



ALL CHILDREN HAVE RIGHTS

12-17-YEAR-OLDS



# When you cannot live at home

ABOUT BEING PLACED IN CARE



Børnerådet



- 3 WHEN YOU CANNOT LIVE AT HOME**
- 6 THE OLDER YOU ARE, THE MORE RIGHTS YOU HAVE**
- 8 CASEWORKERS, EDUCATORS AND OTHER ADULTS**
- 14 INFORMATION AND THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD**
- 18 PRIVACY**
- 22 FAMILY AND FRIENDS**
- 28 HOUSE RULES**
- 34 MONEY AND WORK**
- 38 SCHOOL AND EDUCATION**
- 42 FOR YOU IN SPECIAL INSTITUTIONS**
- 43 WHEN YOU TURN 18**
- 44 IF YOU WANT TO COMPLAIN**
- 45 SOMEBODY TO TALK TO**
- 48 WHO CAN HELP ME?**

# When you cannot live at home

YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN THIS BOOKLET because you are going to live—or perhaps already live—somewhere else than with your mom and dad.

It may be difficult to live in an unfamiliar place and be without everything you know. Especially if you do not think that it is a good idea. However, the municipality has decided that it is best for you to live apart—at least for a while. The idea is that you must do well and develop as much as possible. And the municipality has assessed that this is not possible for you at home at the moment.

Some children placed in care live with foster families. Others live in accommodation facilities or institutions for children if they have a particularly hard time. This booklet gives good advice to all of you, and you can also read about

your rights when you are not living at home. When you know your rights and what the adults can do to help you, it is also easier to talk to the adults about how they can help you in the best possible way and how the rules should be for you. Everything described in this booklet comes from acts and rules which Denmark has agreed to follow. The rules are described in what is known as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. And the act concerning your placement is called the Act on Social Services.

All children in Denmark are entitled to a good life—that also applies to children who do not live with their mom and dad. Children placed in care have the same rights as everyone else, and they are entitled to be treated just as well as all other children and young persons in Denmark.

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## WHAT IF...

If you think that certain things are not as described in this booklet, the adults must try to help you. Tell them what you think should be changed or improved.

If you do not think that you can talk to your caseworker or one of the other adults close to you, you may always call BørneTelefonen or log on to their chat on the website of BørneTelefonen. It is free and you do not have to say who you are.



**What I want is for people to listen me, and I really want that others who are placed in an institution are listened to as well.**

ISABELLA

**BØRNETELEFONEN  
116 111**

- you may also text your questions

**BØRNECHATTEN**  
[www.bornetelefonen.dk](http://www.bornetelefonen.dk)

**THE ADULTS HAVE A DUTY ALWAYS TO ASK YOU BEFORE MAKING ANY DECISIONS ABOUT YOU. YOU ARE ALWAYS ENTITLED TO AN EXPLANATION OF WHY THINGS TURNED OUT THE WAY THEY DID.**



# The older you are the more rights you have

## 12 years old

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You are entitled to read the documents about you—this is known as *access to documents*, and you can read more about it on page 16.

You are entitled to complain against some of the decisions that concern you. Your caseworker must help you if you want to complain e.g. against having to move. Your caseworker can also tell you what else you can complain against. Read more on page 44.

In some cases, you may need a lawyer. This is a person who can help you with all matters concerning your rights while you are placed in care. Your caseworker must tell you when you are entitled to a lawyer and what you can use a lawyer for.

## 15 years old


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When you turn 15, you have to say yes to being placed in care—this is known as a *consent*. But even if you say no, you may still not go home. If the municipality finds that it is best for you, they are entitled to decide that you have to stay.

## 16 years old

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Together with your caseworker, you have to write down the goals for your future when you turn 16. This may be goals for your education, your job, where you want to live, etc.



YOU CAN ALWAYS CALL  
OR SEND A TEXT MESSAGE  
TO BØRNETELEFONEN.  
BØRNETELEFONEN PROVIDES GOOD  
ADVICE OR YOU CAN JUST FIND  
SOMEONE TO TALK TO. IT IS FREE TO  
CALL BØRNETELEFONEN ON 116 111.  
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO SAY WHO YOU  
ARE, AND YOUR CALL WILL NOT  
APPEAR FROM YOUR PHONE BILL.  
YOU CAN ALSO LOG ON TO THE CHAT  
ON [WWW.BOERNETELEFONEN.DK](http://WWW.BOERNETELEFONEN.DK)

## 18 years old

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When you turn 18, you are in principle an adult. This means that the way you are placed in care will change. Perhaps you do not have to be placed in care anymore, or perhaps you still need help from the municipality.

By the time you are 17½, you and your caseworker must make a plan for what should happen when you turn 18. In this connection, you need to discuss where you are going to live, what you will be doing—e.g. whether you should get a job or start an education—how much money you have and many other things. You also need to discuss if you still need support—this is known as *aftercare*. You can read more about aftercare on page 43 and in the booklet “Når du fylder 18 år” (in Danish only).



116 111

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# **Caseworkers, educators and other adults**

**- ABOUT THE ADULTS WHO CAN HELP  
YOU WHEN YOU ARE PLACED IN CARE**



Hi! I am going home next weekend to visit my parents but I do not really feel like going. I think it is a bit difficult to discuss it with someone who knows my parents. Is there anybody else I can talk to?

