



OHIO Youth Advisory Board Safety and Normalcy Concerns

The Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio (OHIO) Youth Advisory Board exists to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that effect all youth who have or will experience out of home care.

The #1 issue that Ohio foster care youth expressed in 2019 was normalcy and safety concerns, especially in group homes and residential placements.

Here are some direct quotes from youth:

- **Providing normalcy makes our time in foster care easier**, when and if it happens.
- **Group homes should be used as a last resort**. They aren't good for certain kids. I think group homes are not good because of the many limits of what you are allowed to do. I think residential placements are worse because they can be very unsafe. I don't like being in group homes. We don't get freedom.
- **Need more cameras to keep us safe**, due to bullying and abuse that happens. Staff members aren't trained on how to de-escalate conflict. *(Multiple youth listed and asked for this)*
- **Without normalcy, group homes feel like jail** because we have no freedom. When it comes to civil freedoms, it's not normal to have to earn them. Too many limits that make kids feel different. Feeling normal is very hard. Youth clients in residential should be able to have as much freedom as they can, instead of being locked in all day. Shouldn't feel like a jail.
- **Some group homes are way too hard on the kids**. Feeling confined, voiceless, no one listening to concerns. Residents should be able to have as much normalcy as possible. Not allowed cell phones. I think we should have the right to a phone.
- **Please stop the dehumanization of foster youth**. Equality: it's not our fault for being in this situation. They should focus more on each individual. Too many limits. Also saying, "No," because of what someone did before. Being able to see family: 1 month waiting period. Having to earn visitation with family. Having to earn trust to be able to see family on birthday. Wanted to go to church and they required photo IDs etc. for us to go.
- **They should provide better preparation for adulthood**. They don't do it enough or go over it. Please support and understand our efforts to build a future. Please give us normalcy and remember that we are people too. It hurts going to school and not having the same freedoms as my peers.