DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY (DCS) CASE MANAGER:** Handles the day to day workings of your case to make sure the safest permanency (home) setting is found for you. This includes anything from getting you a clothing allowance, to getting you glasses, or to making sure you have all the resources you need to participate in the Young Adult Program and many other services. They also work with your parents and your placement to make sure they are providing you with all necessary services. They handle many different parts of your case.

**GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL):** Your best interest attorney, they will advocate for what they believe is best for you. They or their social worker may come and check-in on you every several months and especially before court.

**COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA):** The CASA is an objective volunteer to your case, their goal is to make sure you have everything you need and to advocate for what is in your best interest. They will talk to you and help communicate with all the people involved in your case to let them know how you could be more comfortable during your journey through the foster care system.

**CHILD'S ATTORNEY:** Your lawyer, they will advocate for what you want as opposed to your best interest and everything you tell them will stay confidential (private).

**YOU:** Your role is to come to court and advocate for yourself, the Judge and everyone else working on the case want to know how you feel and what you want.

**PARENT'S ATTORNEY:** Lawyer for your parents or guardian that advocates for what they want.

**JUDICIAL ASSISTANT:** Writes down the minutes of the hearing, and schedules the next court hearing along with many behind the scenes tasks. Minutes are everything that was discussed in the hearing and who attended.

**BAILIFF:** Calls everyone into the courtroom and makes sure things run smoothly.

# Glossary of Foster Care Terms

**Adjudication:** A hearing to figure out if there has been a crime.

**Adoption:** Is when the court gives the rights, responsibilities, and legal relationship to a child to a new parent(s). Adoption can only occur if the birth parents' agree to the adoption, or if their legal rights have been terminated by the court, or they have passed away. If you are aged 12 or older, the judge will ask you if you agree to be adopted.

**Aging out:** When a youth leaves foster care because they have reached age 18 or have finished high school, (Whichever comes last) without returning home or being adopted.

**Appeals:** Someone asks for a hearing to change the court's decision. Any court decision is subject to appeal. Appeals can take several months to resolve.

**Alternative Permanent Planned Living Arrangement:** A permanent case plan that does not involve adoption or guardianship but should include at least one adult playing a permanent and important role in the child's life. Includes "independent living."

**Arraignment:** The court gives an individual a chance to admit or deny the crime or let the judge decide.

**Biological Parents:** the person(s) who gave birth, or fathered the child.

**Case Assessment and Case Plan:** A plan that the Department of Human Services, along with the youth and family, makes and updates every six months. It includes the services provided to the youth and family, and makes clear the expectations and progress made toward reaching the goal of permanent placement of the youth.

**Cease Reunification:** The court decides that since the biological parents did not do what was required of them for the child to go home, the Department is no longer required to provide reunification services for the purpose of the child returning to their biological parent's home.

**Court Appointed Special Advocate:** (also known as **CASA**) An adult volunteer, assigned by the court to study and protect the best interests of a youth in an abuse or neglect case.

**Delinquent Child:** A person under age 18 who is under the supervision of the court for the commission of an offense that would be a crime if committed by an adult, such as stealing, destroying property, or using illegal drugs.

**Department of Child Safety (DCS):** Is the state agency assigned by Arizona law to protect children. DCS has the legal authority to investigate reports of family problems including children

being by their parents, children not being protected by their parents, children being left alone in unsafe situations, or when parents do not provide a safe home, do not provide critical medical care or neglect to properly feed, shelter, or care for their basic needs. DCS can take custody of children in danger, and file dependency petitions. The court may make DCS responsible for the care of children found to be dependent, and to provide services to help the family get back together or to make another permanent plan for the child.

**410 Dependency:** A decision by the juvenile court judge to allow court intervention in order to protect children from neglect, abuse, or abandonment.

**Dependency Adjudication Hearing:** A hearing to decide whether the child will be made “dependent”. The hearing must be completed within ninety days after the parent/guardian receive a copy of the Dependency Petition.

**Dependency Disposition Hearing:** This is the decision about where the youth should live (such as in state custody), as well as what the parents, DHS and the youth must do to change the problems. Please understand that sometimes court hearings are continued and changes to another date for various reasons. For instance, someone may not show up, or everyone at court may feel it’s a good idea.

**Dependency Petition:** A written legal document (pleading) which gives the facts about why a child is in danger in their home, what things were tried to help make things safe, and why those things are not enough to keep the child safe. The Petition asks the Juvenile Court Judge to protect the child from neglect, abuse, or abandonment by making the child a ward of the court.

**Detention:** A locked facility which houses children accused of delinquent acts.

**DHS:** Abbreviation for Department of Health Services or Department of Human Services, often over-seeing agency for foster care in a state.

**Emancipation:** A youth who is legally declared an adult (by a court) prior to age 18. A youth in foster care who emancipates is no longer a ward of the court (or in foster care).

**Foster Care:** Any placement for a child which is not in the home of a parent or legal guardian, and which may include a licensed foster home, group home or residential setting, a court ordered placement with a friend or relative, and an independent living setting.

