



Staying in Foster Care Past Age 18

Who do I talk to about staying in or re-entering foster care after age 18?

You can talk to:

- Your county caseworker, private provider case worker, or Independent Living worker
- Your lawyer or your CASA
- The [Youth Advisory Board](#)
- Juvenile Law Center at 1-800-875-8887

Juvenile Law Center also has two videos that feature former and current foster youth talking about the decision to remain in care that may help you with your decision.

You can find both videos and other resources like flyers, FAQs, and youth guides at:

jlc.org/fosteringconnections

How long can I stay under DHS care?

You can stay in care until you are 21. You need to be doing at least one of the activities listed below unless you cannot because of a medical or mental health condition.

- Completing high school or an equivalent program;
- Enrolling in college, community college, or trade school;
- Participating in a program that will help you get a job;
- Working at least 80 hours per month.

Why would I want to stay in care past age 18?

If you stay in care or re-enter care, you can continue to receive services through DHS. This can help you get:

- A place to live
- Stability, support and guidance from staff
- Health insurance
- Access to supervised independent living and apartment programs
- Food, clothes and other essentials
- An opportunity to finish high school or other schooling
- Involvement of the court and your advocate to make sure things are going ok

What if I left care when I turned 18, but now I've changed my mind?

If you left care when you were 18 or older and are still under 21, **you may be eligible to re-enter foster care.** To re-enter foster care you need to be doing or agree to do one of the activities listed above.

