

The parents/guardians of any foster child in agency care, unless the child is a permanent ward, have the right to:

- be involved in the making of plans for their child and themselves;
- be consulted when changes are considered for the plan;
- visit their child. The parents/guardian must be aware of the caseworker's right to limit visiting (other than court ordered visits) and to set the time and place for visiting;
- appeal any decision made by the caseworker affecting their child or themselves;
- receive assistance in resolving their problems; and
- attend any court hearing affecting their child or their parental rights.

As the foster family caring for a foster child, you have a responsibility to the child and his/her biological family to ensure that these rights are protected. You

may do this by asking the child's caseworker why the parent is not part of a conference, is not visiting, etc.

It must be kept in mind that even a child who is in permanent care, may have an emotional bond with his/her family, to which agencies and foster parents will need to be sensitive. The fact that a child is a permanent ward does not necessarily restrict his/her family's involvement. Agencies will review the child's relationship with his/her biological/ extended family and the child's need for involvement, to determine the nature and extent of the involvement.

Under *The Child and Family Services Act* parents may apply to court for a termination of the permanent guardianship, if the child has not been placed for adoption and more than one year has elapsed since the order was granted. A judge may terminate the permanent order and return the child to the parents, vary the order or dismiss the application.