**Foster Home:** A home where a youth may live while in the custody of the State’s Child Welfare system.

**Guardian ad Litem (GAL):** An adult, assigned by the court to study and protect the best interests of a youth in a civil or criminal abuse or neglect case. The GAL and the youth should talk on an ongoing basis. The GAL is your voice in the courtroom.

**Guardianship:** When an adult is granted parental rights for a youth.

**ILP:** Abbreviation for Independent Living Program.

**Independent Living:** An approved type of living arrangement in which a child who is at least 16 years old resides with a relative, friends, in a dorm or in his or her own apartment without day-to-day supervision of an adult.

**Independent Living Program (ILP):** A federally funded program providing services to foster youth age 14 or 16 and over to prepare for adulthood. This program provides classes in life skills, vocational training, and equipment needed for job training. Also provides funds for college scholarships, skills training and rent assistance.

**Independent Living Skills Case Worker:** Department of Child Safety' Case worker who provides services to youth in state custody who are 16 and older, and whose treatment plan goal is independent living. Services are to help youth learn to live on their own.

**Individual Education Plan (IEP):** A plan intended to improve success for an individual student, which may include additional assistance, learning aids, tutoring, revised or classroom settings. Produced by a team of people, including teachers, school administrators, counselors, parents or foster parents, and sometimes the youth themselves.

**Individual Service Plan (ISP):** A written document describing long range goals and short range objectives for the provision of service for a foster youth.

**Initial Hearing:** This initial hearing is where your parent(s) will go to discuss the reason you were removed and either deny or admit to that reason. During this hearing an adjudication trial will be set where your parent(s) can contest or object to what they have been accused of. (See Adjudication definition).

**Judge:** The judge decides what is best for the youth. The judge issues court orders, reads reports, hears arguments, and decides whether the youth should be placed in the custody of the state among other things.

**Juvenile Dependency Court:** A special court with trained Judges who oversee the cases of abused, neglected and abandoned children who need protection.

**Kinship Foster Care:** Family members raising grandchildren, nieces or nephews, cousins, and other blood relatives. Also can be a non-related adult with a significant relationship to the child

in their care. Financial assistance, support groups, respite care, resource referrals, and advocacy for care givers are provided upon becoming licensed as a Kinship Foster Home.

**Life Book:** Pages or a packet of information prepared with or for a child regarding his/her social background. It includes pictures and stories about people, events, and places which are important to the child's history and life.

**Mediation:** A private meeting with your parent(s) and their attorney(s) and all other parties involved in your case. They will work towards fixing issues that have come up in your case.

**Notice of Hearings:** Everyone involved in the case must be served with a notice telling them when and where there's going to be a hearing. "Parties" include people like parents, attorneys, GALs and your case worker.

**Permanency Planning Hearing:** Within a year of the removal of any child from the home, the court will hold a permanency planning hearing, to decide what the best permanent plan is for the child. The Judge may decide that termination of the parents' rights and adoption, or guardianship, or continuing to work toward reunification with the family is the best plan, or the Judge may decide that that independent living is best for the child. Whatever the Judge decides, CPS will be ordered to do what is necessary to achieve that goal.

**Preliminary Protective Hearing (PPH):** A hearing which will be held within five to seven days after the child is removed from home. At this hearing, the Judge will make preliminary ("for the time being") decisions about whether the child will stay in foster care and which services will be provided to the parents and child. The parents will be asked whether they agree with the dependency. If the parents do not appear at the PPH, there will be an Initial Dependency Hearing. If the parents attend the hearing but do not agree with the dependency, the judge will schedule a dependency adjudication hearing.

**Pretrial Conference:** This hearing is held after your parent(s), their attorneys and all other parties on the case have worked to fix any issues outside of court. Especially issues about your custody, your placement and your visitation with your parent(s). They bring the issues and decisions they have made to the judge and these decisions will be recorded in court before the judge.

**Pleading:** A formal written document filed with the court which asks the court to do something.

**Report and Review Hearing:** At least every six months after the child is found to be a dependent ward of the court, the court will hold a Report and Review Hearing to look at the progress the family is making. Courts usually hold review hearings more frequently in the beginning of the case. At a review hearing, the Judge may order that the child remain in foster care, or be returned to home, or placed somewhere else.

**Respite Care:** Temporary care for a youth in foster care, intended to give either the youth or foster parent (or provider) a break.

**Residential Services Plan (RSP):** A plan describing past behavior problems, with goals and reinforcement information to eliminate the unwanted behavior.

**Reunification:** Services that can bring a family back together by working on the problems that caused the separation of the youth from the family.

**Sibling:** Brother or Sister.

**Surrogate Parent:** a person (usually a foster parent or care provider) who is appointed by the Department of Education to make sure that a youth's special education needs are being met.

**Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)/ Severance:** If family reunification has been ruled out and adoption is a possibility for the child, the Department may petition (request) for termination of parents' rights to the child. IF the court terminates parental rights it means the child is free for adoption. It also means that your biological parents have no legal rights pertaining to you anymore. (They don't have access to information about you; don't work with your case worker anymore, etc.)

