

Community and Family Voice Subcommittee

Update to the Normalcy Taskforce

September 1, 2016

The Community and Family Voice Subcommittee, chaired by Jude Dean and Mickey Sampson, was created to focus on youth and caregivers as authorities with valued opinions; identify key strategies to make sure all voices, including youth, are heard; and promote expectations for normalcy that are higher than the minimum requirement. The group has been highly active, with three in person meetings, numerous phone conferences between Subcommittee and Taskforce leadership, and countless hours of donated time and work from youth, families, and stakeholders. A complete listing of Subcommittee members can be found at Attachment A.

Activities

1. **Youth Bill of Rights Survey and Feedback.** The Subcommittee partnered with Nebraska Appleseed and the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation to release a survey to collect feedback from youth who are currently or were formerly in out-of-home placements on the Youth Bill of Rights. A summary of this survey with preliminary findings is included as Attachment B.
2. **Funding for Normalcy Activities.** The group identified access to funding for normalcy activities as a barrier and is working to create recommendations to increase youth access to normalcy activities.
3. **Access to Wraparound Services.** The group is in the early stages of planning and partnering with state and community organizations to support the creation of a listing of services available to families. Availability of services helps keep children in their homes, and return to their homes sooner if removal is necessary.
4. **Community Events.** The Subcommittee is exploring the feasibility of hosting community events to raise awareness and provide supports for youth achieving normalcy.

Community and Family Voice Subcommittee Membership

Member Name	Title and Organization
Donita Baxter	Healthy Families Project
Raevin Bigelow	Youth Advocate , Project Everlast
Cassy Blakely	Assistant Vice President of Youth Policy , Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
Amoreena Brady	Juvenile Justice Specialist , Administrative Office of Probation, Case Management and Services
Becca Brune	Child Welfare Program Associate , Nebraska Appleseed
Lisa Casullo	Director of Consumer and Recovery Services , Magellan Health
Tierra Conyers	Youth Alumni ,
Cindy Cox	Foster Care Recruiter and Training , Native Families for Native Children
Jude Dean (Co-Chair)	Foster Parent , CEDARS
Chris Klingenberg	Senior Executive Director , Northeast YMCA
Laura McCormick	Executive Director , Nebraska Sunshine Project
Dr. Teri Ourada	Former Principal , Don D. Sherrill Education Center
Keri Rockwell	Foster Parent , Native Homes for Native Children
Mickey Sampson (Co-Chair)	Alumni Foster Youth/ B2I Coordinator , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services
Gail Steen	Private Attorney , Steen Law Office
Lisa Story	Foster Parent , Foster Parent Representative - Rural Nebraska
Sandy Thompson	Executive Director , Family Inspiring Families (Also representing Nebraska Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health)
Deb VanDyke-Ries	Director , Nebraska Court Improvement Project
Aaron Weaver	Youth Alumni ,
Azar Webb	Youth Alumni ,

Normalcy Taskforce
Community and Family Voice
Subcommittee

Youth Bill of Rights Survey
Results

August 30, 2016

The Community and Family Voice Subcommittee has been charged with creating recommendations related to the implementation of the Strengthening Families Act that recognize children, youth, families, and caregivers as the authorities with values opinions. The group has worked to make sure all voices are heard, especially young people. The guiding principle of this group is to create, identify and implement best practices, and promote expectation that are higher than the minimum requirement. The group has been specifically tasked with gathering youth feedback about the Youth Bill of Rights. The Youth Bill of Rights has been drafted by the Department of Health and Human Services, applies to youth aged fourteen and over, and will be required to be distributed to youth.

The group created a survey based on the current youth bill of rights to identify additional areas that should be included, and what should specifically be covered by the broad list of rights. The group additionally created a facilitation guide to capture feedback in group settings. 37 youth responded to the individual survey, and two facilitations with a total of seven youth contributed information. In open-ended questions, responses received from facilitations are italicized. These answers are an accurate representation of the youth's voice, and accordingly, grammar and syntax have not been changed.

Themes Emerging from Youth Feedback

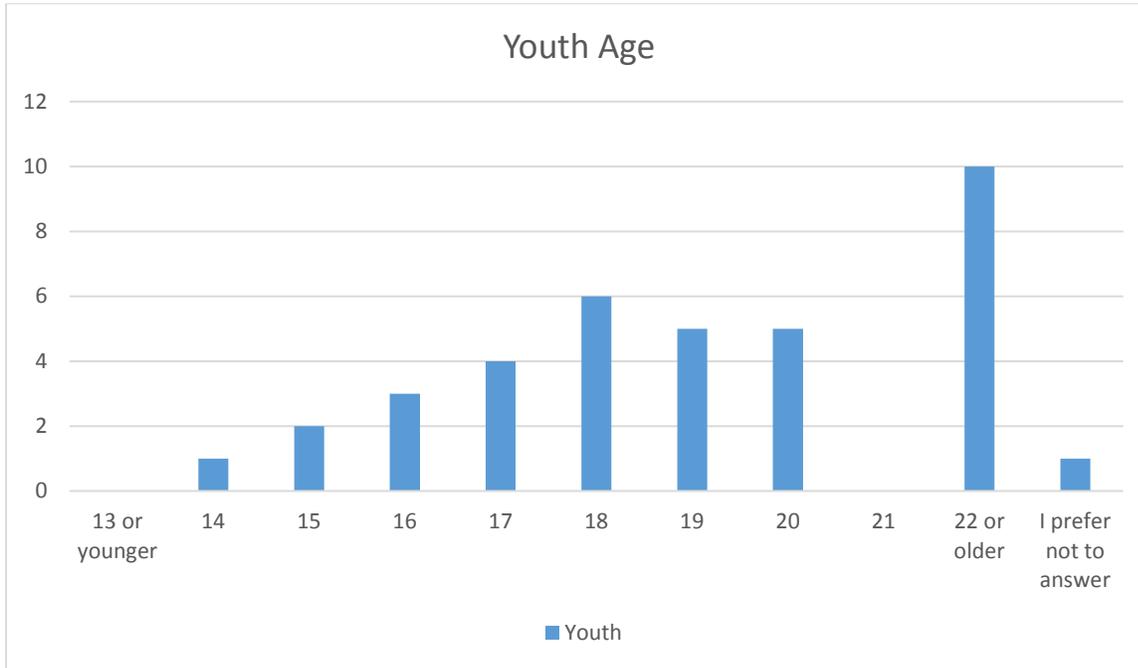
1. **Youth need as much information as possible about resources and services that are available to them.** Many youth note that they did not know what was available to them, and so at times, went without many important and necessary resources.
2. **Youth need to begin the transition to adulthood earlier, and with additional thought to the youth's abilities, wishes, and goals.** Many youth felt that they did not being the transition to adulthood or begin gaining skills soon enough. Additionally, many youth felt pushed into goals that they did not have, or into situations for which they did not have the skills.
3. **Caseworkers, probation officers, and other direct workers are essential in youth achieving positive outcomes.** When these workers are well trained and have reasonable caseloads, it makes a positive impact on youth experience and outcomes.
4. **Youth need to be treated with respect.** This respect should include the "golden rule," fair treatment, and listening to the youth's perspective.

Barriers to Rights

1. **Youth need to be empowered to make medical decisions, both through education and through clarification of right to refuse or consent to medical treatment.**
 - a. The Psychotropic Medications Committee has identified this as a barrier to youth, and is actively working to achieve changes in statute and regulation.
2. **Liability issues related to foster youth driving and transportation should be clarified so that foster parents are protected when youth begin driving.**
 - a. While foster parents' are protected from adverse licensing action related to reasonable and prudent parenting decisions, they may still be financially liable for damages. This potential liability can prevent foster parents from assisting youth in obtaining their driver's license and driver's education.

