

kids' rights



Charter of Rights for children in care



This book belongs to

This is a book about the Charter of Rights for children in care.

If you are a child in care, this book is for you.

The rights that you have are here to protect you,
so you're safe and happy in everything you do.

What is a charter?

The dictionary says that a charter is a written grant of rights by either a sovereign (like Queen Elizabeth), or a legislative body of a state (in this case the Queensland Parliament).

When the *Children Services Act* was replaced by the *Child Protection Act 1999*, the Queensland Parliament said that children in care should be given rights.

The charter is a list of things telling you how you should be treated as a child in care.

The Queensland Government wrote the list to help keep you safe and happy. This means that when grown-ups read the list they have to do what it says. They cannot ignore it.

This book was written to help you understand what the list says and what your rights are as a child in care.

Once upon a time (when kids didn't have rights),
poor Cinderella swept floors late at night.

Her mean stepsisters wouldn't take her to the ball,
she wasn't allowed any playtime at all.

On the night of the ball she was home washing dishes,
when her fairy godmother gave her three wishes.

But all of that happened such a long time ago,
things are different now and you need to know...







Boys and girls have rights, and I'll tell them to you.
If you forget what they are, here's what you should do.

Ask your carer, your worker or just have a look
for the phone numbers on the back of this book.



You have a right to live in a safe, caring place with friendly grown-ups who give you some space to just be yourself, and if you are sad – to ask for some help so you don't feel so bad.





You have a right to ask after your father and mother and if in your family you have sisters and brothers.

You can ask about them, and perhaps you can see them and talk on the phone or meet them some weekends.

You may have a say in when you might meet, and grown-ups will listen most times that you speak.

If you're unhappy at school or not feeling well, the grown-ups who care for you are the ones you should tell.



You also have rights to be private you see,
you can hide your best toy, you can dress privately.

If you want to be quiet you can sit on your bed,
any thoughts that you have can stay in your head.

Most times it's good to share your thoughts (that is true),
like, "I don't want a hug" or, "I hate eating stew".

But if visitors ask where your family is, well...
you can say that is private and you don't have to tell.



YES

NO



Your carers and worker can give you some answers to questions like:

Why do I live away from my parents?

Why am I in care?

Where are mum and dad now?

Where will I be living next year?





You deserve to be happy and looked after with care,
everyone needs someone at times to be there.

To talk to and know you've been heard when you speak,
'cos you're one special kid, you're precious and unique!

Charter of Rights for a child in care

The Charter of Rights under the *Child Protection Act 1999* describes the core rights that apply to every child who is subject to custody or guardianship of the Department of Child Safety.

The Act establishes the following rights for the child:

- a) to be provided with a safe and stable living environment
- b) to be placed in care that best meets the child's needs and is most culturally appropriate
- c) to maintain relationships with the child's family and community
- d) to be consulted about, and to take part in making decisions affecting the child's life (having regard to the child's age or ability to understand), particularly decisions about where the child is living, contact with the child's family and the child's health and schooling
- e) to be given information about decisions and plans concerning the child's future and personal history, having regard to the child's age or ability to understand
- f) to privacy, including, for example, in relation to the child's personal information
- g) if the child is under the long-term guardianship of the Chief Executive, to regular review of the child's care arrangements



- h) to have access to dental, medical and therapeutic services, necessary to meet the child's needs
- i) to have access to education appropriate to the child's age and development
- j) to have access to job training opportunities and help in finding appropriate employment
- k) to receive appropriate help with the transition from being a child in care to independence, including, for example, help with housing, access to income support and training and education.

Want to know more?

If you want to know more about your rights or you have some questions, don't forget to first ask your carer or child safety officer. They are there to help you.

If you want to contact other children in care, freecall the CREATE Foundation on **1800 655 105** or email them on **create@create.org.au**. You can also go to their website at **www.create.org.au**

CREATE Foundation is about you. They connect and empower children and young people in care. CREATE Foundation provide fun activities and experiences organised by kids like you – kids in care.

If you need more help, you can find it here:

Kids Help Line

Freecall 1800 555 1800

Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

Freecall 1800 688 275

All children have a right to be looked after in a safe and caring way. If this is not happening for you, call the Department of Child Safety on **1800 811 810** or visit our website **www.childsafety.qld.gov.au**

childsafety
Child protection... our first priority



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Queensland Government
Department of Child Safety