**Therapist/Counselor:** A licensed person who provides youth supportive services such as counseling, goal planning and advocacy for youth and families. The person can have any of these official titles: Social Worker, Psychologist or Psychiatrist.

**Ward of the Court:** Another name for a dependent child who is under the special protection of the Arizona Courts due to abuse, neglect or abandonment. When a child is a "ward of the court" the Judge will decide who has legal responsibility for the child, which means deciding where the child will live, go to school, etc. A delinquent or incorrigible child may also become a "ward of the court".



# Bill of Rights For Young People

You have the right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

You have the right to live in a place that is safe and comfortable, where you are wanted.

You have the right to be fed nutritious food and to have clothing that fits you and is clean.

You have the right to receive medical, dental, and vision services. You also have the right to mental health, behavioral health, and drug and alcohol abuse and addiction services when you need them.

You have the right to receive a good education that encourages you to focus on developing your talents and interests.

You have the right to attend court hearings and have the opportunity to talk to your judge regarding any decision that affects your life.

You have the right to disagree with your case plan and to talk about your case plan before it becomes final.

You have the right to maintain healthy connections by visiting and contacting family and friends, when contact is ok with the case plan and the court.

You have the right to have emergency phone numbers and the names of people to talk with when you feel unsafe.

You have the right to make mistakes and to have understanding adults help you learn from your experiences.

You have the right to participate in religious services with which you are familiar. You have the right to learn about, nurture, and develop your cultural identity.

You have the right to maintain connections with your community through friendships, school, church, and other relationships important to you.

You have the right to have personal information shared only with people identified to care for and provide services for you only on a need to know basis.

You have the right to know the adults working on your case plan and to expect them to coordinate well with each other to help you to achieve the goals you want and need to reach.

You have the right to have your best interests served in all placement decisions by considering kin and previous caregivers whenever available.

You have the right to have personal belongings kept safe from others.

You have the right to dream, grow up and become a strong, positive adult who reaches his or her goals.

***All Young People deserve to be cared for and safe.***

Example Letter to the Judge

JD# \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your Honor,

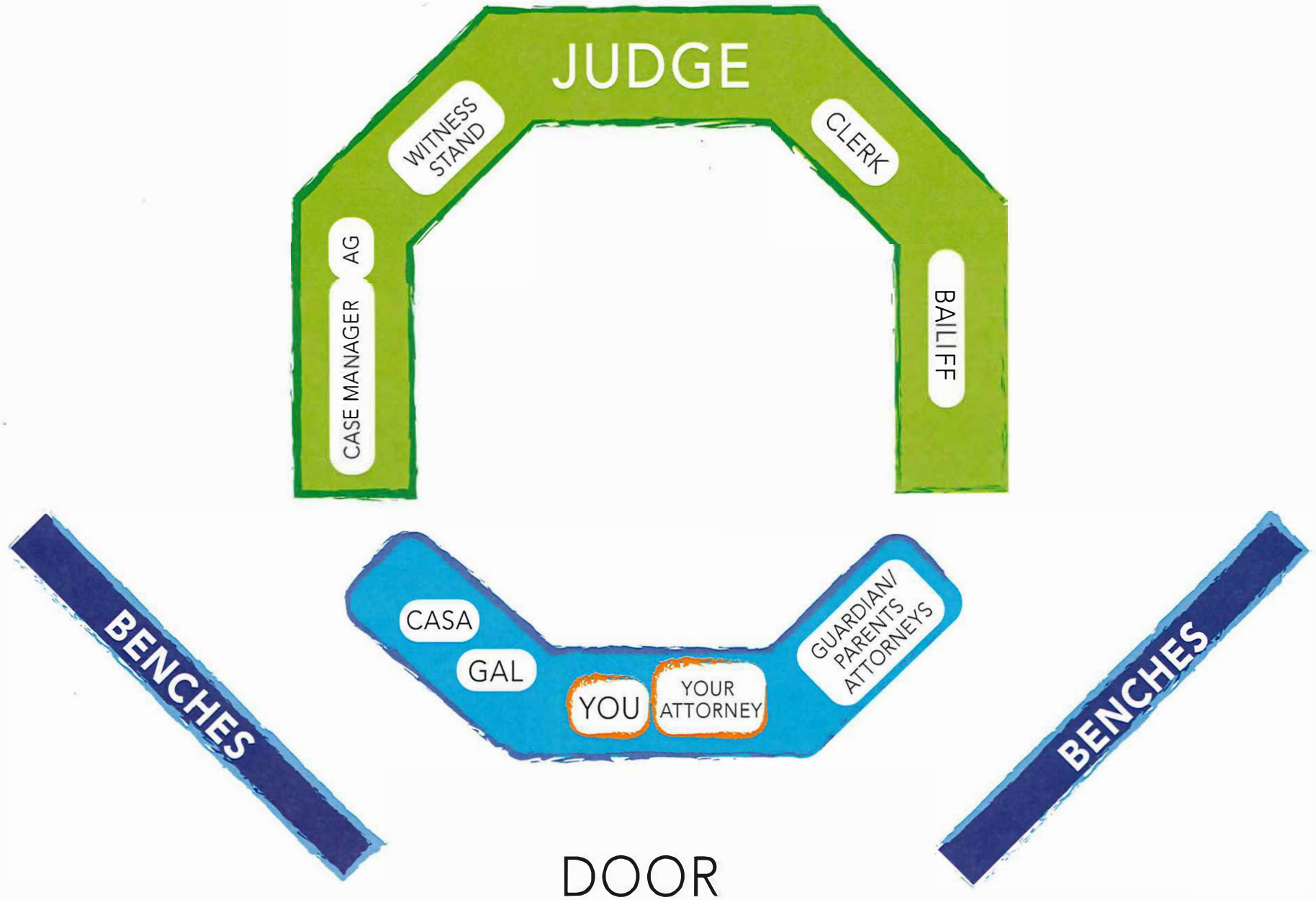
My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am currently a ward of the Maricopa County Foster System. I am writing this letter to ***(state your reason for writing this letter here. Example: Express my concern over my current placement. Or, to express my gratitude over your decision to allow contact with my siblings. You can also take the time to tell the judge how you are doing in school, ask any questions you may have, etc.)***