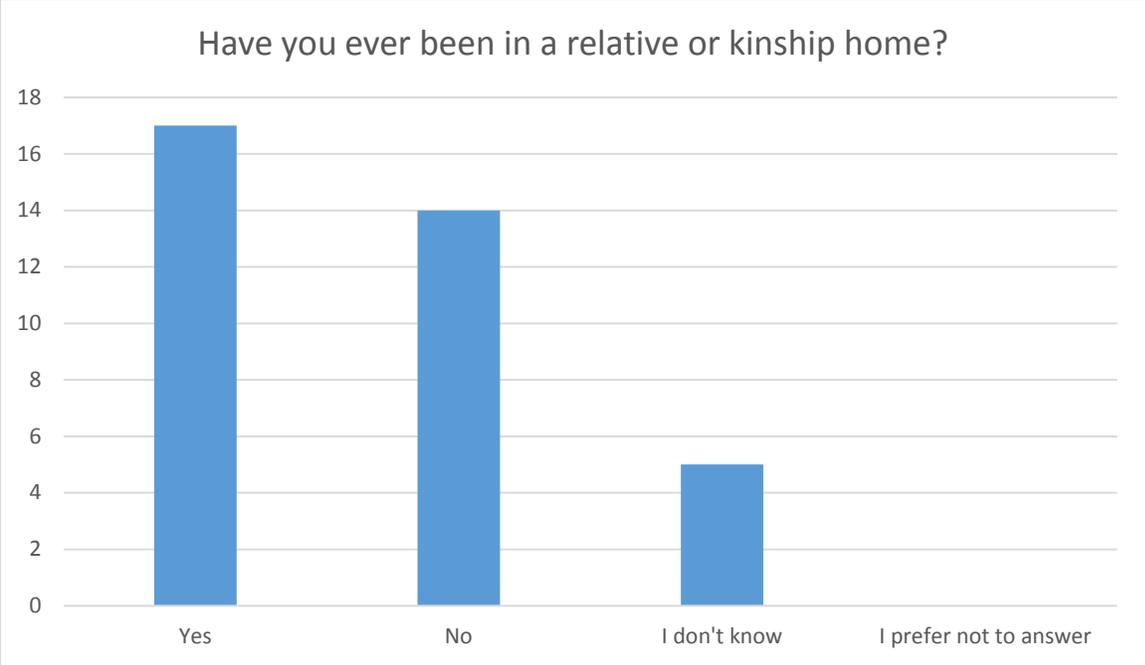
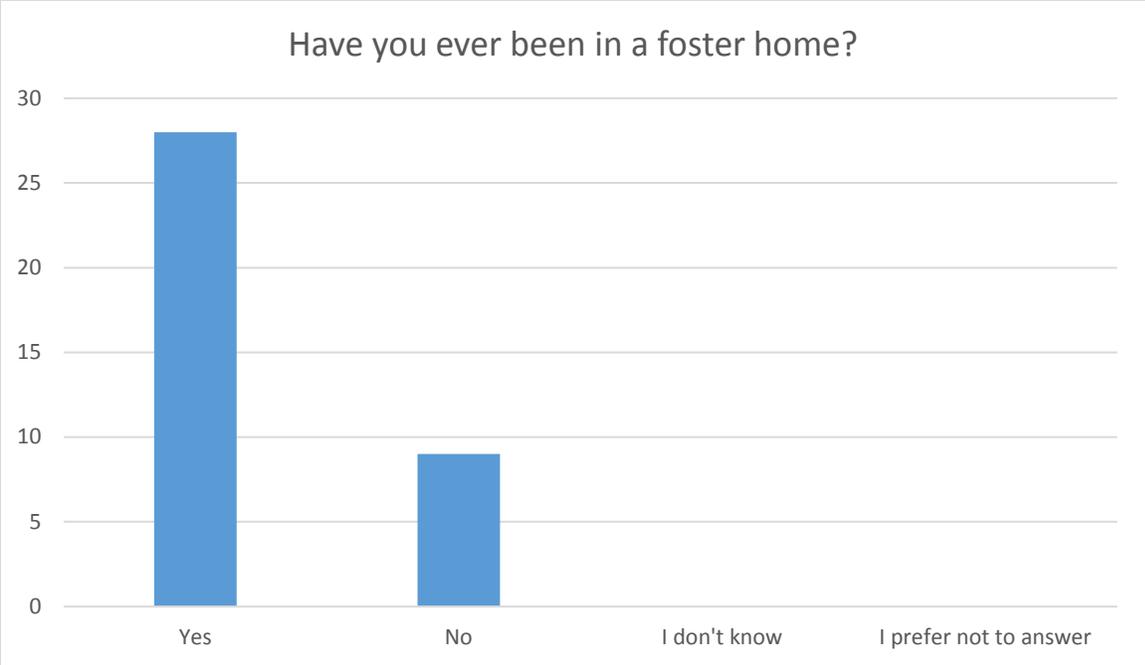
Demographics

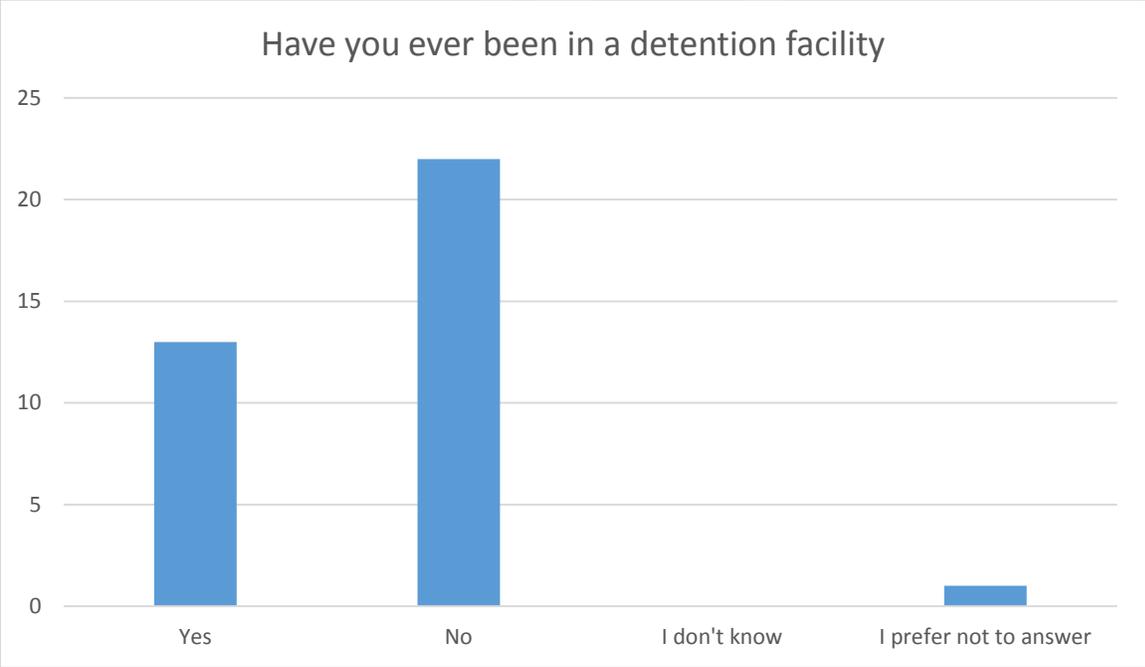
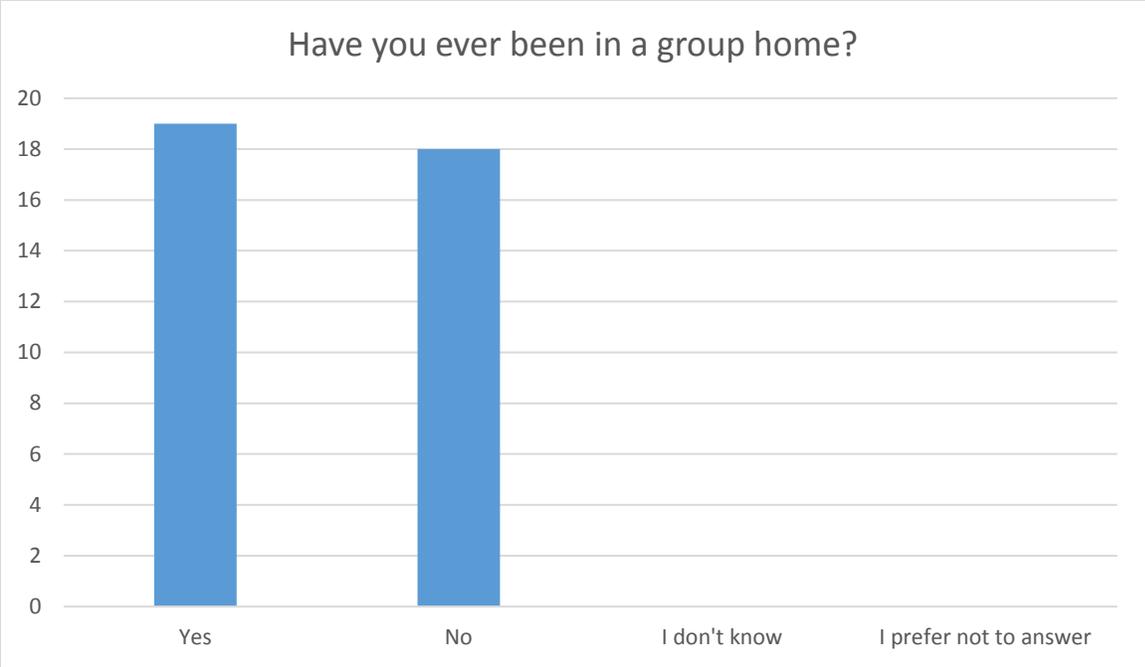
The survey respondents represent a convenience sample. Demographics below represent the youth who responded to the individual Youth Bill of Rights Survey. The majority of respondents were young adults aged 14-19, with a smaller percentage of former wards responding.

