

**Are you in care  
and going to court?**

Going to court can be scary, especially if you don't know what to expect. Knowing your rights and these tips can make going to court a little easier. **In PA Courts, you have the right to:**

- »» **Attend all hearings.**
- »» **Speak in court and have your voice heard.**
- »» **Have a lawyer.** *Your lawyer's job is to make sure you are getting what you need, that the law is being followed, and that your voice and opinions are heard in court. To do this, your lawyer should meet with you on a regular basis.*
- »» **Ask your judge to appoint a new attorney if you do not think your attorney is doing their job (see above).**
- »» **Receive your court order.**
- »» **Be consulted by the judge about your permanency and transition plans.**
- »» **Have the judge approve your transition plan before your case can be closed.**



## **Here are some quick tips to help improve your experience in your court hearings:**

- »» **Be sure to talk to your lawyer about your concerns – in person or over the phone. If you can, send your lawyer an email about your concerns.**
- »» **If you can't get in touch with your attorney or social worker via phone or email, email and/or call their supervisor (always leave voicemails and send follow up emails!).** *If you don't have their email addresses, ask for these next time you see them.*
- »» **If you are unable to attend court because of school, work, or another commitment, let your lawyer know. If you have concerns, write them down and ask your lawyer to present them to the judge. You can also ask your lawyer to request another court date.**
- »» **You should do your best to attend all of your court dates, whether you are going in front of a judge or a master. This is your chance to let the court know what's going on with you!**
- »» **Don't get discouraged if you don't see changes that you want to happen right away; you are still heard when you speak in court!**

**A product of Youth Fostering Change, youth advocates with experience in care.**