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

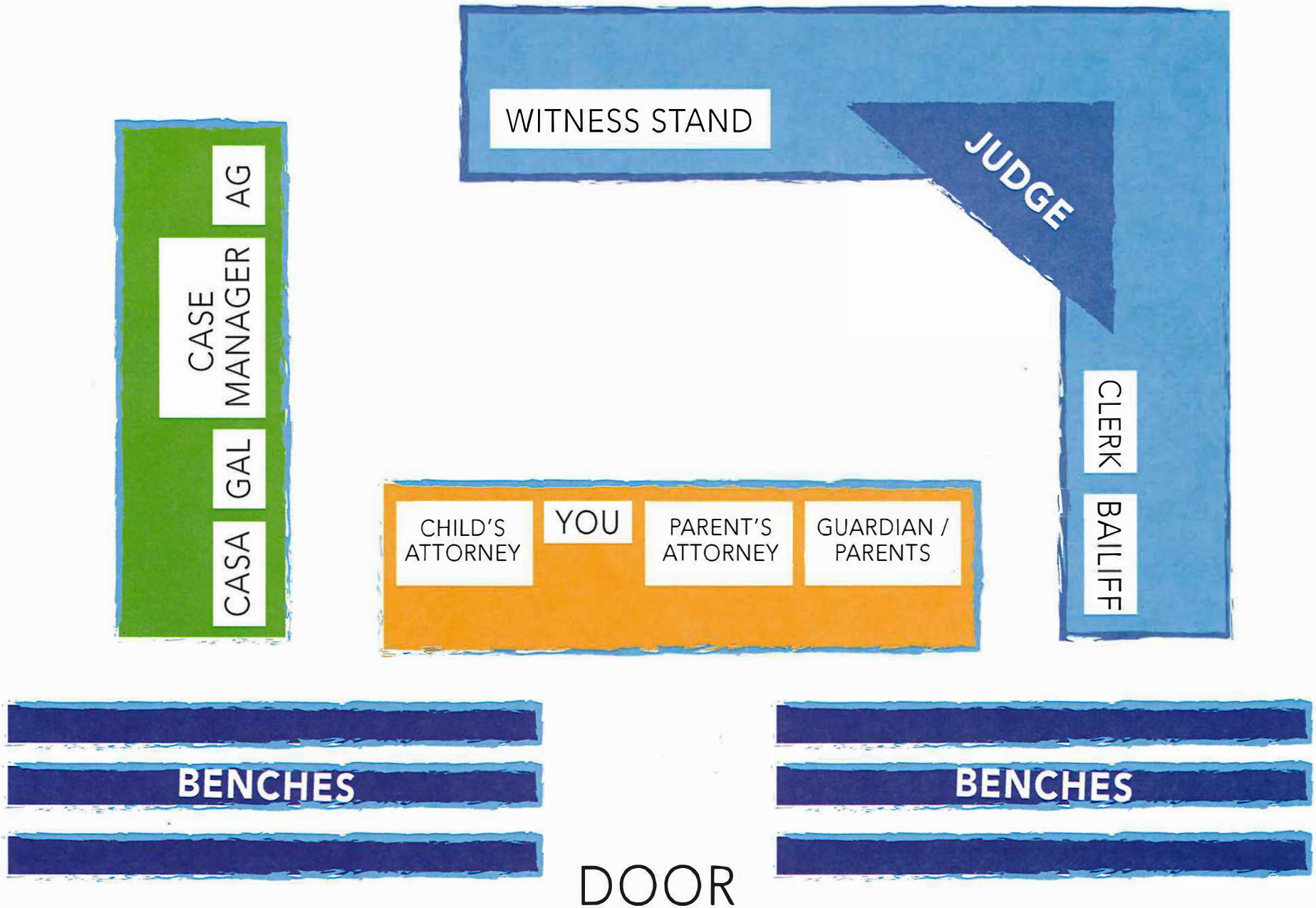
Sincerely,

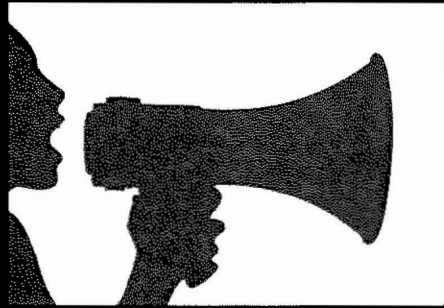
(Your Name Here)

