

Living with other children at a child welfare institution can be fun, friendly, inspiring, boring, annoying and more besides. It's not always easy! Sometimes you and the grown-ups may not see things the same way. That can easily happen when lots of people live together. You can't always do what you want. But there are also limits to what the grown-ups can decide and what they can do towards you.

When you are at a child welfare institution you have some rights and also some duties. In this booklet we will be telling you about your rights. If you think some of what is written in the booklet is hard to understand, you can talk to one of the grown-ups at the institution or to people at the county governor's office.

CARE

You have the right to safety, well-being and care

You have the right to feel safe and sound at the child welfare institution.

The grown-ups must look after you and take good care of you. They must be kind to you and help you when you need help. They must do what they can to make sure you do well.

You have the right to know why you are here

The grown-ups must explain to you why you are at the child welfare institution. They must tell you how long you might be staying here and what will happen next.

When you ask to, you have the right to see and have explained to you what is written about you.

You have the right to have your say and you have the right to help make decisions

You always have the right to say how you feel about things.

The grown-ups must listen to what you have to say.

You have the right to help make decisions about everyday activities at the institution and what you will be doing together in your spare time. The grown-ups must take what you say seriously before they decide on anything about you.

FREEDOM

As long as it is safe, you can go wherever you want to.

The older you get, the more places you will be able to go.

You and the grown-ups have to have a chat about where it is safe for you to go.

You have to tell a grown-up where you are going. If you have left the institution without telling a grown-up first, or if you don't come back by the agreed time, the grown-ups have to go looking for you. If they don't find you, there are rules for who has to come along and look for you.

You have the right to spend time with your family

The grown-ups must help you so you can have contact with your family.

How and how often will have been decided at the same time it was decided that you were to stay at a child welfare institution.

You have the right to spend time with your friends

The grown-ups have to help you so you can see your friends while you are at the institution.

If you want friends to come and visit, the grown-ups have to help make the visit nice for you. Sometimes it may have been decided that it's not good for you to spend time with one or more of your friends. If that's the case, the grown-ups must do what they can to help you make new friends.

You have the right to do things you enjoy

The grown-ups must help you so you can carry on doing the things you enjoy.

The grown-ups must also help you to find new hobbies and interests, and do what they can to allow you to use local facilities. They must help you get safely to and from your leisure activities.

You have the right to write letters to whoever you want

You can write what you want.

If the grown-ups think there is anything dangerous in the post sent to you, they can decide to open the post while you or the person who sent you the post is there.

You have the right to make phone calls

You can phone almost whenever you want to, whoever you want to.

You may use the phone where you live or you can use your own phone if you have one. Sometimes it will have been decided that there are some people you are not allowed to make contact with. This means you will not be allowed to phone them either. There may also be times of day when you are not allowed to phone anyone other than your contact at the child welfare service, or at the county governor's office.

PRIVACY

You have the right to have your own room

You have the right to have your own room. In principle, you can do up your room as you like (put posters and photos up and so on).

You have the right to have help to look after your own things

If you have any things or money you are worried about losing, you can tell a grown-up. The grown-ups will then help you keep your things safe.

If you have things you are too young to look after, the grown-ups will look after them for you.

You have the right to feel safe and secure

No one is allowed to poke around in your things.

But if the grown-ups have reasons to think there might be something dangerous in your room, they are allowed to check the room and go through your things. You have the right to be in the room when they check the room.

If the grown-ups think you might have hidden something dangerous in your clothes, they are allowed to check. But they must ask you first. If you are a girl, the grown-up who checks the clothes you are wearing must be a woman, and if you are a boy, the grown-up must be a man. If the grown-ups find something dangerous, they must take it away with them.

You have the right to be treated fairly by the grown-ups

No grown-ups are ever allowed to hit a child, lock a child in, bully a child or use bad language to a child.

If you are doing something wrong or have done something wrong, the grown-ups at the institution must talk to you and tell you why it is wrong. If you are very angry or doing something very wrong, the grown-ups have to try and stop you. If necessary, in order to protect you, the grown-ups can hold you by force for a short while or take you out of the room you are in.

RESPECT

You have the right to respect for what you and your family believe in

The grown-ups must show respect for what you and your family believe and what you and your family think is important.

The grown-ups at the institution cannot decide what you should believe in. You can think and believe what you like. The grown-ups must do what they can so you can take part in any religious festivals or customs that are important to you.

You have the right to learn things

You have the right to go to school or learn things in another way. The grown-ups must help you with homework and things to do with school.

You don't have any choice about going to school. But if you have problems at school, you can talk to the grown-ups about them.

You have the right to see a doctor

If you feel ill, you must tell the grown-ups.

They must help you and call a doctor in if you need it. A grown-up must come with you and stay with you if you go to the doctor's or to hospital.

PROTECTION

You have the right to complain to others

If there's something you don't like or aren't happy with, you can say so.

You can complain to the grown-ups at the institution.

They must listen to what you have to say. You can also complain to the people at the county governor's office or you can contact your child welfare officer. You can call them, talk to them

when they visit, or write a letter. If you want them to, the grown-ups at the institution must help you to make the phone call or write the letter.

What does the county governor's office do?

The people at the county governor's office are there to make sure that everyone who works at the child welfare institution does their job properly.

Those who work at the county governor's office are interested in everything that happens to you and how you are doing at the institution. They have to make sure that the grown-ups do not do anything towards you they are not allowed to. They have to make sure there are enough grown-ups to look after you and the others.

You can talk to the county governor's office about anything you feel is important. If you think the grown-ups at the institution are doing something they are not allowed to, the county governor's office wants to know about it.

Visits from the county governor's office

At least twice a year, two or more of the staff from the county governor's office will visit the institution you are staying at. Sometimes the county governor's office will tell the institution before they visit. Other times, the county governor's office wants to see what it's like at the institution you are staying at when no one knows they are coming.

If you have complained to people at the county governor's office, then someone will have to visit.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Many of the rules that apply to the rights of children while they are at an institution are written down in things called regulations. If you ask to see the rules, the grown-ups at the institution or the people who work at the county governor's office must give you them.

You can also find the regulations on children's rights on this website: www.ung.no/barnevern

The County Governor's Office

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

Telephone:

The child welfare officer in your municipality

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

Telephone: