

Client / Parent Rights and Responsibilities

A simple guide for families involved with DCFS

THE MAIN IDEA

Families involved with DCFS have the right to understand their services, take part in decisions, be treated respectfully, and know how to raise concerns.

Your Questions, Answered

How should I be treated when I receive services?

You have the right to quality services provided in a respectful way and without discrimination.

Can I choose which services I receive?

You have the right to make an informed choice about services. Before a service begins, you should understand it and be able to agree to it or refuse it.

What should I know before I agree to a service?

- The purpose and type of service
- Why the service is being recommended for you or your family
- What instructions or information you need
- The qualifications of the staff providing the service
- Any charges for the service

Can I refuse a service?

Yes. You may refuse a service. Before you decide, you have the right to receive information about what may happen if you refuse it.

Will I be told if my services are transferred or ended?

Yes. You have the right to be informed before you are transferred to another service or discharged from services.

Will my information be kept private?

You have the right to expect confidentiality and protection of your child welfare records.

How quickly should the agency respond to my needs?

You have the right to a timely response. Services should also be reasonably consistent, coordinated, and connected from one provider or step to the next.

What is a service plan?

It is a plan based on your family's needs. You have the right to receive services through this plan and to help review and update it when your needs change.

What if DCFS does not provide a service I need?

You have the right to receive available services from DCFS or to be referred to another agency that can provide the service.

What can I do if I have a complaint about services?

You have the right to know how to voice a complaint about the services you receive. Discuss your concern with your caseworker or family advocate. If the issue continues, you can contact the Family Advocacy Office at 800-232-3798.

What information am I responsible for sharing?

Give accurate information about issues or circumstances that may affect the care of your children. This includes mental health, substance use, domestic violence, and other important changes or concerns.

What is my responsibility for my child's safety?

Work with the agency to create and maintain a safe environment for your child.

What changes should I report to the agency?

- Tell the agency when you need to change a scheduled appointment
- Tell the agency when your living arrangements change

How should I take part in my service plan?

Work with staff to plan, review, and change your individual service plan.

What should I do if I have a problem with a service?

Tell staff right away if you have concerns or problems with a service you are receiving.

Words You May Hear

Confidentiality: Keeping private information protected and sharing it only as allowed.

Discharge: The end of a service.

Grievance: A formal complaint or concern about a service.

Informed choice: Making a decision after receiving and understanding important information.

Individual service plan: A written plan for services based on your family's needs.

Where can I learn more?

A full list of client rights and responsibilities can be found in CFS-496. Ask your DCFS worker, family advocate, or service provider for a copy and for information about the grievance process.

Important: This handout gives general information. Ask your worker, service provider, or attorney about your specific situation and how a decision may affect your case.