# SOUTHEAST FACILITY COURTROOM MAP



# DURANGO COURTROOM MAP

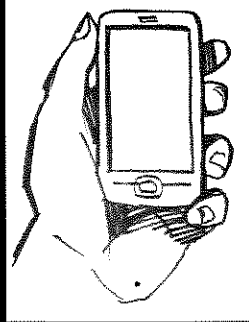




# Let's Talk

The forms on the following pages will help you voice your opinions!

When you send a form, make sure you keep a copy for yourself and file it in this section. That way, you can keep track of who you have sent forms to (and be sure to follow up if you don't get a response).



# Contacts

Develop a solid list of contacts, and you will find a full circle of support when you need help! Here are some of the people to include in this section:

- Caseworker
- Independent Living Provider
- Attorney
- CASA
- GAL
- Foster Parents
- Counselors or Therapists
- Friends and Relatives
- Teachers and Coaches

# Contact List

Name:.....

Description of Services:

Agency:.....

Phone Number:.....

E-Mail:.....

Name:.....

Description of Services:

Agency:.....

Phone Number:.....

E-Mail:.....

Name:.....

Description of Services:

Agency:.....

Phone Number:.....

E-Mail:.....

Name:.....

Description of Services:

Agency:.....

Phone Number:.....

E-Mail:.....

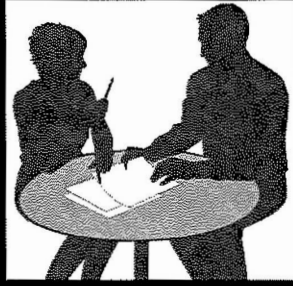
Name:.....

Description of Services:

Agency:.....

Phone Number:.....

E-Mail:.....



# Events

Keep track of all your appointments in this section. Whether you need to jot down when your next therapy session is, visit with a family member, or the date of your next school dance, you will always be prepared.

You can even write down notes as a reminder to bring any paperwork with you or anything that you need to talk about during that appointment.



# EVENTS

**EVENT:**

<b>DATE:</b> <b>TIME:</b> <b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>TO-DO:</b>
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**EVENT:**

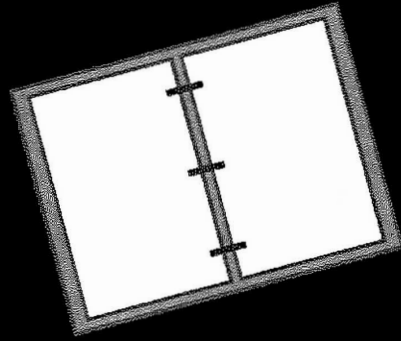
<b>DATE:</b> <b>TIME:</b> <b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>TO-DO:</b>
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**EVENT:**

<b>DATE:</b> <b>TIME:</b> <b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>TO-DO:</b>
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**EVENT:**

<b>DATE:</b> <b>TIME:</b> <b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>TO-DO:</b>
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# Log Book

Use the following pages as a log book to write about events in your life. You can write as much or as little as you want it's up to you! Be sure to write the date in the left-hand column, and then use the space on the left to describe events, feelings, and thoughts.

If you have family visits. You might want to take this logbook with you to help you remember all the stuff that's gone on since your last visit. Ask your family visitors to keep their own "log book" to share with you at your next visit!

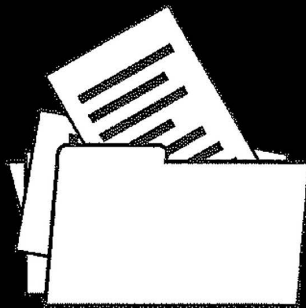


# My Glossary

**Term**

**Definition**

Term	Definition



# Personal Documents

One of the responsibilities of being independent is keeping track of your own stuff.

Personal documents can be required for employment, travel, continuing education, and for medical, legal, and financial needs. Ask your caseworker and/or foster parent to help you collect copies of the following documents to store here:

- Birth certificate
- Social Security Card
- Medical Card
- Passport/VISA
- Medical Records
- Immunization Records
- Pay Stubs/Employment history
- Resume/Job Application
- Family History

# About Me

*What people involved with my foster care plan should know.*

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and here is some information about me that might be helpful to my new foster parents.

My birthdate is \_\_\_\_\_ which means I'm \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

I have \_\_\_\_\_ brothers and sisters. Their names are: \_\_\_\_\_

The school I currently attend is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in the \_\_\_\_\_ grade. I have attended about \_\_\_\_\_ schools in my life.