/ Sara

Hi Sara

You can always talk to your caseworker, your advisor or your foster parents—even if it is about your parents. If you do not want to talk to any of them, there might be another adult who you trust—e.g. your support person, your contact educator, your teacher, your football coach or the mom or dad of one of your friends. If there is there nobody you want to talk to, you can call or send a text message to BørneTelefonen on tel. 116 111—it is free and will not appear from your phone bill.



### WHAT CAN I USE A CASEWORKER FOR?

Your caseworker is employed by the municipality, and he or she will follow you while you do not live at home. Your caseworker has a duty to ensure that the decisions made about you are always in your best interest. You can always call or e-mail your caseworker if there is anything you would like to discuss. If you think it is difficult to get hold of your caseworker, you can talk to your contact educator or your parents about it—maybe they can help you get hold of him or her.

Your caseworker has a duty to visit and talk to you at least twice a year—but he or she may visit or call you more often if you want.



### WHAT IS A CONTACT EDUCATOR?

When you live in an accommodation facility or institution, it might be nice for you to know that one of the adults at the place must be there especially for you. This person is known as a contact educator. At some places, you will be assigned a contact educator already before you move in. At other places, you can find out together who that person should be.

## ADVISOR

IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY HAVE AN ADVISOR AND YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ONE, YOUR CASEWORKER MUST HELP YOU. YOU CAN ALSO CALL THE ADVISOR TEAM OF CHILDREN'S WELFARE IN DENMARK ON TEL. 35 55 55 59 OR BØRNETELEFONEN TEL. 116 111. ADULTS WILL BE READY TO LISTEN TO YOU AND HELP YOU.

Your contact educator is the person who will pay special attention to you and how you are doing. Usually, it is your contact educator who will help you with all practical matter like calling the doctor, attending school-home meetings if your mom or dad is unable to attend, helping with payment of pocket money and money for clothes, etc. Your contact educator is also the person who has the most contact to your parents.

If you live with a foster family, you do not have a contact educator—then your foster dad and foster mom will help you.

### WHAT CAN I USE A SUPPORT PERSON FOR?

A support person is an adult you can call if you need it while you are placed in care. The only task of the support person is to be there for you. You are entitled to a support person, and your caseworker must help you find one if you want one when you are placed in care. It may be someone from your family, a friend or a teacher—as long as it is someone over the age 15 that you trust. Your support person may also be your advisor.

### WHAT CAN I USE AN ADVISOR FOR?

All children placed in care are entitled to an advisor. An advisor is someone who can accompany you to meetings and help you say what you would like to say. The advisor may also help you understand what is said and remember what is decided. It is entirely up to you to decide who your advisor should be. But in special cases, your caseworker may decide that the person you have chosen is unable to provide the help you need. If this happens, your caseworker must help you find another.

### WHAT IS A FOSTER CARE CONSULTANT?

The foster care consultant is employed by the municipality. In some municipalities, they are known as *psychological advisors*. The foster care consultant will find and approve the foster families. He or she will help your foster family with all practical matters in relation to your everyday life. The foster care consultant also checks that everything is alright with you and that you are doing well together.

### WHAT IS A SUPERVISOR?


Every six months, the *supervisor* will visit you. The supervisor

may either be your caseworker or someone else from your municipality who must visit you and talk to you about how things are going. You must talk to the supervisor alone unless you would like somebody else to be present—e.g. your advisor or your contact educator. But it is up to *you* to decide. No adults can decide that they want to be present.

There is also another supervisor who is not your caseworker. That supervisor is from the municipality in which your accommodation facility or institution is located—or from the municipality which has approved your foster family. This is known as the *operational supervision* and they must at least once a year check that the place where you live works well and is suitable for children.

### CAN I AVOID THE VISITS BY THE SUPERVISOR?

No—all children placed in care must receive visits from the supervisor. The purpose of the supervision is to ensure that you are doing well at the place where you live. But you are free to say that you do not feel like talking to the supervisor. However, they may decide that they want to talk to you anyway.

 **WILL IT BE STRICTLY  
BETWEEN US WHAT I TELL  
MY CASEWORKER OR MY  
CONTACT EDUCATOR?**

Many of the things you discuss with the adults will be written down to help the adults remember it. If, for instance, you tell your caseworker that you do not like going to school or that you would like to see your parents more.

Your mom and dad—or those who have custody of you—are entitled to know what is going on. So if your caseworker or the adults where you live write down what you are talking about and put the documents in your case file or in a diary, your parents are allowed to see it.

The adults have a *duty of confidentiality*. This means that they are only allowed to tell what they know to others who are responsible for helping you—e.g. your parents, your foster parents or the educators if you live in an accommodation facility or institution. They are not allowed

to say anything about it to others, e.g. other children at the school or your friends' parents.

If you would like to talk to an adult about something you do not want anybody else to know about, you can ask him or her not to pass on the information. If, after all, the adult thinks that what you tell is important to pass on, then you can agree on how it is said and to whom.

 **CAN I GET A  
LAWYER?**

In some cases, you may need a lawyer. If you need one and you are more than 12 years old, your caseworker must help you find one.

A large, stylized yellow quotation mark graphic consisting of two thick, curved lines.

I have no idea who my caseworker, support person or contact person is—it has all gone haywire.

