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ODJFS Announces New Bills of Rights To Support Foster Youth and Their Caregivers

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is excited to announce two new Ohio Administrative Code sections that establish the rights of foster youth and resource caregivers became effective today. The [Foster Youth Bill of Rights](#) and the [Resource Family Bill of Rights](#) are the result of Governor Mike DeWine’s Children Services Transformation Advisory Council’s 37 recommendations, released in November 2020, to reform Ohio’s children services system. Amended House Bill 110 of the 134th General Assembly, signed into law by the Governor in June 2021, codified the creation of both bills of rights.

“Too many young people and their caregivers are not always informed of their rights, causing confusion when it comes to a child living as normal a life as possible while they are in the children services system,” Governor Mike DeWine said. “While there is still work to be done, these bills of rights are a major win for Ohio’s most vulnerable youth and their caregivers.”

“Through the leadership of Governor DeWine and our legislative partners, we established specific rights guaranteed for all foster youth and their caregivers,” said Matt Damschroder, Director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. “As someone who has fostered children, I know that anything we can do to protect the rights of foster youth and their caregivers can only serve to help all those involved.”

Both Bill of Rights are designed to inform youth in foster care as well as resource caregivers of their rights within the children services system. The Foster Youth Bill of Rights not only ensures that youth have a safe place to live, but also that they have a voice regarding their care and an opportunity for a normal childhood. The Resource Family Bill of Rights elevates the important role foster and kinship caregivers play in the lives of the children they care for by assuring these families are heard, supported, and valued as a part of the team.

The ODJFS Office of Families and Children engaged multiple stakeholders, including current and former foster youth, in the development of both bills of rights.

“I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with ODJFS and my fellow foster youth on the wording of the Foster Youth Bill of Rights in Ohio Administrative Code,” said Raven Grice, Ohio Youth Advisory Board Youth Ambassador. “We appreciate ODJFS incorporating our feedback, including ordering youth rights by triage by putting the most vital rights first. We also thank ODJFS for agreeing to



require that these rights be clearly posted in congregate care facilities such as group homes and residential facilities.”

ODJFS will be providing additional training and technical assistances for both bills of rights for foster youth and resource caregivers. This will include responsibilities for agencies to inform youth and caregivers of all their rights, to include actions and resources available if they are concerned their rights have been violated.

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.