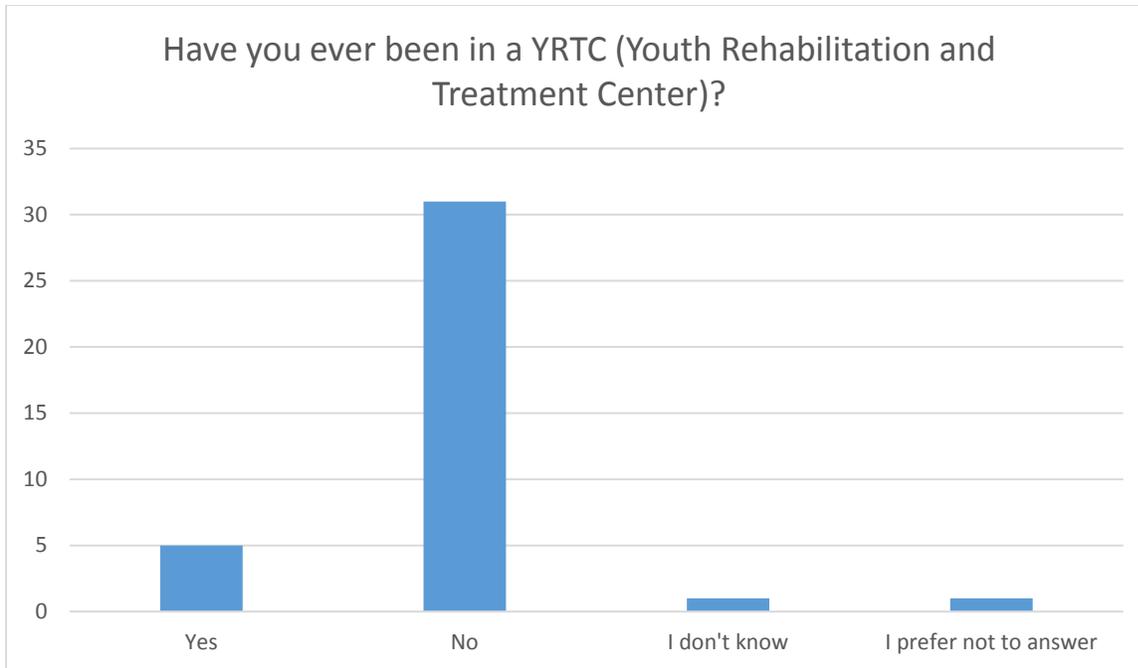


Placement Information

The majority of respondents indicated that they had been in a foster home and a group home. Fewer youth had been placed in a detention center or YRTC. For youth who had been in foster homes, there was almost an equal split between youth who had been placed in kinship or relative placements, and foster placements, with some youth indicating that they were not sure. Placement information reflects







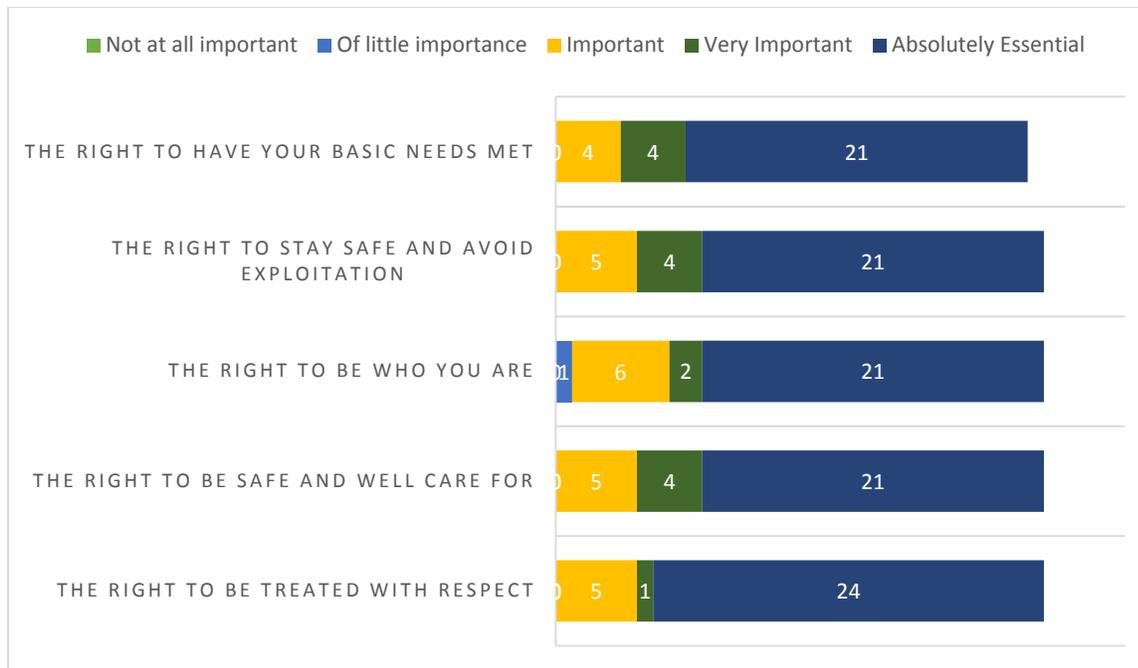
Additional Youth Background Information

The Survey asked youth if there was anything additional they would like us to know to help understand their answers. Fourteen youth responded, with seven noting there was nothing additional, while seven youth provided additional information. The group respectfully asks that the youths' additional information should be considered in the review of the survey results:

- First went into foster care when I was 16
- Lots of placement
- That I should get along with my guardian
- My parents struggle with money and the court system in Nebraska and the probation do not understand that I am not a bad teenager, I am just not the most wealthy
- I am a mom
- I have been in front of a County Court Judge
- My foster home wasn't a legit option. I was placed there for couple days before being took to detention.

Section 1: Personal Rights

When youth were asked to indicate the importance of these rights, on a five point Importance scale, the majority of youth rated all rights as absolutely essential.



The Right to be Treated with Respect

When youth were asked what should be included in the right to be treated with respect, youth responded. The primary theme was youth should be listened to, their feelings should be taken seriously, and that those with contact with the youth should follow the golden rule – treat others as they wish to be treated.

- Using language that is respectful. Using pronoun or descriptor or name chosen by the youth
- That your choices and views are heard and integrated in decisions
- Listened to
- That people don't treat you like you're a kid we are young adults
- I feel as if you input your placement, your consequence, and how you want to be treated should all be taken into consideration
- That you should be respectful to your peers and your relatives and have the right consequences.
- To be accepted by all despite any differences
- To be treated fairly and equally
- To be treated as equal as everyone else
- Being treated how you treat others
- Have someone respect me on the level I respect them
- not to take advantage of me or verbally or physically abuse me
- Acceptance for the way you are
- Treat people how you want to be treated
- Be treated fairly

The Right to be Treated with Respect, CTD

- To be respected at all times
- Treated how you want to be treated regardless of who you are
- Well cared
- Never demeaned or made light of
- Having boundaries for each party, respecting each other's wishes
- Treat people the way you want to be treated
- When I express how I feel respect if. If I don't like or agree with something, don't tell me I'm wrong or that's not right. Accept it even if it is no reasonable.
- They have to be nice they can't be mean to us
- The right to be treated with respect and allow me to speak and ask questions when I want to
- Being treated the same way as everyone else
- To be treated as I treat them.
- Means not being pulled out of class for things like team meetings, drug tests
- Means being respected by following through with commitments – caseworkers and probation officers.
- Didn't feel like they were respected often.
- Need workers to keep their word more to feel respected.
- *Stronger connections with parole officer would be better – they never showed up.*
- *Not being pulled out of class for things like team meetings, drug tests.*
- That you should respect adults.