SONYA

**NEXT TIME YOU SEE YOUR CASEWORKER, YOUR ADVISOR, YOUR SUPPORT PERSON, YOUR SUPERVISOR AND YOUR FOSTER CARE CONSULTANT, YOU CAN ASK THEM HOW YOU CAN GET HOLD OF THEM. YOU CAN WRITE THEIR PHONE NUMBERS AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES ON THE BACK OF THIS BOOKLET.**



# Information and the right to be heard

- ABOUT SPEAKING YOUR MIND AND  
BEING TOLD WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN



Hi! I have just been told that I have to move from my foster family to an institution although I have told my caseworker that I would like to stay. But now I have to move and nobody has told me why. What should I do? / Daniel

Hi Daniel  
You are always entitled to an explanation when you have to move. Even if you do not want to move, there might be a good reason for the decision that you have not thought of. The municipality must tell you. If you do not agree with the decision, you can tell your caseworker—but this does not necessarily mean that things will be the way you want.

**?** **MUST I ALWAYS BE ASKED BEFORE DECISIONS ARE MADE ABOUT ME?**

Your caseworker must always talk to you and listen to your opinion. If you or your caseworker thinks that it is difficult for you to speak *your own* mind—e.g. if you are too young or is under pressure from your parents—then he or she may decide to find out what you think in another way, e.g. by talking to your advisor, your support person, your foster parents or someone else you know well.

**?** **WHY DOES THE MUNICIPALITY NOT DO WHAT I WANT NOW THAT MY CASEWORKER HAS ASKED ME?**

Even though the caseworker talks to you about your situation and


listens to you, things will not necessarily be the way you want them. The municipality is entitled to decide something which is against your will if they think it is best for you. But you are entitled to know *why* things have been decided the way they have. You may complain against some decisions—your caseworker must tell you which. You can read more about how you complain on page 44.

**?** **AM I ALLOWED TO READ THE DOCUMENTS IN MY CASE FILE?**

If you are more than 12 years old, you are entitled to read the documents about you—this is known as *access to documents*. This might be letters written by your caseworker to your parents, the results of an examination by



a psychologist or what is written in the diary at the place where you live. If you have not turned 12 and you want to look in your case file, it is up to your caseworker to decide whether you should be allowed to do so. He or she has to assess whether you are mature enough to know what the documents say.

 **ARE MY PARENTS ALLOWED TO READ THE DOCUMENTS IN MY CASE FILE?**

You are entitled to read the documents in your case from when

you are 12 years old. Your mom and dad are parties to the case—if they have custody of you—and they are therefore also allowed to read the documents in your case. But *only* if they have custody of you; otherwise they are not allowed to. However, the municipality may decide that your parents are not allowed to read all documents in the case. They may do so if they think that it would harm you. If there is something you do not want your parents to read, you can talk to your caseworker about it.

## ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS—WHAT IS THAT?

THE MUNICIPALITY IN WHICH YOUR PARENTS LIVE HAVE ALL THE DOCUMENTS ABOUT YOU. THE FILE THEY ARE PLACE IN IS CALLED THE CASE FILE. THE DOCUMENTS MAY BE LETTERS FROM THE MUNICIPALITY TO YOUR PARENTS, FROM YOUR SCHOOL TO THE MUNICIPALITY OR THE RESULTS OF AN EXAMINATION BY A PSYCHOLOGIST. IF YOU “APPLY FOR ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS” IT MEANS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE DOCUMENTS IN THE CASE FILE. WHEN YOU TURN 12, YOU ARE ENTITLED TO ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS—TALK TO YOUR CASEWORKER ABOUT WHAT YOU SHOULD DO.





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I think that my caseworkers have been really nice. It has been really nice to have someone to tell things.

ANDREA



# Privacy

- ABOUT BEING ALONE AND  
KEEPING THINGS TO YOURSELF

Hi there. I am 16 years old and I live in an accommodation facility. I really think that the staff is picking on me these days. They want to decide what time I should get up and how much telly I should watch. They say that are in charge of those things—but is that really true?  
/ Kristoffer

Hi Kristoffer  
Even though you do not live at home, you have the exact same rights as all other children and young persons in Denmark. This means that you are entitled to privacy, to visits, to close your door and to be who you are. The facility where you live have rules which you must follow. This means that you cannot just go to bed and get up whenever you want. You must take part in the household chores if you can. And then you must show consideration for those living with you. House rules are made to ensure that everyone feels at home and comfortable. So the staff is allowed to make demands on you—e.g. not to sleep all day or help doing the dishes and clean the house.

### **? ARE THE ADULTS ALLOWED TO SEARCH MY ROOM?**

The adults where you live are required to take good care of you. If you live in an accommodation facility or institution, the staff may in special cases search your room. But only if they think that you have something in your room that may be harmful to yourself or others. Or if they think that you have things that are not allowed where you live. First they must ask you to find the things, they think you have. If you refuse, they are entitled to search your room. You are entitled to be present and the search must be

carried out calmly and in respect for you and your belongings. When they search your room, it is a forcible measure, and it must always be reported to the municipality. Remember that you are entitled to tell how you experienced the forcible measure. For more information about forcible measures, see pages 30 and 31.


### **? ARE THE ADULTS ALLOWED TO SEARCH MY BODY FOR E.G. HASH?**

If the adults at your accommodation facility or institution have a good reason to believe that you

are carrying something that you are not allowed to—e.g. things that might be harmful to yourself or others—they are allowed to search your body. This is known as a *body search*. However, they may never ask you to take off anything else than your shoes and your outerwear. And as a general rule, it must be someone of the same gender who checks you outside your clothes. When they perform a body search, it is a forcible measure, and it must always be reported to the municipality. Remember that you are entitled to tell how you experienced the forcible measure.


