



**National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information
National Adoption Information Clearinghouse**



Gateways to Information: Protecting Children and Strengthening Families

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**Educational Stability for Children and Youth in Foster Care
2001-present**

One recommendation at a time: 2003/2004 Fall Policy Conference report.

California Youth Connection.

California Youth Connection Fall Policy Conference (2003: Modesto, Calif.)

California Youth Connection Fall Policy Conference (2004: Orange, Calif.)

2005

Available from: California Youth Connection Statewide Office

604 Mission Street 9th Floor

San Francisco, CA 94105

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Available from: <http://www.calyouthconn.org>

California Youth Connection (CYC) is a statewide foster youth empowerment and advocacy organization that is guided, focused and driven by current and former foster youth, ages 14-24. CYC members are foster youth from every lifestyle with every foster care experience represented: long term foster care, guardianship, adoption, youth with children, youth receiving mental health services, youth in the juvenile justice system and more. This report is a product of CYC's 2003 and 2004 Fall Policy Conferences. The Policy Conference is the one time per year that CYC members statewide gather specifically to discuss current issues in foster care, and to propose policy solutions to address those issues. The last day of the Fall Policy Conference is spent presenting issues and recommendations to a distinguished panel that has included California State legislators, local policy makers, various directors of child welfare programs and other decision makers within the child welfare system. This report contains recommendations from foster youth on education, LGBTQQ foster youth, improving social worker services, transitional housing, group homes, and placement stability. (Author abstract modified)

http://www.calyouthconn.org/files/cyc/PDF/2003_2004%20Fall%20Policy%20Conference%20Report.pdf

Foster care education fact sheets.

California Foster Youth Education Task Force.

2005

Designed to inform California educators, this collection of fact sheets explains legal requirements relating to the education of foster children. The fact sheets contain information on: school stability, transfer of records, and protection of grades and credits; the right of parents to make educational decisions for their children unless the child is in a legal guardianship, has been freed for adoption, or the court has specifically limited the parents' educational rights; special education and the Individualized Education Program; requirements for non-public schools to provide special education services; the provision of mental health services (under AB 3632) as part of a youth's Individualized Education Program (IEP) to ensure that she benefits from her education; Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavioral Intervention Plans for foster youth; school discipline; and discipline for children receiving special education services.

<http://www.abanet.org/child/rc/ij/education/californiafactsheets082205.pdf>

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Maine School Transfer Policy and Practice for Children in Care.

2005

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Children in care deserve to remain in their own school system if at all possible. If it is not possible for the child to remain in his or her own school system, the child needs to have the transition to his/her new school be as supported and planned as possible. This policy and practice will provide child welfare caseworkers with guidelines and strategies that support positive educational outcomes for children in the custody of the state of Maine. It includes strategies that guide the enrollment in and transfer between schools that ensure a smooth transition to a new school that is sensitive to the individual needs of each child. The desired outcomes of this policy and practice will be improved educational outcomes for youth in care, good interagency collaboration, and best practice guidelines. Every child in care deserves to have the best possible educational experience while in care whether s/he remains in the same school system or not. (Author abstract)

<http://www.abanet.org/child/rc/iji/education/vk3school.doc>

Improving family foster care: findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study [summary].

Foster care alumni studies: stories from the past to shape the future

Casey Family Programs.

2005

Publication Information: Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs.

Available from: Casey Family Programs
1300 Dexter Avenue North Floor 3
Seattle, WA 98109
Tel: 206-282-7300

info@casey.org

Available from: <http://www.casey.org>

The Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study collected data from case records and interviews with alumni of foster care programs in Washington and Oregon to explore the link between foster care services and later mental health status, educational achievement, employment, and financial stability. The findings revealed that more than half of the alumni had mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder, major depression, and social phobia. Although most of the former foster youth completed their high school education, fewer than two percent held a bachelor's degree. Approximately one-fourth of the study participants reported being homeless for at least one day and one-third had incomes at or below the poverty level. These rates are higher than the general population. Recommendations for improving outcomes focus on increasing access to mental health assessment and treatment while in care, encouraging post-secondary education, reducing school transfers during foster care, enhancing life skills development, and helping youth to build supportive relationships. 3 notes.

http://www.casey.org/NR/rdonlyres/4E1E7C77-7624-4260-A253-892C5A6CB9E1/301/nw_alumni_study_sum_apr2005.pdf

Helping foster children achieve educational stability and success: a field guide for information sharing.