The Right to be Safe and Well Cared For

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- It means that the caretaker finds out what safety looks like for the youth and documents how that is being maintained. It is a constant check in and needs to be evaluated continually.
- That I feel I belong and that those around me care for me.
- Clothes food
- Just not allowed to do dumb things
- If so you are being put into another placement or foster home, I feel as if all your needs should be met. Food, tampons, medications, care products.
- Not to get into trouble, tell your parents where you are going and be respectful to your parents
- to live without fear or worry of basic necessities
- safe living environment and healthcare.
- Being in a safe environment.

The Right to be Safe and Well Care for, CTD.

- have a safe home and to be cared for by people who care about me and my wellbeing
- To be cautious
- Feel that you don't have to feel scared. No worries about anything.
- Feeling comfortable in your own home.
- Have food, shelter, clothing
- Make sure I have health insurances, have a back up plan if anything happens, no abuse.
- Necessary needs
- Safe from even the threat of physical, sexual, or emotional harm. Have a place to stay, a secure place.
- Not to be abused or not wanted
- I shouldn't have to worry about getting the right treatment for medical or mental
- They should make sure you're safe at all times and have basic needs met.
- Nothing that's going to get me "acting out" episode" etc.
- Don't be getting into trouble or harm yourself
- To not feel as though I am unsafe in a house.
- *Not being taken advantage of.*
- *Need for really good background checks, experiences not great with foster parents.*
- *Don't feel cared for when you switch caseworkers often, when you switch placements a lot.*
- *With many wrong placements – need better case evaluation.*
- *Pay attention to youth, not just a number.*
- *Want to be cared about in your personal life.*
- *Feel more cared for if caseworkers, probation officers just listened for 30 minutes to hear their POV, how I process things, not just speaking down to youth as a person of authority.*
- Having a roof over my head having the doors locked.

The Right to be Who You Are

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Being able to be genuine and to identify self anyway that works for you and be respected as such
- That I can make decisions about my life
- Be able to express yourself in the fashion that suits you.

The Right to be Who You Are, CTD

- If you go to a place that is religious? and you aren't religious, you shouldn't be forced to believe in something that you don't believe in. you shouldn't be forced to wear clothes that you don't want to wear, you shouldn't be forced to eat things that you don't want to eat and you shouldn't be forced into doing things that you just don't want to do.
- to be yourself and not to be like other people and do the right things that people tell you to do
- To live with acceptance by others without discrimination.
- Express yourself freely
- Ability to be myself
- Be who I am without being criticized or judged
- The people will support me
- Not hiding who you are not and showing who you are
- Right to have your own views on religion, race sexuality and creed
- Not be judged for who I am
- Not being judged by your lifestyle
- Not trying to change me like my previous foster mother tried to
- Express who you are
- Don't try and "break me." Acknowledge me as a person
- Allowed to be who you are without judgement
- Not mess up
- I have the right to attend something I wish to attend. Such as church or a certain school.
- Have my say and input in MY case MY life...
- Don't try to be what everyone else wants you to be. Just be yourself.
- Not to be judges for my decisions
- *Youth shared a story about not being able to practice own religion – was forced into a Christian home when she clearly stated this was not her religion and was punished for not observing their religion and attending their services.*
- *Youth shared a story about being punished for attending youth group at his church. He was not allowed to go to the church and was punished for being on the run when he was really attending youth group at church.*
- *Being who you are means caseworkers get to know you more, help you achieve your goals by asking them what they need, and what their options are, not just telling them what they MUST do.*
- That you should be you even if someone else doesn't like it.

The Right to Stay Safe and Avoid Exploitation

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Basic information about exploitation and safety should be provided for everyone in care. The youth then can determine what safety is to them.
- That people will not take advantage of me or my situation
- IDK
- Not to be around bad people
- If a placement or foster home is willing to take you in, you should be protected as if you were one of their own. You should be provided the things that you need and you should feel like you are safe.
- Not to go with someone that you don't trust and they don't trust you
- To not be used and feel not pressured for a behavior
- That people are not going to put my information out there for everyone
- People won't take advantage of me and be in a carefree environment
- Being aware of the things you do
- To not be used and feel not pressured for a behavior
- Not being in a dangerous situation when are in the placement
- Not being taken advantage of and if it happens have a place to go
- Stand up for self
- I won't be used
- Making sure you are in a safe environment and leave if you will be hurt
- IDK
- Not be around people who aren't good for you.

The Right to Have Your Basic Needs Met

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Basic rights must be outlined. Minimum should include clean and appropriate for weather clothing, access to current medical care, access to clean water, access to hygiene products and ability to engage in a regular hygiene routine, own space that is clear to sleep, blankets and pillows, pjs or sleep clothes to allow for adequate sleep, access to supportive people who can assist in emotional support, healthy foods provided regularly and unrestricted access at appropriate times
- Just what it says, I gave safe shelter, I have good food to eat, I can pursue my education
- have food on the table that is good hot water shoes cloths and the fun stuff to do like decent games and balls bikes skate boards

The Right to Have Your Basic Needs Met, CTD

- Basic needs? Like being fed on a daily basis, have a roof over your head, having the ability to shower when needed, just little things like that.
- That you have to do the right things to get to that. being in a group home and not getting to those needs
- To be able to have food, water, clothing, at your disposal
- Food and shelter
- Essentials to survive
- Having food, shelter, clothing
- Food, shelter, water
- Money, medicine, work
- Food, shelter, water, clothing
- Food and shelter
- Food, clothing, and shelter
- Fed, clothed, roof over my head
- Food shelter
- Adequate safety, shelter, clothing, food, and caring people
- Physically taken care of, food, clothing, bed
- I have everything I need
- Make sure you have food, shelter, transportation to work, and personal hygiene supplies
- I am fed and have proper clothing and housing
- *Basic needs shouldn't mean what I have to get for myself – didn't know my caseworker could help get more clothes, voucher for gas, hygiene stuff. Because she didn't know about it, I didn't get what youth needed because group home foster parents didn't provide.*
- *Right to be informed on the services that are available to us – this shouldn't be a secret or so hard to find out about.*
- *Felt like caseworkers didn't care about their basic needs*
- *Basic needs when you leave also – a youth was on the streets right after leaving care (didn't age out, not able to join B2i)*
- *Counseling can be a basic need, too.*
- *State needs to know basic things about the youth as well, asking basic questions.*
- *Basic needs mean stable living (food, water, and bed) but also it required looking deeper into a families situation than that. Support system is a basic need too.*
- *Consistency is a basic need.*
- *Wanting to be in a placement and feeling comfortable is a basic need that isn't always met.*
- *Feeling safe is a basic need – most youth did not feel they had this.*
- Because we all have needs in life.

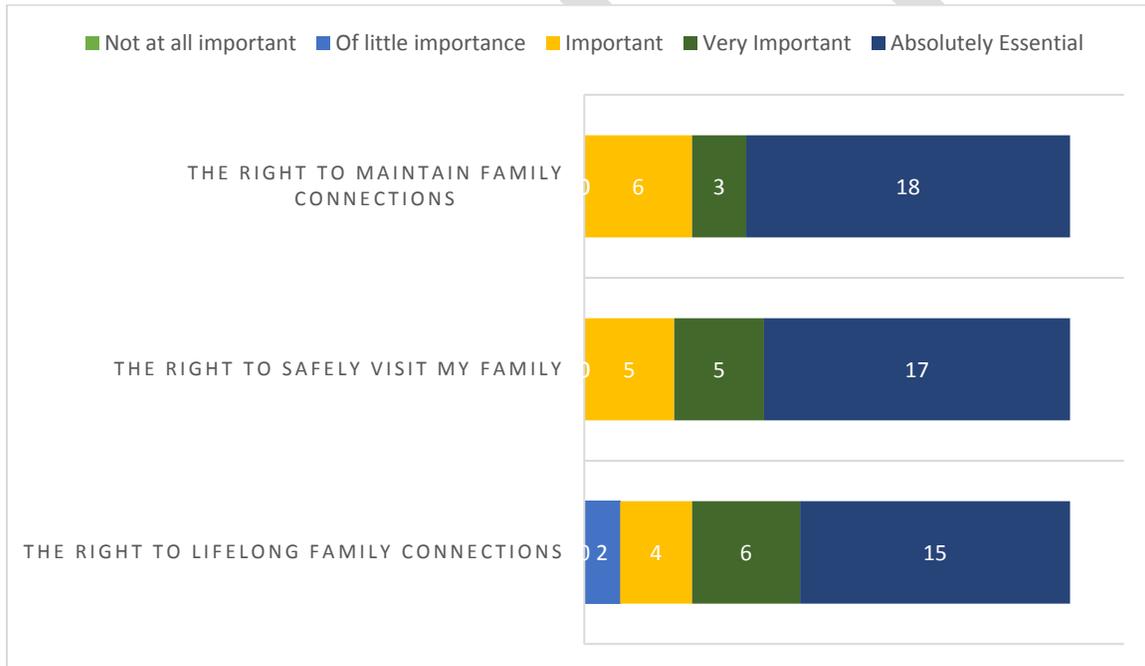
Other Personal Rights that Should be Included

Youth were asked what other personal rights should be afforded to them on the individual survey. Ten youth indicated there were no other rights that should be afforded to them, one was not sure, and five suggested the additional responses below:

- Right to engage in community activities or well being activities
- Being able to have a say in what you do!
- I need to be respected for my sexual identity
- Religion
- Your “religion” right

Section 2: Family Connection Rights

When youth were asked to indicate the importance of these rights, on a five point Importance scale, the majority of youth rated all rights as absolutely essential.