## Describing myself:

The color of my eyes are: \_\_\_\_\_ Color of my hair: \_\_\_\_\_

I would describe myself as:

- |                                   |                                   |  |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> quiet    | <input type="checkbox"/> artistic        | <input type="checkbox"/> talented |
| <input type="checkbox"/> funny    | <input type="checkbox"/> loud     | <input type="checkbox"/> musical         | <input type="checkbox"/> _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> shy      | <input type="checkbox"/> smart    | <input type="checkbox"/> pretty/handsome | <input type="checkbox"/> _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> outgoing | <input type="checkbox"/> athletic | <input type="checkbox"/> stylish/trendy  | <input type="checkbox"/> _____    |

When I have a problem, here is how I try to handle it:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing in a journal         | <input type="checkbox"/> talking to friends        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> thinking by myself           | <input type="checkbox"/> talking to a caring adult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> getting angry and being mean | <input type="checkbox"/> talking to my counselor   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> going on a run or exercising | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                     |

## Favorites:

My favorite foods are: \_\_\_\_\_

My least favorite foods are: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite subject at school: \_\_\_\_\_

Least favorite subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Other favorites:

Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Game to play: \_\_\_\_\_

Kind of music: \_\_\_\_\_ Band: \_\_\_\_\_

Movie: \_\_\_\_\_ Book: \_\_\_\_\_

## Things I like to do:

	Love to do	Like to do	Want to learn how
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I have these hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

- I need some help finding some hobbies

Stuff I like to do on the weekends and in my spare time: \_\_\_\_\_

## Living with me:

If it were up to me, you would find my room:

- Messy       Clean       Somewhere in between

Chores and help around the house that I am pretty good at: \_\_\_\_\_

My sleeping habits:

- I usually stay up late and sleep in       I get up early in the morning
- I have a hard time sleeping       This helps me get to sleep

## Other Information:

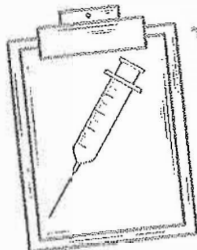
\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**for your  
information**

**Attention Adults:**  
 A foster youth, whose life may be greatly impacted by your decisions, wishes his/her voice to be heard. By submitting opinions on this form, this youth has expressed a desire to be involved in his/her own foster care plan. Please give this input the time, attention and respect it deserves.

**AS YOU TURN 18**, it is **VITAL** that you have a copy of all your personal documents when you leave foster care. Your **medical, educational, and personal identity records** are essential to living an independent life.

**IT IS YOUR RIGHT** to be given these documents within 30 days of your birthday. At your "Age of Majority" Team Decision Making (TDM) meeting, Transition Planning Meeting, or your Child and Family Team meeting, discuss these documents. If you do not get all these documents within 30 days of your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, contact the State Independent Living Coordinator, Barbara Guillen, at [bguillen@azdes.gov](mailto:bguillen@azdes.gov) for assistance. If any of your personal documents are lost or stolen, you will want to replace them as soon as possible!



## VACCINATION & MEDICAL RECORDS

**THESE ARE IMPORTANT FOR YOUR HEALTH** and should be shared with your doctor.

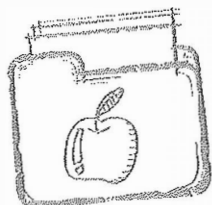
★ For a copy of your vaccination records, complete and submit the Immunization Request Form. (<http://www.azdhs.gov/documents/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/immunization/asiis-request-form.pdf>)

★ If you were not given a copy of your medical records or they are lost, you can request assistance from your DCS Case Specialist in getting new copies. If you are no longer in foster care, but still need copies of your medical records, you can make a medical records request by filling out and submitting the DCS Records Request Form. (<https://dcs.az.gov/resources/public-records-request>)

## IDENTITY RECORDS

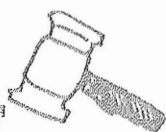
Identity is **WHO YOU ARE** and is recognized by three very important documents:

- ★ Birth Certificate (<http://azdhs.gov/vital-records/birth-certificate/apply.htm>)
- ★ Social Security Card (<https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber>)
- ★ Arizona State ID (if you do not already have an Arizona Driver License) ([www.azdot.gov/docs/default-source/mvd-forms-pubs/96-0155.pdf?sfvrsn=2](http://www.azdot.gov/docs/default-source/mvd-forms-pubs/96-0155.pdf?sfvrsn=2))



## EDUCATION RECORDS

- ★ Transferring your **EDUCATION RECORDS** can be done by requesting records from your current or previous school(s) and/or by visiting: Arizona Department of Education ([www.azed.gov/studentrecords](http://www.azed.gov/studentrecords))



## WARD OF COURT PROOF

- ★ Anticipate needing to provide a **"WARD OF COURT PROOF"** to show you are a young adult who has experienced foster care to receive financial aid for college or vocational school. Contact the State Independent Living Coordinator, Barbara Guillen, at [bguillen@azdes.gov](mailto:bguillen@azdes.gov) and request an "Age Of Majority" Verification Letter.



