

UNDER 19 VS. B2I HEARINGS

Updated November 2014

THE PURPOSE

Under 19 Foster Care Hearings

- ★ **The focus is on the parents** and the well being of the child.
- ★ **The purpose is to help the parents** so that the children can safely return home. If that can't happen, the purpose will be to find another permanent place for the child to live.
- ★ The judge may order the child and the child's parents to do certain things, like go to therapy, have family visits, or have an evaluation.

Bridge to Independence Hearings

- ★ **The focus is on the young adult** and making sure they are getting the services and support they need.
- ★ **The purpose is to help the young adult become independent** - not to make the young adult do things s/he doesn't want to do.
- ★ These hearings will also keep looking at permanency (connecting young adults to positive, permanent adult supports). If the young adult wants to, it is still possible to look at adoption, guardianship, or even reunification.

THE BASICS

Under 19 Foster Care Hearings

- ★ Court hearings are held in the courthouse at least every three months.
- ★ **Youth might not attend these hearings.**

Bridge to Independence Hearings

- ★ Hearings are held at least once a year. Young adults can ask for extra hearings if needed.
- ★ Hearings should be informal and can be held anywhere, even at a coffee shop or pizza place!
- ★ Young adults should attend these hearings to **speak up and advocate for themselves.**

WHO MIGHT BE INVOLVED

Under 19 Foster Care Hearings

- ★ The judge
- ★ The caseworker
- ★ The caseworker's attorney
- ★ The child's guardian ad litem
- ★ The child's CASA volunteer
- ★ The child's parent(s)
- ★ The parent's attorney
- ★ The foster parent
- ★ A parent partner
- ★ Other service providers (like the therapist)
- ★ **The child may or may not attend**

Bridge to Independence Hearings

- ★ The judge
- ★ **The young adult**
- ★ The Independence Coordinator (caseworker)
- ★ The young adult's attorney, if the young adult requested one
- ★ The young adult's CASA volunteer, if the young adult requested one
- ★ Other people the young adult wants to come

YOUTH VOICE

Under 19 Foster Care Hearings

- ★ **Every child has a guardian ad litem to represent the child's "best interests"** (so the guardian ad litem advocates for what s/he thinks is best for the child, which may or may not be what the child wants) and views.
- ★ The judge may also choose to assign a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer to advocate for the child's "best interests."
- ★ Older youth can fill out and send in a Youth Court Questionnaire at hearmyvoice.throughtheeyes.org to tell the judge how things are going.

Bridge to Independence Hearings

- ★ **Young adults are the advocates!** The young adult should let the judge know how things are going and be involved in key decisions made.
- ★ Young adults won't automatically have an attorney assigned to represent them, but they can ask the judge for one. Or, the judge may ask the young adult if they would like an attorney appointed to represent them. **Attorneys in the Bridge to Independence program would advocate for what the young adults wants** - NOT what the attorney thinks is best. Young adults can contact their attorney whenever there is a problem with their services.
- ★ Young adults can also ask for a CASA volunteer to advocate for them
- ★ Young adults can also fill out and send in a B2I Court Questionnaire at hearmyvoice.throughtheeyes.org to tell the judge how things are going.