



SEEN AND HEARD

It's Our Case Why Shouldn't We Be There?



On June 1, 2012 Florida's Supreme Court put into place a new rule requiring dependency judges to find out why a child is not present. Florida Youth SHINE members share with us why they believe it is important for all youth in care, regardless of age, to attending their court proceedings or meet with their judge while they are in care.

1. So we can understand why we're in care.
2. So we can understand what's really going on in our case.
3. Because we're experiencing our life first hand.
4. Because we should be taken a lot more seriously.
5. So we can have more of an impact on our own life.
6. So our judge gets to know us.
7. Because everyone involved in your case is there all at once to cut down on the "he said, she said".
8. Because it's a family reunion/opportunity for us to see our siblings.
9. To request the paperwork of what is said in court, the judge's orders, etc.
10. So we can say what we really want without feeling threatened.
 - Court would be more kid friendly if we didn't fear retaliation
11. So we can speak to our judge one on one.
 - This should be a requirement of the court proceedings
12. Because anyone should be able to go.
13. You get to hear everyone's version of the truth.
 - We get to tell our version (THE ONLY VERSION THAT SHOULD MATTER)
14. We finally get to meet everyone who is associated with our case (case managers, GAL, siblings, lawyers, etc.).
15. Because our foster parents decide for us whether we should be there or not.

Benchmark Hearings (Judicial Reviews and Status Hearings that begin at 17):

1. We feel like we are being listened to less at benchmarks.
2. We are more worried about our education than Independent Living.