



Your voice.

Your say.

You matter.



1 ■ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

“Rights” belong to everyone.

All children have the same rights.

Your rights are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

When you stay with a Five Rivers foster family, everyone who lives with you, or works with you, will help you to understand your rights, know how to use them and help you to enjoy them.

Five Rivers’ staff receive training on children’s rights.

Ask your foster family to give you a copy of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. Participation!

Participation is all about you having the chance to have your thoughts, feelings and wishes taken into consideration when there are decisions being made about you.

Five Rivers Fostering encourage your participation. We have lots of different ways that you can get involved.

In this pack of cards you will see lots of ways you can be involved in decisions.

When you see this character (his name is **Neo**) – it means it's your chance to have your say.

Watch [this animation](#) to find out more about what Participation means.



3. Celebrating differences

Five Rivers really want to celebrate all the different people in the world. We know that every person has their own differences and bring something brilliant and unique to the world.

Every young person, whatever your background, wherever you come from, how old you are, what you look like, what beliefs you have, what languages you speak or how good you are at doing things, can participate.

Equality - Treating people fairly no matter who they are.

Diversity - Understanding people's unique differences and celebrating them.

Inclusion - Making sure that people are helped to take part so they have an equal and fair chance and their voice gets heard.

4. Youth Council

The Youth Council collects the voice of every child and young person from within an organisation.

We ask children and young people what's good, what's not so good and what they might like to see change.

Every fostering office has a Youth Council Representative. This person helps to gather the views of all the young people from that area and then makes sure that these messages get passed to the Board of Directors.

They also make sure the children and young people get answers to their questions and know what changes are going to be made.

All the Senior Managers have made a promise to listen to young people and take their views seriously.

5. Young Assessors

Every young person has a chance to be a Young Assessor.

Young Assessors tell us what they think about how well Five Rivers and our foster carers look after young people and tell us how we could do better.

Every foster child has a chance to have their say on this. We also ask young people lots of questions about how good we are at doing other things as well.

6. Young Recruiters (Staff)

When we're trying to find staff to work with young people, we like to ask young people their opinions on who we might choose.

Children and young people tell us what top five qualities they think make a great staff member.

We use this information in our job adverts. We also ask children and young people to come up with some questions to ask during the interviews.

We aim to have young people involved in interviewing potential staff. They ask questions and score their answers. These young people are specially trained to do this and are usually teenagers.

The young people's score contributes to the final decision being made about whether we give someone a job or not.

This is a very important job and every Young Recruiter takes this very seriously.

7 ■ Young Recruiters (Foster Carers)

Five Rivers like to involve children and young people when they are trying to find good foster homes for you to live in.

Your thoughts and opinions are very important to us. We ask you to give us questions we should ask people who want to foster.

All people who are new to fostering go to a training course called 'Skills to Foster'. We show them films and training DVDs that children and young people have made.

Some young people actually help to deliver part of this training.

8. Young Creators

At Five Rivers we love to see and use young people's talents and experiences.

When we design our handbooks, newsletters, films, training DVDs and cards, we like to use the artwork, poems and designs from our children and young people, no matter how old you are and what talent you have.

Every piece of art shows us something different and unique. Young people have told us it is more fun to read things that have been designed by children and young people.

9. Young Trainers

At Five Rivers we think that some of the best people to teach us about working with children and young people – are the children and young people. It's easy!

We use the experiences of the children and young people we work with together with other information to tell us how best to work with you.

Young Trainers get together to create training information for foster carers, staff and other young people.

Sometimes we do this in the form of DVDs or leaflets and sometimes young people will help our trainers deliver some training face to face.

If you want to help us with our training we will find a way for you to influence the message we get across to our staff and foster carers.

10. My Life Plan

We know that children and young people in foster care have a lot of paperwork in their lives. We can see that lots of it can look boring, be very long and difficult to read.

We are working with you to make some of our paperwork more child friendly, easy to read and fun.

We believe YOU can help to:

- Make decisions about how Five Rivers is run,
- Agree on some of the important rules with your foster family,
- Make the best decisions, with our help, about what risks to take and what to avoid.

We also really like to know how things are going for you, how much you are learning from your experiences, and how much you think you are achieving.

My Life Plan really helps children and young people take more of an interest in their care planning, reviews and achievements.

11. Keep It Plain (KIP)

KIP stands for 'Keep It Plain'. When you see this frog it tells you that a young person has been involved in writing and proof reading the document.

KIP tells us that children and young people agree that it is simple, easy to understand, looks like something a young person wants to read and is written in plain English – short sentences with no big, complicated words they wouldn't understand.

When a young person gets involved, they get to give it their stamp of approval and have their name attached to the document.



12. Support to make a complaint

A complaint is when you tell someone that you are not happy about a situation or part of the service you are getting.

We want you to be happy and you have the right to make a complaint.

We don't see complaining as a bad thing – it helps us get things right for you and those who may follow.

There are lots of ways you can complain and we will always help you to do so.

Here are some of the ways that you can complain:

- To your foster carer
- To any member of staff
- To any Registered Manager
- To any Registered provider
- To Ofsted

Other people that can help you are Advocates and Independent Listeners.

13. Advocacy

An Advocate is someone outside the organisation you can call for free. They will come and speak with you confidentially.

Confidentially means that they won't tell anyone else about what you talk about, unless you want them to or if what you are telling us is putting you at risk of harm.

An Advocate will always aim to keep you safe.

An Advocate will listen to you and help you find a way to fix what you want help with. An Advocate can speak up for you and pass on your points of view in things like meetings.

An Advocate is someone who will also just listen to you if that is what you need. They can help you find the right information and the best people to help you.

If you are a child with additional needs, your Foster Carer can help you access a non-instructional advocacy service.

Children and young people have the right to access non-instructive advocacy. Non-instructed advocacy involves figuring out what someone might want or think when they can't tell you themselves. Find out more [here](#).

14. Independent Visitors

If you'd like someone to talk to, spend time with, or help you feel supported as you grow up, an Independent Visitor might be right for you. Your Foster Carer or Social Worker can help you access an Independent Visitor. Read more at www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

15. Who's who

- **Foster Carer** – the person you will live with and who should care for you
- **Respite Carer** – a foster carer who looks after you when on a break from your foster carer.
- **Supervising Social Worker** – they help your foster carers and make sure they do their best for you.
- **Fostering Service Manager** – the boss of the area who makes sure everyone is doing their best for you.
- **Participation Workers** – they make sure your voice is heard and that changes are made in and outside the organisation.
- **Head of Fostering and Operations Manager** – they make sure that Five Rivers is a safe Fostering Agency doing its best for you.
- **Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Pam McConnell** – Pam started Five Rivers Child Care so she could support children who need someone to help look after them. Pam wants life to be better for children in need and is keen to hear how they are doing.

16. Well trained, experienced staff members

You have a right to be cared for by experienced, well-trained and supervised foster carers and staff.

All our foster carers and staff have lots of checks, interviews and assessments to make sure they are the right person for the job. They also all get lots of training every year, to make sure they have the most up to date information about how to care for you in the best way.

Everyone has a Supervisor and they meet with foster carers or staff members once a month to make sure they are doing the best for you and they are working with you in the best possible way.