 **IS IT TRUE THAT I AM NOT ALLOWED TO LOCK THE DOOR TO MY ROOM?**

You are entitled to privacy at the place where you live. It is therefore a good idea to specify in your house rules that you must knock on each others' doors. But the adults may decide that you may not close or lock your door if they think you are going to do something that is not allowed. Or if they think that you may harm yourself or others. You are always entitled to a good explanation of why things are the way they are—and you can always talk to your caseworker if you think that the adults control too much.

 **MAY THE ADULTS DECIDE HOW I AM SUPPOSED TO LOOK? AM I ALLOWED TO WEAR MY PIERCINGS OR DYE MY HAIR?**

At some places, the adults would like to decide what clothes you

should wear, whether you may wear your piercings, whether you may dye your hair, etc. The adults are allowed to set the ground rules for how you look. But obviously it has to be a reasonable set of rules. If you think that it is completely unfair, you can talk to your caseworker, your support person or another adult who you trust.

 **ARE THE ADULTS ALLOWED TO READ MY LETTERS, E-MAILS, TEXT MESSAGES OR LISTEN TO MY TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS?**

If the adults want to check your letters, e-mails or text messages, it must have been decided by the municipality. But you also have to agree to them doing so. If you do not, the letters, e-mails or text messages must either be discarded or returned to the sender if this is possible. However, this does not apply to letters from public authorities—e.g. your caseworker—or your lawyer. You are entitled to read those without anyone interfering. The act says that letters, e-mails and text messages may only be checked for short periods of time—and you are entitled to know why the municipality wants to check your correspondence. The act does not say that you are entitled to know for how long your correspondence will be checked. But the municipality should tell you if you ask. If you live with a foster family, the adults are not allowed to check your mail, text messages or telephone conversations.

**IF YOU LIVE IN  
A FOSTER FAMILY,  
THE ADULTS ARE NOT  
ALLOWED TO CHECK  
YOUR ROOM OR YOUR  
POCKETS.**

## **EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO BE TREATED WITH RESPECT**

THE ACT SAYS THAT IT IS NOT ALLOWED TO TREAT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS IN A HUMILIATING, SCORNFUL OR CONDESCENDING WAY. NO ADULT MAY HIT YOU, MAKE FUN OF YOU, THREATEN YOU OR PUNISH YOU FOR SOMETHING YOU HAVE DONE. IF YOU THINK THAT THE ADULTS BEHAVE UNREASONABLY AND CONDESCENDINGLY TOWARDS YOU—OR OTHER CHILDREN—THEN IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU TELL IT TO AN ADULT WHO YOU TRUST SO THAT THE MUNICIPALITY CAN BE INFORMED.



# Family and friends

- ABOUT HAVING VISITORS AND VISITING OTHERS



Hi! I am 14 years old and I live in an accommodation facility on Funen. I would very much like to visit a friend from Copenhagen, but the staff at my accommodation facility says that I am not allowed to see him. Can they decide that? And have I no say in the matter? / Kasper

Hi Kasper

Like all other children and young persons, you are entitled to see your friends and family.

In special cases, the municipality may decide that it is not good for you to see your family or some of your friends. For instance if they believe that they have a bad influence on you or are pressuring you. But you must always be told why. And you can always discuss the decision with your caseworker. If you disagree with the municipality, you can complain against the decision—read more on page 44.

#### **?** HOW OFTEN MAY I VISIT MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY?

When you are placed in care, the municipality must make a plan for how much you are going to see your parents and those important to you. The adults must also help you as much as possible maintaining contact to your family and friends even though it may be difficult if they live far away.

Your caseworker must talk to you about what you want before a decision is made. In this connection, you may also say if, for instance, you do not want to see your parents for a period.

#### **?** HOW OFTEN MAY I HAVE FRIENDS VISITING ME?

The adults where you live will make the agreements with you about how often you may have friends visiting you. You can always talk to your caseworker if you do not think the agreements are fair.

#### **?** ARE THE ADULTS ALLOWED TO SAY THAT SOME PEOPLE MAY NOT VISIT ME?

Yes they are. Because it may have been decided that it is not good for you to see certain people. But it is very important that it is something that has been decided by the municipality. And you are entitled to be told why by your caseworker.

**?** **ARE THE ADULTS ALLOWED TO SAY THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE TIME TO DRIVE ME WHEN I WANT TO SEE MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY OR WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES?**

The adults at the accommodation facility must help you so that you—just like all other children and young persons—can participate in leisure-time activities, see your friends and visit your family. But obviously, there is a limit to how much the adults can drive you. It is important that they talk to you about why they cannot drive you. And that you are allowed to explain what it means for you to go. If you think that the rules are completely unfair and you cannot talk to the adults about it, you can try talking to your caseworker.

**?** **CAN I GET FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR BUS AND TRAIN TICKETS IF THE ADULTS CANNOT DRIVE ME?**

The adults where you live must make sure that you can get on a train or bus if you are going to visit your family or friends. But if you travel a lot by train or bus, you may have to apply for extra money for the tickets. You can discuss that

with your caseworker. The municipality may then decide to help you pay—but it is not something you are entitled to.

**?** **CAN I LIVE TOGETHER WITH MY SIBLINGS?**

Your caseworker must always look into the possibility of you living together with your siblings. Sometimes it is good for children placed in care to live together with their siblings. But in some cases, there might be good reasons why it is *not* good for siblings to live together. They may, for instance, not get along very well or they may have a bad influence on each other. But they may also need different kinds of help and can therefore not live at the same place. If you are not going to live together, you must be allowed to maintain contact, e.g. by seeing each other and talking to each other on the phone. The adults where you live must help you. You are always entitled to an explanation if you are not going to live together.

