



The Fair Housing Act makes housing discrimination illegal.

If you have children or are expecting children, you have a right to fair housing

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing, and in other housing-related transactions based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability, familial status and being at least 55 years old.

The “familial status” protection refers to anyone who has legal custody of children under 18, including biological parents, stepparents, foster parents, grandparents, or other relatives or guardians. It applies to anyone expecting children, such as pregnant women or individuals in the process of adopting a child. It is illegal to refuse to rent or to change rental conditions for families because they have children. *The only exception to the familial status protection applies to communities for the elderly.*



Examples of potential familial status discrimination:

- Saying “We don’t allow kids here.”
- Advertisements that discourage families with children from applying for housing, such as “Single Occupancy” or “Adults Only”.
- Only allowing families with children to live in particular areas of a neighborhood or dwelling, such as only allowing children in ground floor units.
- Asking a parent or guardian how they intend to pay rent and provide for their children.
- Setting different income requirements for single mothers.
- Requiring that children always be at school or under adult supervision when the parent/guardian is at work.
- Suggesting a home is not suitable for children because there is no playground nearby.
- Suggesting a home is not suitable for children because the neighbors/neighborhood are quiet.
- Charging a higher damage deposit to tenants with teenagers.
- Charging additional fees per child.
- Running criminal background checks on teenagers.
- Requiring that children of different genders sleep in different rooms.
- Not allowing a child and parent to share a bedroom.

**You should not be blocked from housing because you have or are expecting children.
You have the right to choose housing that is suitable for your family.**

If any of these things may have happened to you or someone you know, call Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Virginia (HOME) at (804) 354-0641. HOME can help you understand and advocate for your fair housing rights. There is no charge for any of HOME’s services, and all calls are confidential. Interpreter services are offered in many languages.

The Fair Housing Act also prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. If you are facing unfair housing treatment because your child has a disability, HOME can help.

