

FAMILY is where I BELONG

Flipbook No. 2

November 2024



Rights of Children in Alternative Care and Family

#KeepMeSafe



#MyFamilyMyRight

*"Happy Children's Day, dear friends! This year, we celebrate the theme '**Listen to the Future**' by nurturing the people, friendships, and environment around us. Together, we can create a safer, kinder world where every child's rights are protected and respected.*

— Fr. Joe Prabu

Executive Director of DB YaR Forum, Delhi



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It was a cold winter morning, and the fog was so thick I could barely see in front of me. I kept walking, clutching my backpack tightly, my fingers numb from the cold.



As I crossed the footpath, a biker came out of nowhere and almost hit me. He braked just in time, and I stood there, my heart racing. I took deep breaths to calm down, but the air was so heavy with pollution that it hurt my lungs, and I started coughing. The air quality had been terrible, and sometimes we'd get school holidays because of it, but not today. I had no choice but to breathe it in—at home, at school, everywhere.

I've been living in a childcare institution recently, after being taken away from my family. Life at home was tough. My father was addicted to substances, and every day, I saw violence I couldn't escape. Our family was struggling just to get by, and sometimes, there wasn't even enough food for two meals a day. The government money meant for me wasn't being used to care for me; instead, it went to immoral things. I had no choice but to leave and look for a family that could take care of me.



This new family at the institution is kind to me, and they care about me. I'm grateful, but I still miss my parents and siblings so much. My heart feels split between two worlds—my parents who couldn't care for me, and this new family I'm supposed to accept.

My mind fills with questions I can't answer: Will I ever see my parents again? Do I still have the right to call them my family? And can I think of this institution as my family too?

As I walked, I remembered lessons from my textbooks on rights. I have the right to a family, to grow and learn, to live in a clean and safe environment. But they all feel like words in a book, not my reality. I didn't do anything wrong, yet I had to suffer

Maybe it's okay to love my parents while learning to accept this new family too. Perhaps having a bigger family isn't about replacing anyone, but about letting my heart grow, making room for more people and more love.



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From the story, we learn about the violation of several fundamental rights of children, as provided by the Indian Constitution and law.

Right to Education (Article 21A)

- Every child has the right to free and compulsory education.
- Circumstances like family responsibilities and economic hardship should not prevent a child from attending school.

Right to Health (Article 21)

- Children have the right to health and access to a clean, safe environment.
- Exposure to pollution, which causes health problems, infringes on this fundamental right.

Clean and Safe Environment (Article 21)

- Ensured through environmental laws, this right protects children from exposure to hazardous pollution.
- Children should not bear the health impacts of environmental issues they did not create.

Protection of Children from Exploitation and Abuse (Article 39(e) and (f))

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The story highlights that the child was living in an abusive environment due to parental addiction and violence, causing emotional and physical distress.

The story also raises concern on child entering alternative care that echoes the feelings of many others: "Do I still have the right to call them my family?"

Let's Look What Courts Have Said About the Concern

Gaurav Jain case (1997) ¹

The court said every child deserves a loving family, even if their parents face difficulties. No child should be separated from their parents just because they are poor or struggling.



1: Gaurav Jain Vs. Union of India, 1997

Shabnam Hashmi case (2014)²

This case helped children find new families through adoption. The court said adoption is a beautiful way to create families and give children permanent homes filled with love.

ABC case (2015)³

The judges said families come in different shapes and sizes. A single mother can be a complete family too. What matters most is love and care, not how many people are in the family.



The courts' main message is: Every child has the right to family love, whether it's their birth family or a new family through alternative care or adoption.

2: Shabnam Hashmi Vs. Union of India, 2014

3: ABC Vs. The State (NCT Of Delhi), 2015

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Activity 1: Family Memory Box

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Find a box you'd like to keep special.

Decorate the box with colors, stickers, or drawings that mean something to you.

Fill it with memories

- Family photos, letters, or notes
- Small gifts or mementos from family members
- Drawings you've made for your family
- Paper stars representing each of your siblings
- Any important papers or special items that remind you of them



This box is your safe place to keep memories close, so you can look back on them whenever you like.