The Right to Lifelong Family Connections

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Access to and assistance with developing and maintaining connections to people the child identifies as family
- That I can stay connected to family members and that the connections are encouraged
- To be able to see your family when you want

The Right to Lifelong Family Connections, CTD

- My parents are struggling right now with money and I am in a group home because of it. I love my family, and even though I am away from them now I still should be able to spend time with them, we aren't bad people just because we don't have a lot of money.
- that you haven't seen your family members for a long time and you want to see them
- Not sure
- No interference
- The ability to see or contact my family whenever you need it
- I will always know where my family is
- Have consistent support no matter what you do
- Keeping a bond with family for life
- Being able to communicate with family as much as I want
- Spend time with my family
- No matter where you are you can still talk with them
- Strangers should not be able to tell me I can't speak to my parents
- Communication
- Those connections might be foster families in addition to bio family
- Should be able to call when I need
- Keep in touch with family
- Be able to contact them when you want and as often as you want
- Having communications with your family.

Right to Safely Visit Family

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Opportunity to have regular and meaningful interactions with family
- Opportunities to visit family in a variety of settings. Not just supervisors visits, but visits in the community, with other family.
- That you can get there easily
- I and anyone else away from their family should be able to see their family, regardless of the situation.
- That you can see them whenever you want to and have a good time with them
- The right to visit without being afraid
- To see them without harm or forcefulness
- I can visit my family without being in danger or putting them in danger
- To be in a circumstance that nothing they do will affect me in a bad way
- Sharing moments that are important and success
- To be able to see my family safely
- As long as family member is not negative, you have a right to see them

Right to Safely Visit Family, CTD

- I should not have to run away to visit my family
- Visits
- If I have been abused or neglected my visits must be structured to support that
- Safe way of transportation be able to visit
- See my sister
- Plan yearly visits, and be able to have supervision available if I felt unsafe at any time.
- *For visits, look at what happened, and how family members actions are harming the actions of the youth.*
- *Sometimes visiting family is not safe – need to connect with the youth to know what is going on.*
- *Youth have different experiences with relationship to families.*
- *Youth wishes caseworker would have done more to listen to his father’s opinions about his well-being.*
- Having good conversations with them.

Right to Maintain Family Connections

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Providing assistance in developing a plan for how to connect with family and the ways in which it is possible
- Keep in touch with family and friends like having a cell phone
- I am far from home right now and I should be able to keep in touch with my family
- Having connections with family and friends. Getting along with my family and other people around them
- The right to see your family without interference
- See and communicate with your family
- Sustained contact with my family
- I trust them and they trust me
- Consistent bond and rely on them
- Family bonds
- To see and speak to family during important family events and holidays
- Consistently staying in touch with my family
- Being able to talk to them as long as not negative
- Strangers should not be able to tell me I can’t speak to my parents
- Communication
- I need to have some form of positive contact with Mom, Dad, siblings, grandparents and other relatives
- Call, stay in contact
- Have family still there for me

Right to Maintain Family Connections, CTD

- Being able to keep in touch with everybody
- *Phone calls are important*
- *In YRTC there is a barrier when some kids want to see family members, very hard for visits but depends on the situation. Ex – In YRTC, you can't see families until you have had good behavior for two or three months. Couldn't make phone calls that aren't on an approved list – wanted to call grandma on her birthday, but it was too late to add her to the list. This is not normal, so many barriers here. Only a couple phone calls per week. Had the idea to provide free mailing to youth.*
- Make sure you check up on them daily.

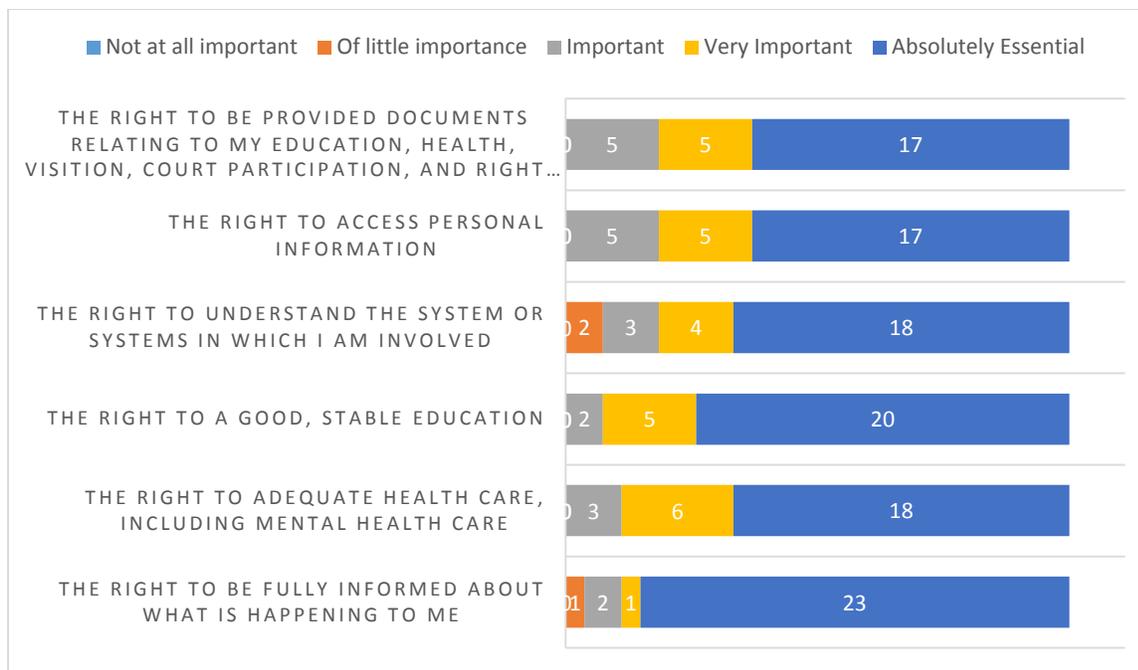
Other Family Connection Rights that should be Included

Youth were asked what other personal rights should be afforded to them. Seven youth indicated there were no other family connection rights that were not included and six individual youth and additional youth in a facilitation suggested the additional responses below:

- I think it is not clear when and who helps the youth develop their support system then it should be identified
- Family connections rights? I think family connections are to be included in the rights
- Should have the right to see your family
- My visits can't be stopped resulting from punishment
- Family is family. Don't let the system take that from someone as well. If you ask anyone. They will say they lost family in the system or while being in system. Does the system really wanna help. And instead of the youth grow up being proud there life was different then "normal" but still had things. Let them say. I'm here and the system helped me get there. (High school, college etc.) It isn't all their fault they are in the system. Why do they have to be punished..
- Foster Parents should not have the right to decide when youth get to visit their own parents.
- *Should have background checks on family – this is a good way for caseworkers to understand what happened and maybe what happened to make things not go well in a kids case.*
- *Sounds like sometimes they want things to be more critical of the bio family, instead of punishing the kid for what they grew up with.*
- *Family members are also often made to feel powerless, like their opinions don't matter.*

Section 3: Access to Information and Services Rights

When youth in the individual survey were asked to indicate the importance of these rights, on a five point Importance scale, the majority of youth rated all rights as absolutely essential.



