

SECTION 9: SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PARENT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY



The rights and responsibilities of parents have been mentioned throughout the guide. This section provides a summary of the rights and responsibilities of parents involved with the Department of Child Safety, and is divided into three key areas. In addition, this section includes a description of rights of children and youth who are placed in out of home care. These children/youth rights are included to help you understand and advocate for your children's rights.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS RELATED TO DCS?

If your family is investigated by the Department of Child Safety, you have the right to the following:

- Not be discriminated against based on disability, race, sex, religion, ethnic origin, economic status, or sexual orientation
- Know about the report and why the investigation is happening, but not the name of the person who made the report
- Know the outcome of the investigation
- A hearing with the juvenile court if your child is moved out of your home
- Request in-home services to strengthen and support your family
- Participate in services to help your family without admitting that the allegations against you are true
- Notify the DCS Specialist, or your attorney if you have any concerns or problems with services
- Be present, bring witnesses, and have your say in all hearings about your child
- Choose to have a attorney represent you during juvenile court proceedings (and be provided one if you cannot afford one)
- Appeal an agency finding of abuse and neglect
- Make a complaint or raise any concerns you may have

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FAMILIES

- If you need accommodations during your involvement with DCS for translation or other support services, you can request this support from your DCS Specialist.
- Support services that strengthen families are offered free of charge to parents and children involved with DCS
- Before, during, and after juvenile court hearings maintain contact and open communication with your attorney who can assist in advocating for the needs of your family during all hearings.

IF YOUR CHILD IS REMOVED FROM YOUR HOME, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO THE FOLLOWING:

- Know the reasons your child was removed and placed out of home
- Know exactly what behavioral changes need to take place for your child to return home
- Know the protective capacities, and which areas you are deficient in; behavioral, cognitive or emotional and how you can improve them
- Provide the names of relatives who might care for your child
- Have your child placed with a relative if there is a relative who can care for him/her safely
- Develop a visitation plan, visit and consistently communicate with your child
- Be informed about your child's development while out of home
- Be consulted and make decisions about things such as your child's religion, health care, and education
- Be informed about the people and/or services involved with your child such as the school, teacher, medical doctor, and therapist
- Go with your child to a medical or dental appointment
- Be notified of any medical emergencies your child may have
- Inform your DCS Specialist about any problems with your child's placement

- Receive the needed services and supports that will help your child return home
- Report to the hotline if you suspect your child is being abused or neglected by their caregiver
- Inform the agency, your attorney, and the court if the agency has not provided you with the services outlined in your case plan and agreed upon by your team
- Know why a concurrent case plan has been established
- Have your child return home after the conditions to return outlined in your case plan have been sufficiently met

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FAMILIES

- Your DCS Specialist is an advocate for you and your child while your child is out of your home. Express your needs and ask questions as they arise to ensure you get the support you and your family need.
- Use your case plan as a crosswalk to success, ensuring that you review your progress with your DCS Specialist during every monthly visit, or in between monthly visits if necessary
- Send a copy of certificates of completion from classes or services to your DCS Specialist and your attorney

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS RELATED TO CASE PLANNING?

You have the right to do the following:

1. Actively participate in case planning
2. Sign the case plan and be given a written copy
3. Receive services that are described in the plan
4. Be informed of the services your child is receiving
5. Ask your DCS Specialist to coordinate your case plan with other services or service plans that your family is involved in
6. Review proposed changes to your case plan and approve them
7. Have the case plan written in your own language if English is not your first language
8. Have someone present that can help you understand what is taking place and support you in advocating for yourself and your family

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FAMILIES

- Your family's case plan is your roadmap to success. Participate in any case plan staffing meetings, and invite any members of your support system that can help provide a voice for your family.
- You know your family and your child the best. If you feel as if the right services are not being offered, speak to your DCS Specialist about what you feel will work best.

WHAT ARE THE RIGHTS OF MY CHILD OR YOUTH IN OUT OF HOME CARE?

If your child is in out of home care, he or she has the right to the following:

- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Live in a setting that is safe, healthy, nurturing, and comfortable
- Be provided care that is developmentally and culturally appropriate
- Receive a thorough assessment of their strengths and needs
- Practice their own religion
- Participate in plans for his/her own well-being and their own future
- Have regular and appropriate health care provider visits and prompt treatment for any illness, physical or emotional or physical disability
- Receive services from a counselor or therapist if they want or need to
- Have appropriate educational placement and be provided assistance needed to succeed
- Visit with siblings, parents, and other family members (unless the court has ordered otherwise)
- Have regular contact with the DCS Specialist, their attorney or an advocate and in private

- For a complete list with more detailed explanations you can obtain the Notice of Rights for A Child in Out-of-Home Care (form – CSO-1141a) from the DCS website at: <https://dcs.az.gov/content/cso-1141a> or from your DCS Specialist

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PARENT INVOLVED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY?

You have the responsibility to do the following:

- Participate in creating your family's case plan
- Share information about your child
- Participate in services that are offered
- Keep appointments you have agreed to
- Make the agreed upon behavioral changes
- Consistently visit and communicate with your child as agreed upon
- Stay in contact with your DCS Specialist
- Provide information to your DCS Specialist about your progress, class completions and changes in your life, such as a new address or telephone number, new job
- Communicate any concerns that you have to your DCS Specialist and your attorney
- Attend all court proceedings

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FAMILIES

- Your involvement in your family's case plan is very important in meeting the goals outlined for your family to be reunified. Your participation in all case plan activities is essential to your success.
- If you have to miss an appointment or a visit with your child, communicate to your DCS Specialist, and the provider, in advance, preferably twenty-four (24) hours, so alternative arrangements can be made.
- Your DCS Specialist is an advocate for your family. If you are experiencing any difficulty achieving your case plan goals or need additional services, communicate this with your DCS Specialist and your Attorney.