**?** **DO I HAVE TO SEE MY PARENTS IF I DO NOT WANT TO?**

If you think that it is hard to be together with your parents, you should tell it to an adult,



A young man and woman are looking at a laptop screen together. The man is in the foreground, looking towards the right, and the woman is behind him, also looking towards the right. The image has a blue tint.

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**I still love my mom and dad very much. But I also love my foster family.**

**SANNE**



**I think that almost all foster children should talk to a psychologist because this has helped me a lot.**

**GERTRUD**

e.g. your support person, your foster parents, your contact educator or your caseworker. It may be nice for you to bring one of them when you see your parents. Or perhaps you should not see your parents at all for a period. If you do not want to see them for a period, you need to discuss it with your caseworker. He/she will decide what will happen, but he or she is required to listen to your opinion.

**? WHEN CAN I MOVE BACK HOME?**

If you or your parents think that you should move back home again, your caseworker will assess whether this would be good for you. Your caseworker may not think

so, and then you will have to stay. If you are moving back home again, your caseworker must write in your action plan when you will be moving home and what help you need at home. You can always tell your caseworker that you do not want to move back home, but in this case your caseworker will also decide what should happen.

If you do not agree to the decision made, you can complain—read more about it on page 44. While the complaint is being considered, you need to stay where you are.



## **ACTION PLAN—WHAT IS THAT?**

**THE ACTION PLAN IS A PLAN FOR WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU WHILE YOU ARE PLACED IN CARE, E.G. WHERE YOU ARE GOING TO LIVE, WHY YOU ARE GOING TO LIVE THERE, HOW LONG YOU WILL HAVE TO BE PLACED IN CARE AND WHAT HELP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WILL GET.**

**THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE MUST MAKE PLANS FOR YOUR STAY TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS. YOUR CASEWORKER MUST CONTINUALLY CHANGE YOUR ACTION PLAN IF NECESSARY.**



# House rules

- ABOUT MOBILE PHONES, BEDTIMES,  
VISITS AND FORCIBLE MEASURES

Hi! The other day when we were having dinner, one of the educators at my accommodation facility took my mobile phone away from me because I was texting under the table. I know that we have rules about not using the phone during meals. But is he allowed to take the mobile from me? / Martin

Hi Martin

The adults at your accommodation facility are allowed to take your phone. But there must be a good reason—e.g. if you break the rules on when you are allowed to use the phone. It should not be a punishment where they keep your phone for long periods of time.



#### CONFLICTS OVER MOBILE PHONES

The adults are allowed to take your mobile phone away from you if they think that it is not good for you to have it. This could be if you call someone who is not good for you to talk to or if you use it at times where you should be focusing on something else. If the adults take your mobile phone away from you, they must always remember that the mobile phone may mean a lot to you. Therefore, they should always think of alternative ways of solving the problem other than just taking the phone away from you. The adults are not allowed to take the phone away from you as a punishment for something you have done which did not have anything to do with your phone.



#### FOR HOW LONG CAN THE ADULTS KEEP MY MOBILE PHONE?

If the adults have your mobile phone overnight or while you

are eating, your phone must be returned to you when you wake up or when you have finished eating. If they take it for long periods of time, they must have a good reason to do so. And it must be a decision made by the municipality, e.g. because they think that you might call someone who is not good for you to talk to. If they take your mobile, you must agree on when you will get it back again.



#### FORCIBLE MEASURES

If a child living in an accommodation facility or institution behaves violently and may harm him-/herself or others, then the adults may have to hold the child so that nobody—including the child—gets hurt. This is known as a *forcible measure*. In foster families, the adults are not allowed to use force against you unless they are afraid that you will hurt yourself, the foster parents or others.

## FORCIBLE MEASURES

**FORCIBLE MEASURES ARE WHEN THE ADULTS AT YOUR ACCOMMODATION FACILITY HAVE TO DO SOMETHING TO A CHILD AGAINST THE CHILD'S WILL BECAUSE THEY THINK THAT THE CHILD MAY HARM HIM- OR HERSELF OR OTHERS. A FORCIBLE MEASURE MAY BE HOLDING THE CHILD OR MOVING THE CHILD FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER. BUT IT MAY ALSO BE IF THE ADULTS WANT TO SEARCH THE CHILD'S ROOM OR BELONGINGS EVEN THOUGH THE CHILD DOES NOT WANT IT.**

### **WHEN ARE THE ADULTS ALLOWED TO HOLD ME?**

If you live in an accommodation facility or institution, the adults are allowed to hold you. They may also take you to another room if they think that you may harm yourself or others. But only if its absolutely necessary. And they must always have tried to calm you down in other ways first.

### **ARE THE ADULTS ALLOWED TO LOCK ME IN?**

Locking people in is a serious matter and in normal institutions, accommodation facilities and foster families, adults are not allowed to lock you in. The first two weeks after you have moved into the institution, the municipality may, however, decide that the adults can hold you to prevent you from running away. But they are not allowed to lock you in.

### **WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE WAY I HAVE BEEN TREATED?**

If you think that any forcible measures have been too excessive or

unnecessary, you should say so to make sure that it is included in the report to the municipality. You may also talk to your caseworker or support person about it. If there is anything you disapprove of at the place where you live, you should discuss it with an adult—e.g. your caseworker, your mom or dad or somebody else who you trust.

