

## What can I do if my rights are being violated?

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1. Try to remember the event. Writing it down can help.
  - What happened?
  - Where did it happen?
  - When did it happen?
  - Who was involved?
  - What rights were violated?
2. If you feel safe, try to resolve it with the people who were involved.
3. If you feel safe, talk to your caregiver or staff member.
4. Contact your social worker/probation officer and lawyer
5. Contact the LA County DFCS/ Probation Ombudsperson.
6. Contact the California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson



## You Have Rights!

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You have rights if you live in foster homes, resource family homes, STRTPs, shelters, or transitional housing facilities. The law says social workers (SW) and probation officers (PO) must tell you and your caregiver about your rights in a way that you understand.

The law also says:

- Your SW/PO must talk with you about your rights every 6 months and before every placement change
- You have a lawyer and their job is to defend your rights

## Contact Us

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**California Foster Care Ombudsperson**  
1-877-846-1602

[fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov](mailto:fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov)  
[www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov](http://www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov)

**LA County DCFS Ombudsperson**  
1-888-445-1234

[afriend@auditor.lacounty.gov](mailto:afriend@auditor.lacounty.gov)  
<http://ombudsstrtp.lacounty.gov>

**LA County Probation Ombudsperson**  
1-877-822-3222

[ombudsman@probation.lacounty.gov](mailto:ombudsman@probation.lacounty.gov)  
<https://probation.lacounty.gov/ombudsman>

# THE FOSTER YOUTH BILL OF RIGHTS

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A Guide to Your  
Sexual Orientation & Gender  
Identity (SOGIE) Rights



To learn more about all your rights  
visit [LAYouthRights.com](http://LAYouthRights.com)





## Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, & Expression (SOGIE)

### Can I be treated differently because of my sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or expression (SOGIE)?

No. You have the right to be treated fairly and with respect, and get the same services, care, treatment, and benefits as all foster youth. No one can harass you, hurt you, or discriminate against you based on your actual or what someone thinks is your SOGIE. If you feel harassed or threatened your caregiver and SW/PO must do something to stop it. No one has the right to force you to change your SOGIE.

### Do I have the right to live in a home that respects my sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE)?

Yes. You have the right to live in a home or STRTP that accepts your SOGIE, regardless of what any records say about your sex at birth.

You also have the right to use a safe bathroom that matches your gender identity. If your caregivers do not accept your SOGIE and you feel unsafe, you should tell your attorney and SW/PO. You have the right to move to a different place.

### Can I request that my caregiver, social worker/probation officer (SW/PO), and other people in my home call me by my preferred name and gender pronoun?

Yes. You have the right to be called by the name and gender pronoun you choose regardless of what any records say. Your caregiver and SW/PO must respect your chosen name and pronouns. Gender pronouns are words like she/her, he/him, or gender-neutral pronouns like they/them.

### Can I dress, style my hair, and use products that match my gender identity and expression?

Yes. You have the right to have clothes and dress in a way that matches your gender identity and expression. You have the right to cut and style your hair and have grooming and hygiene products (like soap, shampoo, deodorant, and lotion) that respect your gender identity and expression. Your caregiver must make sure you have the things listed above.

### Can I participate in extracurricular, enrichment, spiritual, and social activities for LGBTQ+ youth?

Yes. You have the right to participate in activities for LGBTQ+ youth, like LGBTQ+ sports, Gay Prom, and LGBTQ+ youth clubs or support groups. You have the right to see and have friends and mentors outside of foster care that are LGBTQ+.

### Can I keep information about my sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) private?

Yes. You have the right to keep information about your SOGIE private, unless you allow the information to be shared. This

information may also be shared if sharing it will protect your health and safety or if the judge orders it to be shared.

### Do I have the right to see a doctor or counselor that supports and understands my sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression (SOGIE)?

Yes. You have the right to get gender affirming health care and mental health care. You have the right to see doctors and counselors that are specially trained to serve transgender and gender diverse youth. Gender affirming health care might include, but is not limited to, prescribed medications that stop puberty, hormone treatments, or surgery to make your body's appearance match your gender identity.

Gender affirming mental health care means seeing a counselor that has special training to work with transgender or gender diverse youth. Gender affirming surgery would require parental consent or a court order for minors, and non-minor dependents can consent for themselves.

Gender diverse means people of all different genders including those outside of male and female.

