

Foster Care Ombudsman Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I make a complaint?

- a. Complaints can be made by contacting the toll free Youth Empowerment and Safety (Y.E.S.) Line at 1-855-840-6036 or by emailing fco.info@state.or.us

2. Who can file a complaint?

- a. Complaints can be filed by anyone on behalf of foster children and youth in the State of Oregon.

3. Can I receive help to talk about a problem or negotiate a solution with my foster parents?

- a. Yes. While it is important that you talk with your foster parents directly, the Ombudsman can assist you on how to bring up complaints and concerns that you have.

4. What are my rights as a person in foster care?

- a. The Foster Care Bill of Rights outlines your rights and must be posted in your foster home or substitute care facility. It must be given to you within 60 days of you entering foster care and reviewed annually thereafter.

5. Will my foster home be put under investigation if a complaint is filed?

- a. Each complaint is different. Some complaints rise to the level of investigation and others result in conversations, clarification and further training.

6. Can I report on behalf of someone else in foster care?

- a. Yes. Sometimes children and young people are not able or ready to speak for themselves and you may be their voice.

7. If I am in a group home and on probation, can you take my complaint?

- a. The Foster Care Ombudsman has jurisdiction of children in the legal custody of the Department of Human Services (DHS). If you are not in the legal custody of DHS, the Ombudsman may assist you in locating the correct person, department or organization for your complaint.

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- 8. If I want to change foster homes, can the Foster Care Ombudsman help me?**
- The Ombudsman can work with you, your caseworker, Attorney, CASA and foster parents to resolve problems. Your caseworker is the only person who can change your placement.
- 9. Do my complaints affect my biological siblings or foster siblings?**
- All complaints are different. The nature of your complaint could have an impact on more people than just you.
- 10. Are you able to help me receive more visitation time with my biological family/parents?**
- The Ombudsman can work with you and your caseworker to look at the amount of visitation time that you are receiving to see if it is in compliance with DHS rules and policy.
- 11. Am I able to meet with the Foster Care Ombudsman?**
- Typically all communication with the Ombudsman will be done over the phone and/or email. Since the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman covers the entire State of Oregon, the Ombudsman is rarely capable of in-person meetings.
- 12. What is the best time and way to contact you?**
- The YES Line has a confidential voice mail that you may leave a message on 24/7. You may also contact the Ombudsman at fco.info@state.or.us The Foster Care Ombudsman is typically in the office Monday-Friday 830-5:00pm. The Ombudsman will get back to you normally within 2 business days.
- 13. When contacting the Ombudsman, what information must I submit to receive help and who will have access to this information?**
- Please leave your full name, date of birth, contact information, day and time when the Ombudsman should contact you back, and a short description of the complaint.
 - When you contact the Ombudsman to file a complaint or help problem solve an issue, your confidence will be honored. It is important to know that if you are reporting issues of neglect or abuse, the Ombudsman is required by law to report this to DHS or Law Enforcement. As you work with the Ombudsman and talk about the

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case, it will be discussed who will be notified in all other situations beyond neglect and abuse.