You may always call BørneTelefonen (advisory service for children and young persons) on 116 111 or log on to the chat for children and young persons. You may also call the children's office of the Ombudsman on 33 13 25 12 or log on to the chat on [www.ombudsmanden.dk/boernekontoret](http://www.ombudsmanden.dk/boernekontoret). Adults will be ready to talk to you and tell you what is right and wrong.

### **ARE THE ADULTS ALLOWED TO TAKE A URINE SAMPLE IF THEY ARE WORRIED THAT I HAVE BEEN SMOKING HASH?**

Yes, the adults may require a urine sample, but only if the municipality has decided that you need to be checked.



## **REPORT ON FORCIBLE MEASURES**

**IF THE ADULTS TAKE FORCIBLE MEASURES—HOLD YOU OR SEARCH YOUR ROOM—THEY MUST ALWAYS WRITE A REPORT ABOUT IT TO THE MUNICIPALITY. YOU ARE ENTITLED TO SEE THE REPORT, AND YOU ARE ALSO ENTITLED TO WRITE OR TELL THEM YOUR EXPERIENCE OF THE FORCIBLE MEASURE. YOU MAY NOT AGREE WITH WHAT THE ADULTS HAVE WRITTEN. WHAT YOU TELL OR WRITE MUST ALWAYS BE INCLUDED IN THE REPORT SO THAT THE MUNICIPALITY CAN SEE YOUR OPINION OF THE CASE.**



”

The worst thing about living here is that you can never be alone. But this has improved a bit after I said it at a house meeting—now the others have become better at knocking on the door before they enter my room.

PATRICK





## HOUSE RULES

MOST ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES AND INSTITUTIONS HAVE HOUSE RULES—LIKE MOST FOSTER FAMILIES HAVE SOME RULES FOR HOW TO BEHAVE IN THE HOME. IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO MAKE THE RULES IN COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CHILDREN AND THE ADULTS. AND IT IS A GOOD IDEA THAT THEY ARE WRITTEN DOWN AND THAT YOU TALK ABOUT THEM TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE KNOWS THEM.

THE RULES ARE MADE TO MAKE EVERYONE FEEL COMFORTABLE IN THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE. THEY MAY BE ABOUT SMOKING, WHEN YOU ARE ALLOWED TO USE YOUR MOBILE PHONE OR COMPUTER, ABOUT BEDTIMES, WHEN YOU SHOULD BE QUIET IN YOUR ROOM, WATCHING TELEVISION, ETC. THEY MAY ALSO BE ABOUT WHEN YOU ARE ALLOWED TO HAVE VISITORS OR PARTICIPATE IN LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES. THE RULES ALSO OFTEN DESCRIBE HOW YOU SHOULD BEHAVE TOWARDS EACH OTHER, E.G. HOW YOU ENTER EACH OTHER'S ROOMS OR HOW YOU BEHAVE IN THE TV ROOM.



# **Money and work**

**- ABOUT THE MONEY YOU RECEIVE  
FROM THE MUNICIPALITY AND WHAT  
YOU EARN YOURSELF**



Hey. I am 14 years old and have just moved in with a foster family. Now I would just like to know whether I should get pocket money and money for a travel card from my foster family or my parents? / Trine

Hi Trine

You are entitled to money for clothes, pocket money and money for bus/train from the municipality. But the adults where you live must ensure that you receive the money. And you must also agree with them whether should receive all the money at once or whether it is a good idea to receive small amounts at regular intervals. You are entitled to different amounts depending on your age.

#### **?** POCKET MONEY AND MONEY FOR CLOTHES

In the box on page 37, you can see the recommended rates for 2013. If you receive an amount which is smaller than specified in the box, you may discuss it with your caseworker.

#### **?** DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES MYSELF?

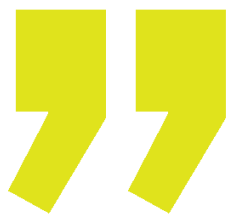
No, not as long as you do not participate in too many or too expensive activities. The money paid by the municipality for your stay must cover rent, food, pocket money, money for clothes and leisure-time activities.

#### **?** ARE THE ADULTS ALLOWED TO DECIDE WHAT I SPEND MY MONEY ON?

The adults are allowed to help you control your money, but it is *your* money. It is a good idea to talk to the adults about how you spend your money. They may, for instance, help you save some money so you can afford to buy a winter jacket when winter comes or a pair of new shoes.

#### **?** MAY I BE FORCED TO WORK AT THE FACILITY?

There is a difference between normal household chores and work. Many places have rules saying that you must help clean the house, cook etc. But if you think that you have to do more than what is fair—and the adults



**I think that we should get an increase in our pocket money.**

**DANIEL**

where you live are not willing to change this—you can talk to your caseworker, your support person or your advisor.

**?** **SHOULD I BE PAID FOR WORKING AT THE FACILITY?**

If you perform any special work which is not part of the normal household chores, the accommodation facility may pay you a work reward—this is like extra pocket money. This may be different kinds of workshop work. You will have to discuss what is fair. If you think that you perform work which is entirely unfair, you should talk to your caseworker or another adult.

**?** **AM I ALLOWED TO EARN MY OWN MONEY?**

If you have turned 13, you are allowed to earn your own money. This may be if you work as a trainee and receive pay or have a job as e.g. doing paper rounds. If you work as a trainee or have a permanent job, the municipality may decide that you will have to pay part of your salary to the municipality. You will have to discuss this with your caseworker and with the adults at the facility.