Right to be Fully Informed about what is Happening

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- I think this must be defined better. Fully informed can simply mean providing enough information in a written format that the youth signed off on but doesn't understand. That is not good enough.
- Information delivered to me about every step of the process
- To know where I'm ending up
- I am in this situation, I feel as if I have a right to know what is happening to me
- Asking people how I'm doing and what needs to be done in a better way and not fight with other people
- To know what is being done about my case
- To know what is going on
- Be up to date with what's going on around me
- To what is going on in my life and what people are doing to help me
- Means that you want to be updated
- To see any paperwork involving me
- You know what is going on in the situation
- To not be put in a situation where I am caught off guard and placed where I don't want to be and no one even asked and I didn't do anything wrong.
- Knowing what's going on
- Involve me in decision making and no surprises
- Know places I can and cannot go

Right to be Fully Informed About what is Happening, CTD

- Know before it happens and not the day
- Case worker should not hide anything from you even if it will make me upset
- *Youth noted that the full picture wasn't taken into consideration when kicked out of diversion. There was three months when he was removed and he didn't know why and felt like he failed. Efforts to do community services weren't rewarded. Felt like the answer was already known – so didn't know how to go through a grievance process (didn't know there was one). Then was kicked out of school for not completing diversion. Didn't know he had court – just got a thing in the mail. Didn't know what was coming after was kicked out of diversion.*
- *Feels like they are set up to fail when information is not shared with them.*
- *When I go into emergency placement, sucked when you didn't know why it was happening, knowing what is coming next, what you need to do.*
- *Scary when you don't know what is happening.*
- Case workers telling me what is going on.

Right to Adequate Health Care, Including Mental Health Care

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Adequate as defined by who? I would also say the right to question mandated treatment...sometimes we over treat or treat with the wrong services.
- All health care
- Just that if anything happened to me I would be covered
- If I am in another place besides my parents, I deserve to be taken care of, health, physical and mentally
- Mental Health Care? I think mental health care should have all the rights they can
- The right to a doctor when you need one
- Having services available to me
- Meeting with medical and mental health care providers if I need to
- I'll always know that I am being given the right medications
- Not fall through the cracks with the mental thing
- That I can see the Dr. if I want to
- To see health provider when I feel it's needed for me
- Everything with health is up to date
- Be insured but not forcing me to therapy
- Being healthy
- I have health care needs just like everyone else and I need to have those needs addressed
- Taken if I need to go to the doctor
- Keeping myself healthy

Right to Adequate Health Care, CTD

- Being up to date on shots and physicals
- Making sure I go to appointments

Right to A Good, Stable Education

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- That again will be hard to ensure but I do think limiting movement between schools or educational facilities is helpful. I think assisting youth in looking at alternatives to traditional settings might be necessary as well.
- Being able to stay at the same school is I choose
- That I can get the job I want because I was educated properly
- School is important, but not my biggest concern right now
- That I can have a good education when I go to college
- The right to learn freely
- Some way to be provided education
- I'm going to a school where my talents and skills will be challenged
- Right to be educated and know what is going on in the world
- It means that I can be a benefit in the future to me
- Right to high school, college, tutoring from a professional
- Not denied right to education
- High School, FAFSA
- Going to good schools
- What chance do I have without an education and a system that accepts me?
- Sign up and go to school
- Go to college
- Being able to have supplies to graduate high school and be able to attend college
- Turning in homework, listening.

Right to a Credit Report Annually

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Is there a process for this?
- An annual credit report with education on what it means
- Idk
- I don't have a credit card
- Don't have a credit card
- The right to know your credit when necessary
- I don't know

Right to a Credit Report Annually, CTD

- To see my your report to check my status when I feel it's important
- A right to see my credit report annually
- You receive a credit report
- If I had a credit it be sent to me
- Knowing your education
- I want to watch out for my future
- I don't know
- IDK
- Given a credit report each year and to go over my credit score
- To see how I am doing in school.

Right to Access Personal Information

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Again, what does this entail? What information?
- I should be able to access all information that pertains to me
- That I can like have access to a bank and checking account that only I can use
- I am me, and I am in my situation, nobody else. I should be able to look at my file and see what everyone else thinks of me.
- That I am able to have the rights to check personal information that I have and no one else can check it
- To know what is in your background
- Being able to access reports said about me
- To see what is going on in my own life
- I'll be able to look more in depth in my personal information
- I don't know
- If it has to do with me I have a right to see it
- Be able to see documents about your case
- Have personal documents
- Read court documents
- I need to be aware of evals assessments and how I and those around me are bring portrayed
- Should get information what I really need to know
- Know and have all documents about me
- Know where to go or what to do if you lose personal information.
- Able to see your information

Right to Be Provided Documents

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- How much information and who provides it?
- Idk
- I should be able to look at my own things, I don't understand why those things are considered confidentiality when I am the one who did all of those things
- That I have the rights to say what I want and when I can say them
- To safely have what you need
- Having a voices and being able to be heard
- To make sure of secure information
- I don't have those things
- Anything that has to do with me, I have a right to know about it and a choice to see it
- Given documentation
- Other people not taking my mail that has this information
- I need these for my future and a place to put them
- Get information I really need to know
- Have all
- Be provided your own personal folder with the documents you need.
- If you wanted to look at your background.

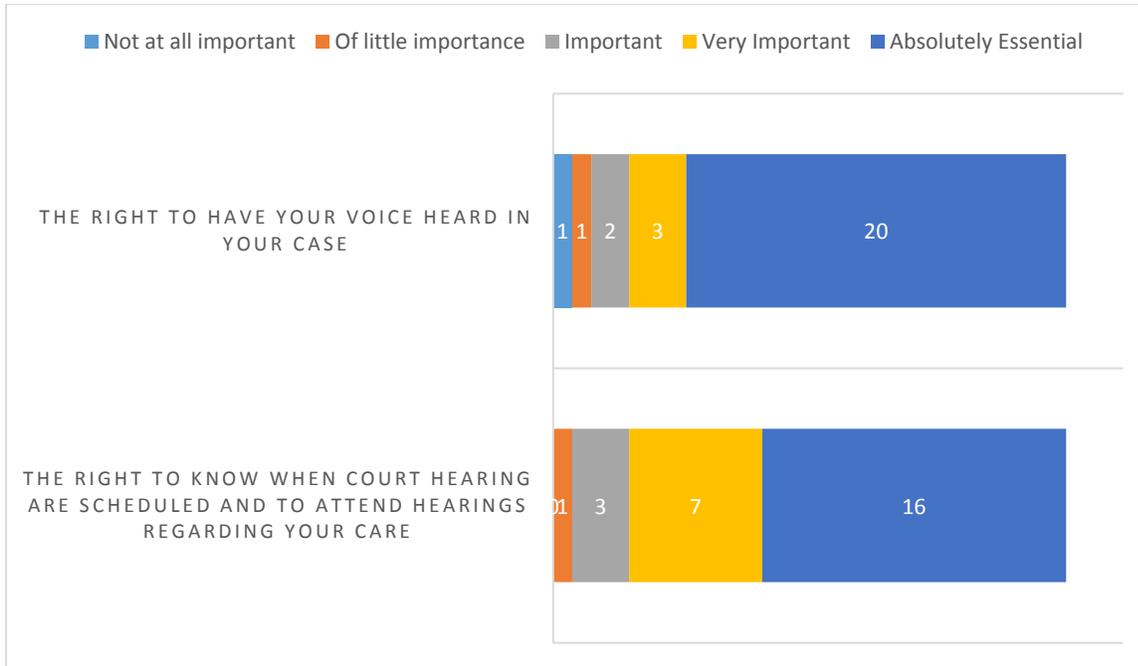
Other Access to Information and Services Rights that should be Included

Youth were asked what other access to information rights and services should be afforded to them. Nine youth indicated there were no additional access to information rights that had not been included, one youth and additional youth in a facilitated session suggested the rights below:

- A child has every right no matter what age but age appropriate has the right to know what's going on... And if a kid is asking what's going on. As a system you have no right but to give the truth about what's going in. What case they are in.
- Caseworkers don't even seem to know what is going on. Caseworkers have a lot of cases – don't know how to deal with things when they come up.
- Doesn't seem to be enough caseworkers
- *Others didn't know their options – and what their access to resources was.*
- *Not feeling safe when having to take the bus everywhere (also this lead to risky behaviors because youth, esp. girls, or situations of seeing other drug users, would allow youth to find an unhealthy support system down town.*

Section 4: Youth Voice and Participation Rights

When youth were asked to indicate the importance of these right, on a five point Importance scale, the majority of youth rated all rights as absolutely essential.



