

What is foster care?



Foster care is when you are removed from your family's home because it is not safe for you to be there anymore. A Judge of the District Court can place you in the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services (foster care). The reason you are placed in foster care is to keep you safe while your family has an opportunity to make positive changes.

Youth come into care for many reasons:

- Physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse or neglect
- Family crisis or conflict
- Voluntary placement by parents or care providers
- Parents or care providers are not able to keep you safe
- Parents or care providers cannot control a youth's behavior

Always remember that you were not removed from your home because of something you did.

Being in foster care doesn't mean you have to live in a foster home, although that is an option. Other placements include relative's home, group home, residential placement or shelter.

You may have many questions about the rules and routines of your placement. Ask your care provider to go over them with you. If you have more questions or concerns or are uncomfortable, be sure to speak with a person whom you trust.

Being removed from your home and placed somewhere new can bring up a lot of feelings. You may feel angry, confused, sad, afraid, relieved and/or glad. It is important to talk to a person you trust about your feelings. All of your feelings are okay.

"It's OK to be mad and sad. It's how you deal with it that counts."

Muriel G., age 17

**Sitting in the corner alone and afraid
trying to hold to hope for the life I've made.
It's so hard to smile while holding back tears.**

**But if you dig down deep somewhere in your soul,
you will find the strength to fill in the empty hole.**

**It might take time, long hours of pain
But nothing to lose, and everything to gain.**

Chanthy L., age 17