25

**WEEKLY POCKET MONEY  
(2014)**

AGE 3-10—DKK 28.  
AGE 11-13—DKK 60.  
AGE 14-15—DKK 121.  
AGE 16 AND OVER—DKK 243.

**WEEKLY MONEY  
FOR CLOTHES (2014)**

AGE 0-10—DKK 103.  
AGE 11-13—DKK 121.  
AGE 14-15—DKK 141.  
AGE 16 AND OVER—DKK 155.



# **School and education**

**- ABOUT GOING TO SCHOOL AND  
ABOUT DECIDING WHAT SHOULD  
HAPPEN AFTERWARDS**

Hi! My foster family lives far away from my school and I have to go by taxi every day to get there. Now they want me to change school to one that is closer to them, but the only thing I am looking forward to every day is to get to the school to be with my friends. I would therefore like to know if I can tell them that I do not want to change school? / Lars

Hi Lars  
Your foster family cannot make this decision alone. But your caseworker may decide that you have to change school. It is very important that your caseworker listens to you and your wishes. You should therefore tell him or her how much it means to you to see your friends at the old school. However, it may still be decided that you have to change school, but then you are entitled to a good explanation.

#### **? DO I HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL EVEN IF I DO NOT WANT TO?**

Denmark has *compulsory education*—this means that all children must receive education for ten years. You do not have to go to a normal school, and teaching may take place in many ways. It is therefore important that you tell your caseworker and other adults around you how you feel about your school and if you would prefer going to another school. Then your chances of going to a school which suits you are better. But you *must* receive education and a plan must be prepared for your schooling while you are placed in care.

#### **? WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I HAVE FINISHED PRIMARY AND LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL?**

When you turn 16 or immediately before you finish primary and lower secondary school, you, your parents, your caseworker and the adults where you live must make a plan for what should happen when you finish primary and lower secondary school. Your caseworker must tell you about your options and your decisions must be entered in your action plan.



”

**I learn more at the new school  
because they do not know  
me already. So I have sort  
of been given a new chance.  
I also do more homework  
because I get help doing it.**

**MAGNUS**





A top-down view of a desk with various school supplies. A ruler is placed vertically, showing measurements in inches and centimeters. To the left, several pencils are lined up. In the center, a calculator is visible. To the right, a notebook with a wooden cover and a white label is open. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter.

## **USE YOUR EDUCATION ADVISOR!**

**AN EDUCATION ADVISOR IS AN ADULT WHO KNOWS A LOT ABOUT THE EDUCATIONS YOU CAN CHOOSE AND WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE A STUDENT AT THE VARIOUS PLACES. HE OR SHE CAN HELP YOU FIND AN EDUCATION THAT WOULD BE GOOD FOR YOU AND IDENTIFY WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO WORK WITH WHEN YOU GROW UP.**

**YOUR CASEWORKER OR YOUR CONTACT EDUCATOR CAN HELP YOU GET IN TOUCH WITH AN EDUCATION ADVISOR.**



# For you in special institutions

**- about living in a partly locked residential institution or in a special secure ward in a residential institution**

AT SOME INSTITUTIONS for young persons who are placed in care due to crimes, substance abuse or other serious problems, special rules apply. This may be rules allowing the staff to lock doors and windows and rules on checking letters, telephone conversations, e-mails and text messages.

You are always entitled to an advisor or to talk to BørneTelefonen or your caseworker about your situation.

If you want to learn more about your rights, you can find the help you need at [www.børneportalen.dk](http://www.børneportalen.dk).

The phone numbers for some of those who can help you are stated on pages 44-46.

# When you turn 18

- about have to having to do more and more things on your own

WHEN YOU TURN 18, you will have to do more and more things on your own. By the time you are 17½, you and your caseworker must make a plan for what should happen when you turn 18. In this connection, you need to discuss where you are going to live, what you will be doing—e.g. whether you should get a job or start an education—how much money you have and many other things. You also need to discuss if you need support after you move on your own—this is known as *aftercare*.

Aftercare is a service provided by the municipality to you. This may be help managing your finances, looking for a home, getting a job or starting an education. It may also be help in the form of a regular contact person.

You may want to get rid of everything that has to do with your time in placement and manage everything on your own in future. But before you make that decision, it is a good idea to familiarise yourself with your options with an agreement for aftercare. This may be of great help to you.

If you say no to aftercare but regret, you may always contact the municipality. Then they will assess whether aftercare is still an option.

You may also get more support at the beginning and then scale up or down at a later point.

You can read much more about aftercare in the booklet “Når du fylder 18 år” (in Danish only).

# If you want to complain

**If you disagree to some of the decisions made by the municipality about you and you are over the age of 12, you may complain. Your caseworker must explain to you what you can complain against and how.**

YOU CAN COMPLAIN against the municipality's decision that you have to be placed in care, where you are going to live, how much you are allowed to see your family and who is going to be your advisor.

You may also complain if the municipality wants to send you back home again or make you live in your own flat.

If you want to complain, you must do so within four weeks after you have been notified of a decision. You may talk to your caseworker, your foster parents, your parents or your contact educator about your complaint so they can help you with the practical matters. Sometimes, the complaint will have to be submitted directly to your municipality and sometimes it must be submitted to the National Social Appeals Board.

If you complain to the municipality, they must consider whether they will change the decision.

Your complaint will not necessarily be successful. In any case, you are entitled to be told why the decision was made.