Right to know when Court Hearings are Scheduled and to Attend Hearings Regarding your Care

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- This is clear as is
- Notice of every hearing, transportation to each hearing and access to someone who can help me understand what has taken place at the hearing
- That I can go to court
- You should of course be informed of when you have a court date, that when justice is declared
- So I can go to the court hearing and tell what I can say
- To know when your court date is set
- It allows me to show up there on time
- I'll be able to know when a court case is coming and be present
- Know what time and day and where
- Right to know when court is and to be there when it's regarding me
- Know when court date is so you don't miss it and get a warrant

Right to Know When Court Hearings are Scheduled and to Attend Hearings Regarding your Care, CTD

- Get the letter and be informed and transported to court
- Knowing your information
- I should not be ignored in my own proceedings
- Be able to know when they are scheduled and what I need
- To know when they are scheduled and what I need
- To know when they are and if I have to go
- Everything. I don't want to go to jail for not attending.
- So that I can get there on time.

Right to Have Your Voice Heard in Your Case

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Having a process in place for providing feedback and then being aware of how this information will impact your case outcome or result
- That I can speak, or submit a letter, that I am notified of each hearing
- Idk
- You know what you have done, and everyone's case is different. The one involved should have say in where they want to go, what consequence they should have and for how long. Having other people besides your parents run your life isn't exactly fair.
- So they know how I feel about things and what I can tell the,
- To let me know how you feel about what is going on with me
- To allow me to speak for myself
- I'll have a say in the choices that are being made
- People listen and don't just push under rug. Take what I say into account
- Important no people can make themselves present
- That I can speak in court regarding me
- Speak your opinion
- For people to respect my opinions and take it in to consideration when I am doing what I am supposed to do
- Express yourself
- I have ideas, feelings, and thoughts that need to be heard
- About me I should be able to talk
- If I need something
- If it is about me then I should be able to speak.

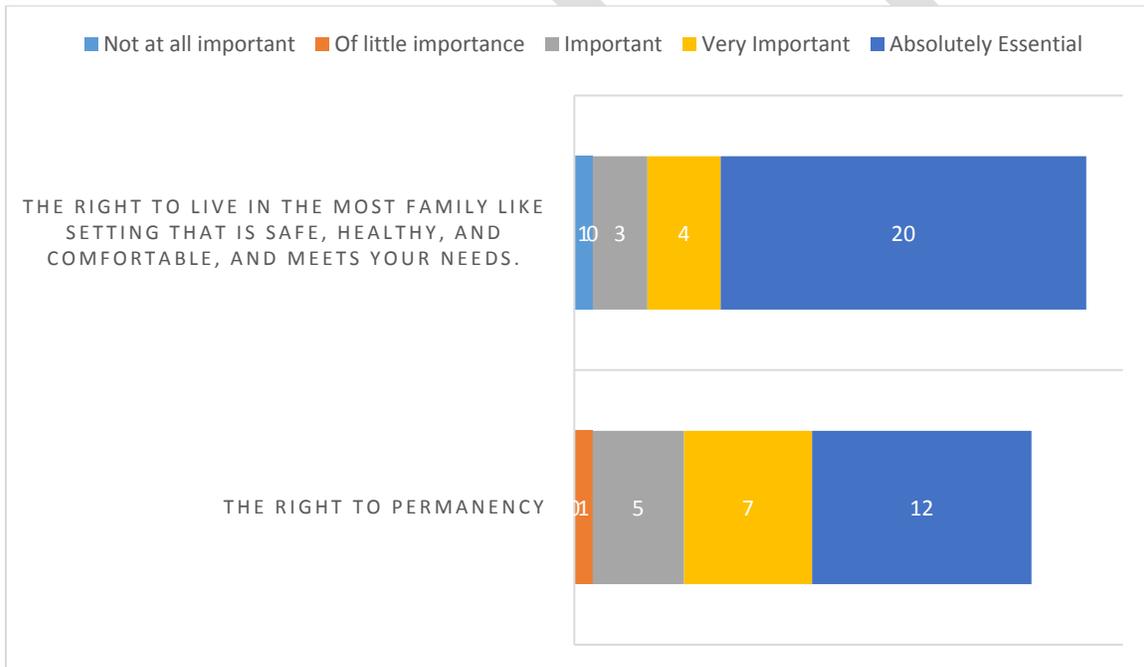
Other Youth Voice and Participation Rights that should be Included

Youth were asked what other access to information rights and services should be afforded to them. Nine youth indicated there were no other youth voice and participation rights that were not included and two suggested the additional responses below:

- The right to have an advocate or alumni support?
- If every voice is important such as lawyers, probation officer, GAL, power attorneys, prosecutors, judges.... Then who is the only one in the court room not saying nothing. The most important one in a case. THE YOUTHS VOICE

Section 5: Permanency and Placement Rights

When youth were asked to indicate the importance of these rights, on a five point Importance scale, the majority of youth rated the right to live in a family like setting as absolutely essential, and the majority of youth rated the right to permanency as either very important or absolutely essential.



Right to Permanency

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- The right to have a plan about long term outcomes/care
- Limited moving around
- To be able to be in a home that is best suited for me
- I just want to be with my parents
- I don't really know

Right to Permanency, CTD

- To feel like a person has a home
- To have a nurturing family
- I'll be somewhere I want to be
- Somewhere that is no short term. Place to stay and have a life
- Being able to go home when finished with foster care
- A right to go home if safe and possible
- Chose where you can go
- The last place you go when you age out
- Being safe
- Don't be moving me around like something that has spoiled and people are trying to get rid of it
- Should know if placement will be long or short term
- Stay in a home forever
- I should be able to feel like I have my own family
- Make sure stuff is stable.

Right to Live in the Most Family Like Setting that is Safe, Healthy, and Comfortable and Meets Your Needs

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Perhaps identify the options of family-like care?
- That I can have a say in my placement
- To be able to be in a home that is best suited for me
- A place that isn't home with your parents will never be "home." I promise.
- That the family can keep me safe and healthy
- To feel like you are not the parent
- I'll be somewhere in a safe environment
- Have support network
- Close to being at home as you can be
- Be in a place that feels like a home
- A family setting that meets basic needs, so foster homes do more than basic needs
- Not something I care about
- Caring and loveable
- I want to be recognized as a normal kid
- Safe and comfortable where I am staying, want to see the place before moving there
- A home that is health and good for me
- So that you are happy and healthy.

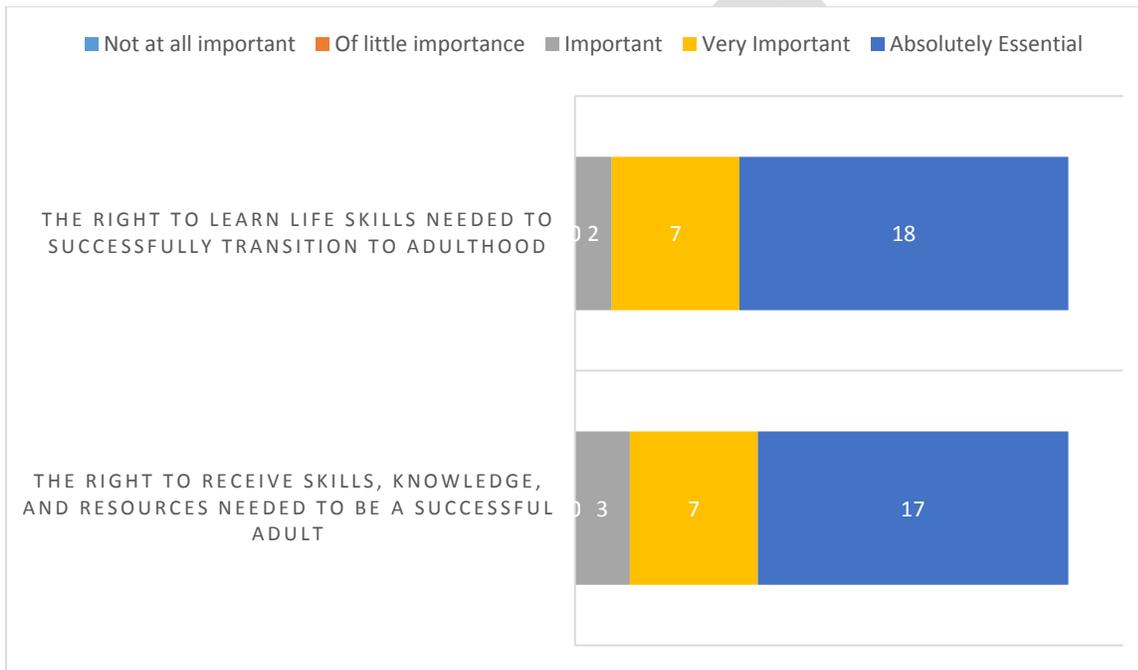
Other Permanency and Placement Rights that Should be Included

Youth were asked what other placement and permanency rights should be afforded to them. eight youth indicated there were no additional permanency and placement rights that were not included and one suggested the additional responses below:

- Right for reconsideration of a foster home placement

Section 6: Transition to Adulthood Rights

When youth were asked to indicate the importance of these right, on a five point Importance scale, the majority of youth rated all rights as absolutely essential.



