

My Rights

The ACT's Charter of rights for kids in care

'The Charter is important because we are important, like all children and young people...' (Female, 18)

Info for young people 13-18



There are many reasons why young people come into care, and your story is unique to you. While you are in care you have different people looking after and working with you – your carer, case manager and others. Something else you have is the ACT's *Charter of rights for kids in care*.

This Charter sets out your **rights** and what you should **expect** from the people looking after and working with you while you are in care. **All** these people have to make sure the things they do for you, and allow you to do, respect and uphold your rights.

WHO IS THE CHARTER FOR?

The Charter has been specifically written for children and young people, like you, who are unable to live with their parents and are instead living in someone else's care. You may be living with someone from your family in kinship care, or with another family in foster care, or with other young people in residential care.

The Charter was written with input from young people, children, carers, care agencies and ACT Government people to make sure everyone involved understands how children and young people in care should be treated.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AND WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

There are **10 rights** in the Charter. We spoke to other young people in care about what these rights mean to them and we've used their ideas and words to help explain what your rights are and what they mean in your life.



The right to be safe and looked after

This means you feel safe and cared for and get all the basics you need like food and a safe place to live. It means there are people who will look after you and protect you.



The right to be respected

This means you feel respected by the people who care for you and work with you. It means they listen to you, take you seriously and accept you for who you are.



The right to be treated fairly

This means you have the same opportunities as any other young person. You should not be judged or treated badly or unfairly because of your gender, age, sexuality, race, culture, religion, hobbies or because you are in care.



The right to have fun, play and be healthy

This means you get to see your friends and do things you enjoy. It also means being supported to develop and grow with healthy food, exercise and access to doctors and healthcare when you need it.





The right to be heard

This means you get to have a say about decisions that affect your life (like where you live or go to school). It means people who care for and work with you listen to what you say and take your views into consideration before making a decision. It also means they will support you to feel comfortable to speak up about things that matter to you.



The right to privacy and have your own things

This means you have the right to have your own things and for them to be looked after. It means your need to have space is respected. It also means information about you and your family isn't shared with people who don't need to know.



The right to ask questions about what is happening to you

This means being supported to feel comfortable and safe asking questions, that you know who to go to when you have questions, and that these people will do their best to answer them. These might include questions about why you are in care.



The right to have contact with the people you care about and know about your family and cultural history

This means you are connected to people important to you in a safe way. This includes family like siblings, aunts, uncles and grandparents, but also friends you made before coming into care and friends you've made while in care. It also means your parents if it is safe for you. It also means being supported to participate in cultural activities and traditions, learn about your cultural history and background, and feel proud and connected to your culture.



The right to go to school

This means going to a school or getting an education that meets your needs, that you have help to achieve your best, and you are supported to do training that will help you get a job.



The right to talk to people about things you don't like or don't understand

This means being supported to feel comfortable and safe to speak up about things that matter to you, worry you or are confusing. You should be given the opportunity to talk about these things with people who will listen to what you say, and to hear back from them. And remember – it is okay to ask more than once.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

Your rights are important, but with them come responsibilities. **Everyone** has rights. It is your responsibility to **respect the rights of other people** in your life, including your carer, case manager and other children and young people.

WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

If you want to know more about the Charter and how you should be treated in care you can always ask your family, carer and case manager. You can also ask to talk to your case manager's supervisor. For more information about who you can talk to please go to www.communityservices.act.gov.au