Leave your documents in a **SAFE PLACE** in a folder or security box that is locked and stored out of site to reduce your chances of **identity theft**. ([www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0014-identity-theft](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0014-identity-theft))

**FOSTERING  
ADVOCATES**  
Youth. Speak. Change. ARIZONA

For more information or to get involved, contact us:  
Children's Action Alliance, 3030 N 3rd St., Suite 650, Phoenix, AZ 85012

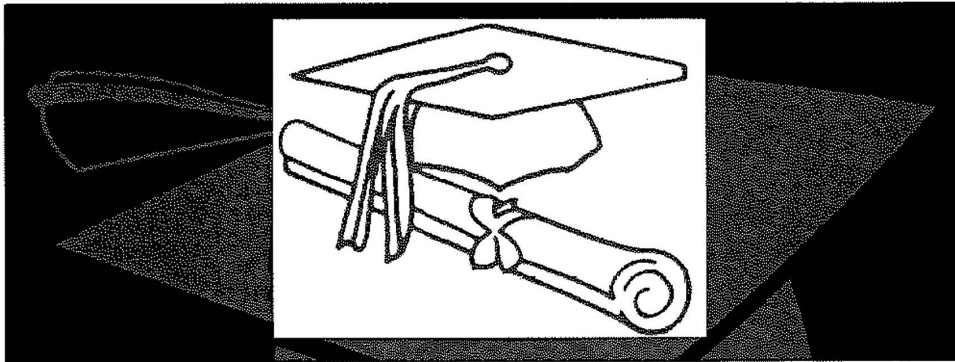
✉ [fosteringadvocatesaz@gmail.com](mailto:fosteringadvocatesaz@gmail.com) ☎ (602) 266-0707

📍 [FosteringAdvocatesArizona](#) 📱 [@FosteringAdvAZ](#)

**STAY UPDATED** at [fosteringadvocatesarizona.org](http://fosteringadvocatesarizona.org)



FOR FOSTER YOUTH  
VITAL DOCUMENTS



# Education

A good education can be the way to a successful life. Take control of your future by becoming involved in YOUR educational planning. You WILL enjoy the rewards.

- IEP Documents
- Report Cards
- High School Diploma
- Extracurricular Activity Record
- Awards & Special Recognition
- School Work
- College Applications
- Financial Aid Applications
- College Correspondences
- Scholarship Information



# 4 TIPS for SCHOOL

**FOSTERING ADVOCATES**  
Youth. Speak. Change. ARIZONA

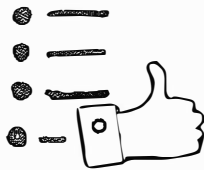
For more information or to get involved, contact us: Children's Action Alliance  
4001 N. 3rd St. #160, Phx, AZ 85012

✉ [fosteringadvocatesaz@gmail.com](mailto:fosteringadvocatesaz@gmail.com)

📘 [facebook.com/FosteringAdvocatesArizona](https://www.facebook.com/FosteringAdvocatesArizona)

☎ @FosteringAdvAZ ☎ (602) 266-0707

1



## DO A CHECK

If it's high school, take a look at your current class credits to see if you're on track to graduate. If you are, congratulations! If you're not, make a plan to either make up missed credits or ask a school counselor about "credit recovery." Get a copy of your school records, especially if you've attended different schools.

Many people who haven't finished high school earn General Education Developments (GEDs) (<http://www.azed.gov/adultedservices/>) Whether you're on the diploma or GED path, talk to your DCS Child Safety Specialist if you turn 18 before finishing high school. You may want to remain in foster care in order to complete your education.

2



## PICK YOUR PATH

If you're exploring potential careers, remember that choosing a college major or vocational program is not choosing a career. Someone who majors in history, for example, may end up working as a research analyst or as a human resources manager. A registered nurse could end

up managing a medical clinic or teaching at a college. Your education gives you options.

Some professions – fire fighter, certified nurse assistant, construction manager, radiologic technician – require training that's available at community colleges. Others are only available at colleges or universities. Even after earning a degree or certificate, some professions require a test in order to get licensed.

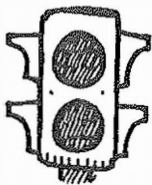
Questions to ask yourself as you think about what you want to study:

- What are my strengths?
- What am I interested in and passionate about?
- How long do I want to remain in school?
- What kind of work do I want to do?
- Who do I know in my life with a job that I think sounds interesting? (Reach out to this person to ask about his or her work.)

Meet with your high school counselor, a college advisor and an Arizona DCS Education Specialist.

Also, talk to people in your life about their work to find out what they do.

3



## TEST DRIVE

Get ready for college entrance exams by taking the PSAT, SAT and ACT. Find out when they'll be held by talking to a high school counselor and use practice sites to get ready. If you're interested in vocational or technical schools, contact them individually to ask about pre-admission tests.

