

Why Focus on Foster Care and Education?

For the almost 800,000 children and youth served in foster care each year in the United States, a quality education is vitally important. It not only provides children with a road map for future success, it can also serve as a positive counterweight to abuse, neglect, separation, and instability.

Unfortunately, many children and youth in foster care are in educational crises. A change in home placement frequently results in a change in school placement, which sets them back both academically and socially as they deal with record transfer issues, different curricula and new teachers and friends. Many of these youth fall behind and stay behind throughout their educational careers, leading to high drop-out rates and only a relatively few young people graduating from college.

Positive, stable school experiences enhance a child's well-being, help them make more successful transitions to adulthood, and increase their chances for personal fulfillment, economic self-sufficiency and their ability to contribute to society. Notably, the recently enacted Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351) now requires states to focus on ensuring and enabling school stability and prompt enrollment in school for young people in foster care.



Facts and Figures*

- Children and youth in out-of-home care experience **one or two** placement changes per year on average. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
- **Over a third** of young adults who aged out of foster care reported having had five or more school changes. (Three-state Midwest Study)
- Less than **60%** of youth in foster care finish high school before leaving care. (Multiple studies)
- Students in foster care score **16 to 20** percentile points below others in statewide standardized tests. (Washington State study)
- Only about **three percent** of youth obtain a bachelor's degree within a few years of emancipation. (Northwest Alumni Study)

*For full fact sheet citations visit:
www.casey.org/friendsandfamilies/partners

The National Working Group on Foster Care and Education

Our mission is to improve educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care across the country. We do this by increasing awareness of the specific educational needs of young people in foster care and by promoting best and promising practices, policies and reforms across the education, child welfare, and court systems.

A newly-formed national Education Advisory Group provides advice and recommendations to the Working Group on how education organizations can best help children and youth in foster care succeed in school.

The Working Group's goals are to promote:

- Educational stability for children and youth in foster care
- Seamless educational transitions for children and youth when education changes do occur
- High quality educational experiences, expectations and aspirations for young people in foster care
- Greater national attention to the disparate educational outcomes for young people in foster care, particularly youth of color

American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law/National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues
American Public Human Services Association/ Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance/National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Casey Family Programs
Children's Defense Fund
Child Welfare League of America
Education Law Center—PA
Juvenile Law Center
National CASA Association
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
National Foster Care Coalition
National Foster Parent Association

For more information, visit:
www.casey.org

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Foster Care and Education

Tools and Resources for Improving the Education Success of Children and Youth in Foster Care



National Working Group on Foster Care and Education

Tools and Resources

This guide identifies key resources and tools designed to help attorneys, CASAs/GALs, child welfare practitioners and administrators, educators, foster parents and kinship caregivers, judges, policymakers, parents and other family members, and youth themselves understand the diverse issues affecting a child's education, and ways to advocate and ensure positive educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care.

For additional resources, please visit www.casey.org or www.abanet.org/child/education.

A Road Map for Learning: Improving Educational Outcomes in Foster Care

Casey Family Programs

This framework provides key strategies designed to improve education for children and youth in foster care. Examples include achieving placement stability and transfer of accurate records, and ensuring youth are both literate and prepared for postsecondary education. **Download at www.casey.org.**

Asking the Right Questions II: Judicial Checklists to Meet the Educational Needs of Children and Youth in Foster Care (2008)

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

These checklists and technical assistance brief outline questions that should be asked in a courtroom with respect to the educational needs of children and youth in foster care. **Download at www.ncjfcj.org.**

Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Children in Foster Care

Legal Center for Foster Care and Education

The Blueprint is both an advocacy and systems reform tool that identifies eight goals and specific benchmarks, and provides examples of successful programs and policies around the country that address these goals. **Download at www.abanet.org/child/education.**

The Chafee Education and Training Vouchers Program: Six States' Experiences

National Foster Care Coalition

This report examines the implementation of the ETV Program in CA, ME, MT, NC, NY and WY, highlighting programs and noteworthy practices. **Download at www.nationalfostercare.org.**

Educational Advocacy Curriculum

National Foster Parent Association

This training encourages and prepares foster parents to become educational advocates for the children and youth in their care. **Download at www.NFPAonline.org.**

Education and Youth in Out-of-Home Care, an E-Learning Module

National CASA Association

This e-learning curriculum helps volunteer CASAs/GALs and program staff support the educational rights and needs of children and youth in foster care. **Email staff@nationalcasa.org.**

Endless Dreams

Casey Family Programs

This free video and training curriculum for educators increase awareness of the unique educational needs of youth in foster care and describe the implementation of policies, procedures, and practices that improve educational success. **Order at www.casey.org.**

It's My Life: Postsecondary Education and Training Guide

Casey Family Programs

This guide provides child welfare practitioners, educators, and advocates with practice approaches for improving college success for students in foster care. **Download at www.casey.org.**

Make a Difference in a Child's Life and Toolkit for Change

TeamChild and Casey Family Programs

The *Make a Difference* manual teaches how to advocate for a youth's education. *Toolkit for Change* enables states to adapt the original manual to other jurisdictions. **Download at www.teamchild.org.**

Mythbusting: Breaking Down Confidentiality and Decision-Making Barriers to Meet the Education Needs of Children in Foster Care

ABA Center on Children and the Law

Mythbusting is a free, online, searchable publication that addresses the issues surrounding confidentiality and other barriers that arise when advocating for the educational rights of young people in care. **Download at www.abanet.org/child/education.**

Planning Ahead for Educational Success: Interjurisdictional Provision of Public Education

AAICAMA/American Public Human Services Assoc.

This issue brief identifies how to secure necessary supports and services for interstate placement of children and youth in foster care. It includes an Interstate Education Checklist. **Available at www.aphsa.org.**

PRIDE Curriculum Module on Education: Working Together to Improve Educational Outcomes for Youth in Care

Child Welfare League of America

This module enhances foster and adoptive parents' knowledge and skills, enabling them to fulfill the tasks of an educational advocate. **Purchase at www.cwla.org.**

Solving the Data Puzzle: A How-To Guide on Collecting and Sharing Information to Improve Education Outcomes for Children in Out-of-Home Care

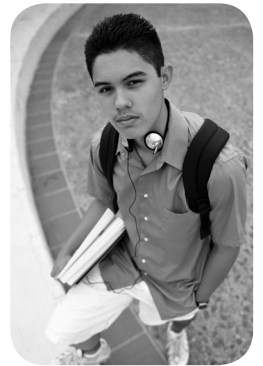
Legal Center for Foster Care and Education

This guide provides a roadmap to state or local-level data collection and information-sharing efforts. It includes agency tools and a manual which details laws, policy considerations, and nationwide examples. **Download at www.abanet.org/child/education.**

Special Education Decision-Making Series

Legal Center for Foster Care and Education

This series of fact sheets and articles address the issues surrounding special education decision-making for children in out-of-home care. **Download at www.abanet.org/child/education.**



Technical Assistance Resource

Legal Center for Foster Care and Education

The Legal Center for Foster Care and Education is a collaboration between Casey Family Programs and the ABA's Center on Children and the Law, in conjunction with the Education Law Center-PA and the Juvenile Law Center. It serves as a national technical assistance resource and information clearinghouse on legal and policy matters affecting the education of children in the foster care system. Resources include: a listserv group, topical conference calls, a searchable database, and numerous publications that provide details about important issues related to the education needs for children in out-of-home care. **Visit www.abanet.org/child/education.**