## COMPLAINTS TO THE NATIONAL SOCIAL APPEALS BOARD

Complaints against certain decisions must be submitted to the National Social Appeals Board. It may be difficult to figure out what you can complain against and where to complain. Your caseworker, your support person or your contact educator can help you. If you want to complain to the National Social Appeals Board, you can visit their website [www.ast.dk](http://www.ast.dk) and read about what to do under the menu "Vil du klage"? (in Danish only).

You may also call or write to the National Social Appeals Board if you do not think that your caseworker is doing a good enough job helping you. On [www.ast.dk](http://www.ast.dk), you can see how the National Social Appeals Board can help you. You can also call on tel. 33 41 12 00 or send an e-mail to [ung@ast.dk](mailto:ung@ast.dk).

### **CHILDREN'S OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN**

You can complain to the Ombudsman against decisions made by the municipality. Or against the way in which the municipality has processed your case. You may also complain against the institution or foster family you live in. If you have any doubts about how to complain, you can call the children's office on tel. 33 13 25 12 or use the chat on [www.ombudsmanden.dk/](http://www.ombudsmanden.dk/)

boernekontoret. The website also contains information about complaints to the Ombudsman. If you do not think that you receive the help you need to be able to complain, you can call BørneTelefonen (advisory service for children and young persons) on tel. 116 111 or log on to the chat for children and young persons. Adults are ready to help you find out where you should send your complaint.

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## Somebody to talk to

If you have any doubts, you can always ask your caseworker, your support person, your contact educator or your foster parents. But there are also places where you can get more information or talk to others who are in the same situation as yourself.

### **BØRNETELEFONEN – CALL 116 111**

BørneTelefonen provides good advice or you can just find someone to talk to. All children and young persons can call BørneTelefonen on 116 111 free of charge. You do not have to say who you are, and your call will not appear from your phone bill. You can also log on to the chat on [www.boernetelefonen.dk](http://www.boernetelefonen.dk).

### **BØRNEPORTALEN**

On the website of the National Council for Children for children and young persons, [www.boerneportalen.dk](http://www.boerneportalen.dk), you can read more about your rights and on how to get help and advice. The aim of the National Council for Children is to ensure that all children and young persons in Denmark have a good life.

### **BØRNETINGET**

[www.boerninget.dk](http://www.boerninget.dk) is a website for children and young persons placed in care. The website contains answers to many questions and you can get in touch with other children and young persons who are placed in care.

**SNACK.NU**

On [www.snakk.nu](http://www.snakk.nu), you can chat with other young persons between the ages of 12 and 21 who are or have been placed in foster care or institution. [SnaKK.nu](http://www.snakk.nu) is a confidential forum and the site is only open to children or young persons who are or have been placed in care.

**BAGLANDET**

Baglandet is a drop-in centre for children and young persons who are or have formerly been placed in care. Baglandet is located in Copenhagen, Aarhus, Aalborg and Vejle. You can get advice, help and guidance or just spend time with others who are in the same situation as you. See addresses and telephone numbers on [www.baglandet.net](http://www.baglandet.net).

**ACT ON SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Act on Social Services is the act describing how the municipality is to support children and young persons with problems. It is the act according to which the municipality is entitled to place you outside your home. It describes how the municipality is to ensure that you are doing well when you are not living at home. Read more about the act on the website of the

National Board of Social Services,  
[www.socialstyrelsen.dk](http://www.socialstyrelsen.dk)

**CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child concerns children's and young person's rights and the obligations of the Danish government in relation to children and young persons. The Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to all children under the age of 18 and it enforces children's rights in a range of areas, e.g. welfare, health, schooling, play, protection and co-determination. You can read the Convention on the Rights of the Child on [Børneportalen](http://Børneportalen) under "Dine rettigheder"—[www.børneportalen.dk](http://www.børneportalen.dk).

**DE 4 ÅRSTIDER**

De 4 Årstider is a drop-in centre for children and young persons in Copenhagen who are or have been placed in care. Here you can join communal eating and other activities or get help and advice. You can read more about De 4 Årstider on [www.de4aarstider.com](http://www.de4aarstider.com). You can also call on tel. +45 35 36 86 39 or send an e-mail to [konsulenterne@de4aarstider.com](mailto:konsulenterne@de4aarstider.com).

**BørneTelefonen**

116 111

**Børnetinget**

[www.boernetinget.dk](http://www.boernetinget.dk)

**Børneportalen**

[www.børneportalen.dk](http://www.børneportalen.dk)

**When you  
cannot live  
at home**

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**EDITORS:** KATRINE MUNCH AND FLEMMING SCHULTZ,  
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**The booklet is illustrated  
with archive images**

# Who can help me?

Here you can write the names and telephone numbers of the most important adults in your life if you need it. It may be your caseworker, your support person, your contact educator or your foster care consultant. Your caseworker or contact educator can help you fill in the page.

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**Name of my caseworker**

---

Telephone

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E-mail

---

My caseworker can help me with

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**Name of my contact educator**

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Telephone

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E-mail

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My contact educator can help me with

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**My foster care consultant**

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Telephone

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E-mail

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My foster care consultant can help me with

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**Name of my support person**

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Telephone

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E-mail

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My support person can help me with

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**Name of my advisor**

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Telephone

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E-mail

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My advisor can help me with

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**Name of my supervisor**

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Telephone

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E-mail

---

My supervisor can help me with

---

**Name of the manager where I live**

---

Telephone

---

E-mail

---

The manager can help me with

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CHILDREN ·

VESTERBROGADE 35 A · DK-1620 COPENHAGEN V

TEL.: 33 78 33 00 · WWW.BRD.DK