4



## GET DIRECTIONS

Know how GPS can sometimes steer you wrong? Frustrating! Well, finding your educational path can be like that, too. But don't be afraid to reach out and ask for help or information. Check financial aid opportunities, including Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) (<http://www.fosteringadvocatesarizona.org/education-and-training-voucher-etv/>). Learn more about ETV from the Education Specialist in your region of Arizona.

# 7 WAYS TO ADVOCATE FOR YOUR RIGHTS IN FOSTER CARE

A good way to become an advocate is to start by advocating for yourself, your case plan goals, and what you want your life to look like.

» **When something is wrong or you want something to change, take action!**

1

## Know How to Effectively Get Your Message Across.

To make your message effective, it is not just about what you say, but how you say it. As angry as you might be about your situation, you are more likely to succeed in getting your message across if you are calm and clear when you speak to your Department of Child Safety (DCS) Case Specialist, lawyer, GAL or judge. The calm presentation of your complaint or request will help show your maturity.

2

**Call your DCS Case Specialist.** If you are unable to get through, leave a voicemail sharing your concern(s). It's important to keep records of the calls you made, the day(s), time(s), and outcome of the conversation if you spoke.

3

## Call Your Lawyer or GAL.

The job of your lawyer/ GAL is to make sure you are safe and that your needs are being met.

4

**Go Up The Chain of Command.** If you make several attempts to call and leave messages for your DCS Case Specialist and no one calls you back, you can go up the chain of command to reach someone. Chain of Command at the Arizona Department of Child Safety—Your DCS Case Specialist—Your DCS Case Specialist's Supervisor—Area Program Manager—DCS Deputy Director—DCS Director.

6



5

## Plan For Court & Attend.

Court is one of the best places you can go to make sure you are heard. You can go with a statement or outline to read to the judge if that makes it easier. You can call your lawyer to help you prepare. You should take the opportunity to let the judge know how you feel.

## Write a Letter.

It is important to always make a record of your concerns and what you want to achieve. Writing letters to your DCS Case Specialist and lawyer/GAL shows you are serious and taking time to explain what is important to you. You can also write a letter to the judge and give it to him or her before or during a hearing. However, you should know other people involved in your case may have the right to also see it.

FOSTERING ADVOCATES ARIZONA

Youth. Speak. Change.

For more information or to get involved, contact us: 3030 N 3rd St., Suite 650, Phoenix, AZ 85012

- ✉ [fosteringadvocatesaz@gmail.com](mailto:fosteringadvocatesaz@gmail.com)
- 📍 [FosteringAdvocatesArizona](https://www.facebook.com/FosteringAdvocatesArizona)
- 📱 [@FosteringAdvAZ](https://www.instagram.com/FosteringAdvAZ) 📞 (602) 266-0707



7

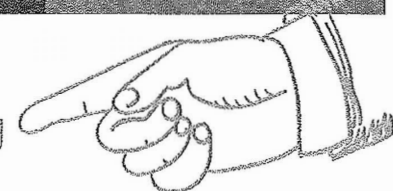
**File a Complaint/Grievance.** A complaint (or grievance) is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about services, actions or lack of actions or manner of treatment by the Arizona Department of Child Safety or its staff affecting you or your case. You can file a grievance with the **Arizona Department Of Child Safety Family Advocacy Office at 1-877-527-0765 or 602-364-0777. Visit <https://dcs.az.gov/resources/resolve-complaint-or-disagreement>**



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# Victim Compensation

Crime victim compensation programs are offered across the nation. In Arizona, Victim Compensation Programs are managed by each individual county.

You may be eligible for money from the Victim Compensation Program.

# Know Your Rights to Victim Compensation

## What is the Victim Compensation Program?

This program provides money to people who have been the victim of a crime. It can cover a victim's expenses caused by physical harm, mental distress, and financial loss. It does not require that person who committed the crime be arrested or convicted.

## Who is eligible?

Victims of:

- Rape
- Child sexual abuse
- Drunk driving
- Domestic violence
- Family members of a victim
- Person who witnessed a crime
- Person who pays expenses caused by a crime
- A resident of Maricopa County who becomes a victim in another country that does not have a compensation program

## Eligibility Requirements

- Crime occurred in Maricopa County or another country without a compensation program
- Crime is reported within 72 hours unless there is a good reason not to
- Victim cooperated with law enforcement unless they have a good reason not to
- Victim applies for compensation within two years unless they have a good reason not
- Victim is not serving a sentence in a detention facility, on home arrest, work release or escaped from any of these
- Victim is not the offender of a crime or the accomplice of the offender

## For Questions or to Apply:

Maricopa County Attorney's Office  
301 W Jefferson  
Phoenix, AZ 85003  
(602) 506-4955

Office of Child Welfare Investigations  
DCSOmbudsman@AZDES.gov  
(602) 364-0777



# Independent Living

Getting ready for life on your own can be tough. Getting help preparing for independence is a smart idea.

If you are involved in an Independent Living Program, congratulations! If you're not, ask your caseworker or foster parent about getting involved.

The Independent Living Program (ILP) will help you with career training, educational opportunities, personal finance, job hunting skills, apartment finding, transportation and more.

Use this section of your planner to store important information you have gathered about living on your own.