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Activity 2: Family Journal

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Let's make a Family Meeting Journal! Every time you meet with family, fill in this page to remember those special moments. Use your own colors, drawings, and words to make it unique to you



Family Journal

Date of Meeting: _____

Place of Meeting: _____

Relation with the person I met: _____

What we talked about tick in box:

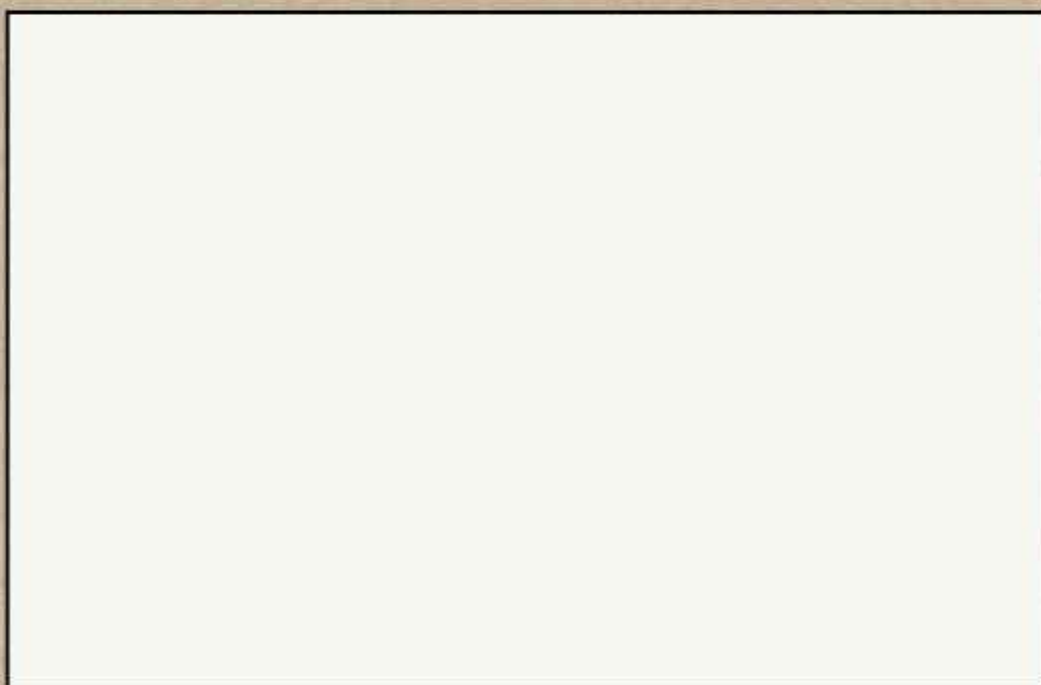
| | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> School or hobbies | <input type="checkbox"/> Funny memories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family stories | <input type="checkbox"/> Future plans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any other: _____ | |

Write down one or two things you talked about.

Family Journal

What do I feel about this relation?

Draw a picture on what you think about family?



Circle all the feelings you had today

😊 Happy

😊 Safe

😊 Loved

😞 Sad

😞 Unsafe

😞 Neglected

😡 Grumpy

😡 Upset

⚡ Energetic



Family Journal

Something I saved from today

If you have a small item from the visit (like a ticket, a picture, a leaf, or a little note), tape it here or describe it!



Something I Wonder About...

Rate Your Meeting

🌟 Amazing!

😊 Really Good

😊 Okay

😞 A Little Upset

😞 Confused

😞 Not Good

Note: Sometimes memories bring up happy and sad feelings. If these activities make you feel upset or uncomfortable, it's okay to stop, take a break, or ask for help. Your feelings matter most!

Note: This template can help you to create your own family meeting journal

Activity 3: My Care Plan

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- 1 Do I know my social worker's name?**
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 My relationship with the social worker is?**
☐ Distant ☐ uncomfortable
☐ Neutral ☐ Close
- 3 I understand my care plan**
☐ Not At All ☐ A Little Bit
☐ Mostly ☐ Very Well
- 4 Parts of my care plan I want to know more about are**
☐ School plans ☐ Activities I can join
☐ Family visits ☐ Health check-ups
☐ Other: _____
- 5 I know who to talk to if I'm unhappy about something**
☐ Counselor ☐ Friends
☐ Warden ☐
☐ Other: _____
- 6 My responsibilities in the care institution/family**
☐ Following the rules ☐ Respecting the elders'
☐ Attending school ☐ keep my space clean
☐ Other: _____

Note: This template can help you to create your own Care Journal

Note: Social Worker are counselor, caregiver, warden, etc.

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