

# All About You...

## A Georgia Foster Child's Rights and Benefits



As a foster child in the state of Georgia, you have benefits and rights to services, like healthcare and education.

### STAYING HEALTHY—BODY, MIND, TEETH AND MORE

You now receive healthcare (including visits to the doctor or hospital) through a managed care program known as Georgia Families 360. If you have questions about your service, call Amerigroup Community Care of Georgia. The number is 1-800-600-4441.



**Complete healthcare.** Georgia Medicaid provides you with physical and mental healthcare through age 26, as well as necessary medication, immunization (shots), trauma assessment (including medical history and a summary of recommendations), other assessments and roundtrip transportation for healthcare visits.

**Physical exams.** Within three days of your placement with a foster family, you will receive a complete physical exam. You will receive physical exams every year afterward, even if you change placements.

### New school transition services

- **Initial meeting.** Within five days of enrolling in a new school, a school social worker is required to meet with you, your DFCS caseworker and your foster parent to talk about services you may need, such as special education, counseling or more.
- **IEP.** When you enroll in a new school, your Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be reviewed and transferred. Your records must be sent to the new school within 10 days of when someone asks for them.
- **Enrollment.** You must be immediately enrolled with full participation in all school activities, regardless of status or documentation.

- **Expenses.** If you are eligible and in an Independent Living Program, you may receive money for school-related expenses.
- **College.** If you attend Georgia public or private colleges and are in good academic standing, you can receive additional money until age 26. Contact the Independent Living Program for funding and scholarship applications.
- **Pregnancy.** If you are enrolled in school and are absent because you are pregnant, you can receive at-home schooling and other services.

### FAMILY CONNECTIONS

**Reaching relatives.** Within 30 days of when you move, DFCS must try to identify and contact your parents or other relatives who have an ongoing commitment to you.

**Placement with siblings.** DFCS must make reasonable efforts to place you with any brothers or sisters, unless that is not good for the safety and well-being of you or those siblings.



**Dental care.** If you are over age three and did not have a dental (teeth and mouth) exam within six months before your placement, you will get a complete dental exam by a dentist. After that you will get a dental exam twice a year. Children younger than three get an oral exam during their well check visit to the pediatrician (children's doctor).

**Pregnancy benefits.** If you are pregnant you will receive gynecology care, family planning, nurse/midwife services and participation in the Healthy Babies program. Text For Baby ([text4baby.org](http://text4baby.org)) provides free tips and connects you with other local services to help you during your pregnancy.

**Reproductive health.** Young men and young women in foster care statewide can get sex education and reproductive services through the Georgia Department of Public Health, Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program (AHYD) <http://dph.georgia.gov/adolescent-health-and-youth-development-ahyd>.

## GETTING THE EDUCATION YOU NEED TO SUCCEED

**Right to education.** If you follow school rules, you are guaranteed a free public education through high school.



## Educational stability

- Reasonable efforts must be made to keep you in your home school, with services. You must only move to a new school if it is in your best interest to do so.
- In determining the most appropriate placement for you, your case manager must consider the location of your current school. Your case manager will also refer you for an educational assessment.
- Your reunification plan (rejoining your birth family) must ensure your educational stability.
- If you change schools, you must be allowed to immediately enroll in the new school rather than wait for admission.

**Family visits.** Your case manager must make reasonable efforts for you to have frequent visits with parents, siblings and relatives unless that is not good for the safety or well-being of you or other children. If you are denied these visits, contact a child attorney or CASA.

**Transition plans.** 90 days prior to your 18th birthday, you will get help developing a personal transition plan for housing, work, health insurance and other matters. A formal transition meeting will be arranged for you 90 days before aging out (at age 21) to talk about your transition to independence.

## FOR THOSE 18 AND OLDER

**Records.** If you are 18 or older and are leaving foster care, you have a right to a free copy of your education and health records.

**Extending foster care.** You can remain in foster care from age 18 to 21 1/2 if you sign an agreement within six months of leaving care and meet school and/or work requirements.



## A LAWYER TO REPRESENT YOU

You have the right to a lawyer to represent you in court. If you cannot afford a lawyer, one will be assigned to you and you will not have to pay.



This card was developed by Georgia Appleseed and Families First, two groups that help protect your rights. For information updates and links to resources, please visit [www.GaAppleseed.org/fostercarerights](http://www.GaAppleseed.org/fostercarerights). 12.14