

# Foster Youth Mental Health Bill of Rights

1. I have the right to receive mental health services in California.
2. I have the right to know about my diagnosis and treatment options in a way that I can understand.
3. I have the right to help make all the decisions regarding my mental health, including treatment and services that meet my needs.
4. I have the right to promptly receive mental health services and treatment.
5. I have the right to promptly receive mental health services in a placement that meets my needs.
6. After my 12th birthday, if I am mature enough, I have the right to seek and consent to mental health counseling and treatment on my own (except psychotropic medication).
7. I have the right to only take medication or other chemical substances that are prescribed by a doctor.
8. I have the right to have the risks and benefits of the medication explained to me in a way I can understand. This includes understanding how my medication may interact with other medications or food.
9. I have the right to tell the doctor if I disagree with any medication the doctor recommends for me.
10. I have the right to tell the judge I disagree with psychotropic medication being prescribed to me. To do so, I should ask my lawyer to fill out the JV-222 (Opposition to Application Regarding Psychotropic Medication).
11. I have the right to ask for mental health services, including a reassessment of my diagnosis and my psychotropic medications.
12. I have the right to work with my doctor to safely stop taking my medications.
13. I have the right to contact my doctor and mental health providers.

14. After my 12th birthday, I have the right to confidentiality when talking to my therapist or doctor.
15. I have the right to confidentiality regarding my medical information and diagnoses. This information can only be shared with authorized individuals in order to help me access and obtain treatment.
16. I have the right to see and get a copy of my court records.
17. At the age of 12 and older, I have the right to see and get a copy of my medical and mental health records, unless a doctor or medical professional believes that it would be detrimental to me.
18. I have the right to continue receiving mental health treatment when my placement changes, including when I am moved to a different county.
19. If I am in foster care on my 18th birthday, I have the right to continue to receive health care, including mental health services through Medi-Cal until age 26, regardless of my income level.



This brochure outlines some of the legal rights of California foster youth within the public mental health system. The rights listed are intended to reflect and support the needs expressed by foster youth in their experience as consumers within the public mental health system.

Office of the Foster Care Ombudsman:

**1-877-846-1602**

My social worker is: \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

My attorney is: \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

My CASA is: \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

My doctor/pharmacist is: \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_



State Of California  
Health and Human Services Agency  
Department Of Social Services

# Foster Youth Mental Health Bill of Rights

## Questions to Ask About Medications





## Questions To Ask About Mental Health Medication

When you don't feel well, sometimes mental health medication, also called psychotropic medication, can help. If you've tried things like getting better sleep, making changes at school or home, or talking with your therapist and it hasn't helped, then medication may be something for you to consider. But, before taking medication, you should know the following:

- Reason(s) for the medication including your symptoms and diagnoses.
- Alternative treatments instead of medication.
- Risks and benefits of the medication.
- Possible drug interaction(s) with the medication.
- Who to call in an emergency about the medication.

You have the right to understand the benefits and risks to your physical and mental health from taking any medication. You also have the right to agree or disagree with any recommended treatment and to tell your doctor, social worker, probation officer, attorney, and the judge why you agree or disagree. Being informed allows and encourages you to ask questions to help you decide whether or not you agree or disagree with any recommendation to take medication, this brochure will help you know what questions to ask.

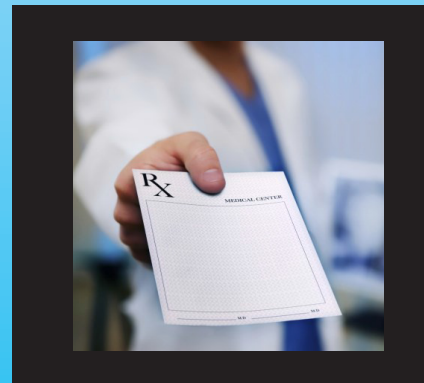
## Preparing For Your Visit With Your Physician

- Consider asking the following questions before taking psychotropic medication. It is important to be fully informed about the psychotropic medication you are taking.
- If, after asking these questions, you still have questions or doubts about your psychotropic medication or treatment, ask for a second opinion.
- If you need assistance or have questions about this process, you should call your social worker, probation officer, public health nurse, attorney or your CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocate).
- By asking and writing down the answers to the following questions, you and your caregivers will gain a better understanding of psychotropic medication.

## Talking To Your Physician Or Pharmacist

*Here are some questions you may want to ask your physician or pharmacist.*

1. Can you review the names of the medication that I am currently taking or suggested medication (including over the counter medication such as allergy medication or pain relievers)? Are there possible interactions between any of these medications?
  2. What are the common side effects for the medication? If I experience side effects, what is normal and what is not? Whom should I contact if I have questions or concerns about side effects or have an emergency?
  3. What are the common side effects for the medication? Is the medication addictive? Can the medication be abused?
  4. Are there other activities or treatments besides medication that might help me? What can I do at school or home to help with my mental health besides taking medication?
  5. How long will I take the medication? Who should I talk to if/when I am ready to stop taking medication? How will the decision be made to stop the medication?
6. What medical tests (e.g., heart tests, blood work, etc.) need to be done before starting the medication and continuing the medication? How often should I be tested?
  7. Who else in my life needs to be informed that I am taking medication?
  8. How long does the medication have its effect? How long does it take to wear off? How long will it be effective in my body?
  9. Are there any other medications or food to avoid while taking the medication? Should I eat food with the medication? What happens if this medication is combined with tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs?
  10. Are there any activities, such as driving a car, to avoid while taking the medication? Are there any precautions recommended for other activities? Are there any weather conditions, such as direct sunlight, to avoid while taking the medication?
  11. Can you summarize and write a list of actions I should take before my next follow up appointment with my doctor?
  12. Can you give me a list and schedule of when I should take my medication? Can you give me information sheets for all my medications?
  13. What happens if I take too much or the wrong amount of medication?
  14. Are there any special concerns about this medication and pregnancy (if relevant)?
  15. If I stay in extended foster care, will the medication be covered by Medi-Cal? How should the medication be stored or kept? Will there be any changes to my treatment plan when I turn 18, 21, and 26 years old?



## Talking To Your Social Worker, Probation Officer, Or Public Health Nurse

*Here are some ways that you can start a conversation about your medication.*

1. What other supports or information can you give me to help me with my treatment plan?
2. What can people at home and school do to help me with my treatment plan?
3. I'd like to try some other activities such as sports to help me with my treatment plan. Can you help me sign up for \_\_\_\_\_?
4. The medication is helping me with \_\_\_\_\_. The medication does not help me with \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When I take my medication, my mind feels like \_\_\_\_\_ and my body feels like \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I have been experiencing side effects. I've noticed that \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Is my height and weight being checked often enough? Is any lab work being done to monitor my medication?
8. I currently take the following medications \_\_\_\_\_ and the following vitamins \_\_\_\_\_ and the following over the counter medications \_\_\_\_\_. Do you see any risks in combining these medications?

## Talking To Your Attorney Or Judge

*You can always tell your attorney or judge, I'd like to talk to you about my medication and treatment plan.*

1. What rights do I have? Can you review the Foster Youth Mental Health Bill of Rights with me?
2. Are my rights regarding my medication and treatment plan being upheld? What can I do if my rights are not being upheld?
3. I don't agree with the recommendation to take medication. What choices do I have?

Questions to Ask about Medications adapted from: Psychiatric Medications for Children and Adolescents Part III: Questions to Ask and <http://www.ohiomindsmatter.org/Parents.html>