Right to Receive Skills, Knowledge and Resources Needed to be a Successful Adult

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Basic life skills/independent living skills
- Financial literacy, supportive housing
- Learn
- Schools is always important, you should have to go to school no matter where you are
- Rights to receive skills, knowledge and resources and to tell what they want to here
- To know and learn the skill freely on how to be an adult
- To be better prepared in advance for adulthood
- I'll know everything I need to know in order to be a successful adult

Right to Receive Skills, Knowledge, and Resources Needed to be a Successful Adult, CTD

- People help with my bills
- To get things I need to be on your own
- Right to schooled on adulthood
- Teaching me what I need to know before its too late
- Having help
- How can I be successful later if I don't have someone showing me the way
- Written information to look at, to figure out what skills I need
- To know how to go into the world as an adult and what to expect
- Everyone should be referred to PALS if they were in Foster Care.
- *Mentioned in many places of the survey that they were not aware of the different resources and services they could be connected to in the system and when aging out.*
- *One youth was made aware of B2i and is was a good situation for a while for him.*
- *One youth did not find B2i to be a good fit and wished other resources and living situations would have been promoted, like Centerpointe.*
- *One youth was not eligible for B2i.*
- *Wished they would have started the transition sooner, because B2i is not going to help in the long run if they aren't ready for it when it comes, it is a short amount of time.*
- Make sure I understand stuff.

Right to Learn Life Skills Needed to be A Successful Adult

When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Learn
- I already grew up too fast
- Have the courage to be what they want when they grow up and be successful
- The right to have stability financially and emotionally
- To be or get prepared
- I'll know how to be self sufficient
- People help with my bills
- Right to decide what to do to make positive choices
- Right to be shown what to do as an adult
- Teaching how to pay rent, utilities, budget
- Teaching me what I need to know before its too late
- Independent living skills
- I need to learn to be able to take care of myself
- Learn skills needed
- Needing to know

Right to Learn Life Skills Needed to be a Successful Adult, CTD

- *One youth noted he had what he needed provided to him to be a successful adult but realizes it is not the situation for everyone.*
- So that when you grow up you know.

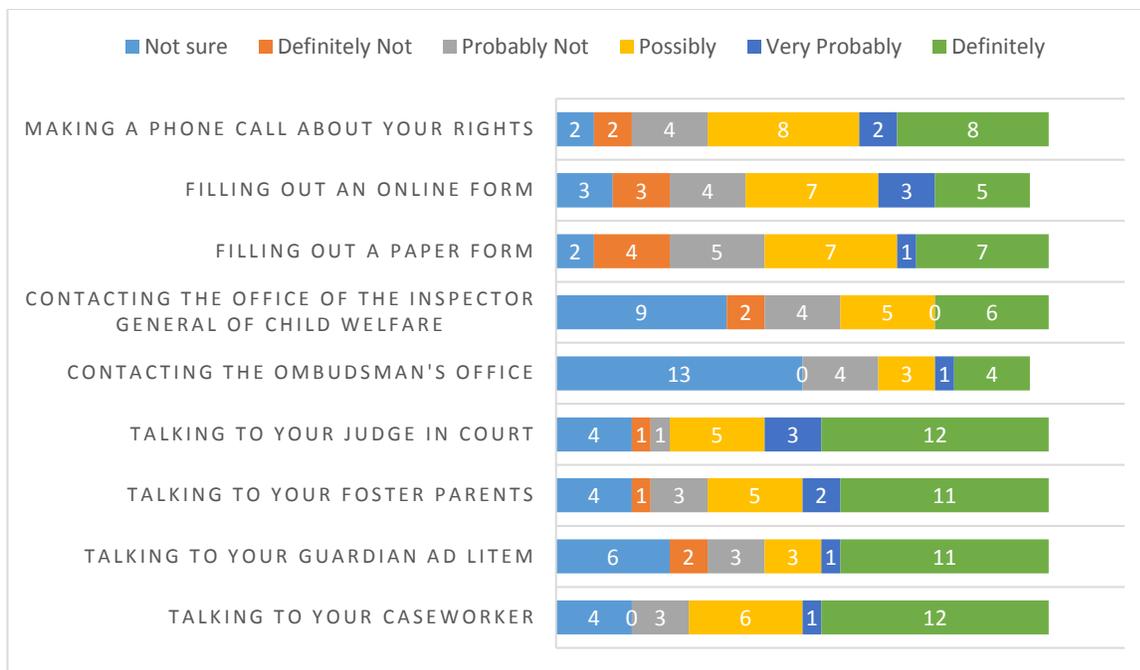
Other Transition to Adulthood Rights that Should be Included

Youth were asked what other placement and permanency rights should be afforded to them. 10 youth indicated there were no additional transition to adulthood rights that were not included and three youth and additional youth at a facilitation suggested the additional responses below:

- Its one of the most important factor that needs to be taught once they become an adult...Can't keep just getting taught into adult year and saying good luck. Best of wishes
- Help finding a place once I graduate.
- *Many youth noted that they were not given the tools or skills needed to make having a B2i roommate work.*
- *Normalcy can mean having that group, family, friends, to come home to and share meals, but it did not work for all youth and wish it could have.*

Section 7: Right to Seek Assistance if Rights are not Being Met

When youth were asked to indicate how likely they were to seek assistance by accessing the following options, they indicated that they were most likely to want to seek assistance from someone they knew, such as a caseworker or the judge in their case.



When youth were asked what this right means to them, and what should be included, youth said the following:

- Discussing process and what you can expect after you make the complaint.
- That I know who to contact
- Call for help
- If you are feeling mistreated and feel like things are not fair, you should have the right to make things change so you are comfortable and feel safe
- By telling them what is on my mind and telling them when stuff happens
- The right to know that there is someone to help when needed
- Being able to talk to someone
- Finding help
- I know where to go to seek help and information
- Tell someone
- Contacting someone who can help me
- Right to have your rights reviewed
- Trying to find help elsewhere
- Be able to express to someone so they take care of it
- If something is going wrong I should be able to ask for help and get that help
- Contact workers
- Someone needs to be there for me when I have needs that are not being met
- Have someone be on call
- How to get help
- Everything to me. It would save a lot of trouble.
- If you need help.

Youth were asked what options should be available to them if their rights are not being met. Three youth indicated they were not sure and youth responded below:

- The right to appeal what a person is saying or doing against you
- Getting help from who is in charge and making an arrangement
- Right to a lawyer
- Being placed in a shelter or removal if you are in a bad situation, not waiting until the kid feels like they have to run away.
- Hopefully work with whomever is stopping that from happening
- Its not only the youth having all education in what to do when they feel they have been violated.. But also people showing we care about this feeling. We are going to ACTUALLY look into it and not just say we will. And then talk directly to the youth...
- *Youth were not clear on what the word grievance meant or on what the available processes were.*
- *There should only be one specific process.*
- *Process should be an outside agency.*
- *When going through the options below - they said it depended too much on the individual experience - but that outside agency would be the best. Felt it could be too self-serving if they are evaluating themselves through the grievance.*
- *A grievance process could really make the system better*
- *Need follow up on grievances*
- *This process should connect you to services that are available.*

Section 8: Additional Information from Youth

Youth were asked if they had any additional comments about the Bill of Rights that they had not yet said. Eight youth indicated that they did not have any additional information, and five youth provided the below comments:

- Not all teenagers learn when they are being treated like nothing and being thrown around from place to place
- Rights are being violated for state wards on a consistent and unknown basis
- Sexual health, orientation, and education on sexually related topics
- Every kid should be allowed to go to their “religion” no matter what situation...
- *One youth disliked the statement “when possible” in the BOR, because he felt it gives caseworkers too much room to manipulate the situation and not provide youth with what they need. Has personal experience with this.*