



**STEP-BY-STEP GUIDANCE ON DISTRIBUTION
AND REVIEW OF THE
BILL OF RIGHTS FOR YOUTH AGED 14 AND
OLDER**

1.	<p>The assigned caseworker must provide youth aged 14 or older who are in foster care with a copy of the <i>New York State Bill of Rights for Children and Youth in Foster Care</i> (Pub. 2001) (Bill of Rights). A copy of <i>Know My Rights in Foster Care</i> (Pub. 2002) must also be provided. Both publications are available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Italian, Korean, Polish, Spanish, Russian, Urdu, and Yiddish.</p> <p>These publications must be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• at a casework contact within the first 30 days of placement when entering foster care when age 14 or older, or• at the casework contact immediately after the youth turns 14.
2.	<p>During the relevant casework contact, the caseworker must read the Bill of Rights to any youth in foster care who is unable to read it independently. If the youth requires the Bill of Rights in a different language, the agency must utilize an interpreter to read and discuss the Bill of Rights with them. The caseworker must always discuss the Bill of Rights with the youth, whether read independently or not, to assess their understanding and answer any question they may have.</p>
3.	<p>During the casework contact, the caseworker must review the Bill of Rights with the youth in a way that is age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate, and the caseworker must be prepared to answer any questions the youth may have. Caseworkers should also answer any questions that the parent, foster parent(s), pre-adoptive parent(s), or relative caregiver(s), if applicable, may have so that they may also have a clear understanding of the youth's rights.</p>
4.	<p>After the document is reviewed, and within 90 days of the review of the document, the youth must write their name attesting that they received a copy of the Bill of Rights and that they discussed it with their caseworker, parent(s) or guardian(s), and foster parent(s), if applicable. The youth, caseworker, and supervisor must print, sign, and date the Bill of Rights. If the youth is unable or unwilling to sign the document, a note must be entered on the youth's signature line stating that the youth did not sign and why.</p>
5.	<p>At the initial Service Plan Review (SPR), or at the next SPR for youth in foster care, the Bill of Rights must be distributed and reviewed again, to engage the parent(s)/guardian(s), the attorney for the child, and, if applicable, the foster parent(s), pre-adoptive parent(s), or relative caregiver(s). If they have not already been encouraged to sign the document, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and foster parent(s) must be encouraged to do so. The caseworker must provide a signed copy of the Bill of Rights to all participants and place a copy in the youth's case file. The event must be recorded in the next family assessment and services plan (FASP). If a <i>required</i> participant in the case-planning team is unable to attend the SPR, the caseworker must mail a copy of the signed Bill of Rights to that participant.</p>
6.	<p>If the youth initially refuses to sign the Bill of Rights but decides to do so at a later date, the signed document must be placed with the original unsigned Bill of Rights in the youth's case file. The next FASP must be updated to reflect the signing of the Bill of Rights.</p>
7.	<p>The caseworker should have ongoing conversations with the youth regarding their rights while in foster care and be available to the youth when the youth expresses curiosity and/or concern about their rights. The caseworker should periodically meet in private with the youth to give the youth an opportunity to discuss any concerns/problems with their rights.</p>
8.	<p>It is strongly recommended that the Bill of Rights be discussed with all participants annually at the SPR.</p>