Lichtenberg, Lynn. Lee, Anne. Helgren, Pat. Bradley, Sandy.
Washington. Department of Social and Health Services.
Washington. Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
Casey Family Programs.

2004

http://www.wa-schoolcounselor.org/documents/Field_Guide_DRAFT_rev%5b1%5d_.pdf

The educational status of foster children.

Courtney, Mark E. Roderick, Melissa. Smithgall, Cheryl. Gladden, Robert Matthew. Nagaoka, Jenny.
2004

Available from: Chapin Hall Center for Children
1313 East 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
Tel: 773-256-5213

This issue brief is based on two recent Chapin Hall studies: one of youth aging out of the child welfare system in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, and the other of Chicago Public School (CPS) students in out-of-home care. It describes findings from the studies on the educational status of children and youth in out-of-home care and examines some of the challenges confronting child welfare and educational systems in their attempts to develop strategies to work together more productively to improve educational outcomes for these children. Findings indicate that foster youth have high educational aspirations but experience significant academic failure, and that a disproportionate number enter school with significant delays and never catch up. CPS students in out-of-home care were substantially more likely to be old for their grade. In addition, a high percentage of the students received special education services, and both studies revealed substantial levels of school mobility associated with placement in out-of-home care. The following recommendations are made for improving educational outcomes for foster youth: reduce school mobility for children in out-of-home care; avoid unnecessary special education placement by assuring that special education placement focuses on long-term needs rather than the child's reaction to crisis, and considering alternative interventions to address short-term behavioral problems; reduce dropout rates by providing academic support, such as tutors, and monitoring to maintain consistent school attendance; improve communication between schools and the child welfare system; improve collaboration and team building between schools and the child welfare system; develop professional development and training between schools and the child welfare system; and strengthen reporting systems for educational indicators. 2 tables, 2 figures, and 3 references.

http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1377&L2=61&L3=130

Learning curves: education advocacy for children in foster care.

McNaught, Kathleen M.
2004

Publication Information: Washington, DC: ABA Center on Children and the Law.
Distributed by: ABA Center on Children and the Law.
740 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005-1022
Tel: 800-285-2221

Available from: <http://www.abanet.org/child>

A quality education can help foster children overcome adversities and achieve success in adulthood. This book explains federal laws that support education rights and describes the role of lawyers, judges, parents, and educators in ensuring that foster and adopted children receive necessary school services. The text emphasizes several key strategies for education advocacy: obtain accurate school records for all foster children; collaborate with school officials; maintain stability in the school placement; facilitate early education for preschool children; encourage high school completion and continued education; obtain extra support for children when necessary; and enroll qualified children in special education services. Benefits of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the No Child Left Behind Act, the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Act, and the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 specifically are discussed. The chapters also review the special education process, the education needs of young children, school discipline policies, and practical approaches for direct advocacy, courtroom advocacy, legislative advocacy, and interagency collaboration. A glossary of education and advocacy terms is included. Numerous endnotes.

Closing the education achievement gap for foster and probation youth.

Children's Law Center of Los Angeles.

Los Angeles Education Summit (2004)

2004

Publication Information: Washington, DC: National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues

Available from: National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues

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This report summarizes the discussion and recommendations of participants of the 2004 Los Angeles Education Summit in regard to eight critical areas: the role of the judiciary, empowering caregivers, probation youth, special education, nonpublic schools, early childhood education, school stability, and data collection. The summit brought together educators, child welfare experts, advocates, and community leaders to identify key issues, challenges, and possible reforms related to the educational needs of foster youth and probation youth in Los Angeles County. Participants shared their expertise, perspectives, and recommendations for overcoming the barriers that have resulted in an educational achievement gap for these youth. Discussion in each of the eight areas is summarized and recommendations are listed.

Recommendations include: judges need to hold all parts of the system responsible for the educational attainment of probation and dependent youth; courts need to be more proactive in monitoring and overseeing the educational needs of youth in out of home care, from the time of a child's first entry into the dependency or delinquency system forward; courts need to be provided with complete and timely information regarding a dependent or probation youth's educational status, ongoing progress, and any developing problems; both judicial and cross-system training in relation to education issues should be developed; train school personnel about special education law and the rights of students in addition to the special circumstances of foster/probation youth; teach dependency attorneys about educational advocacy and how to enhance coordination and dialogue with caregivers; conduct assessments to determine an optimal placement match that promotes school stability and is consistent with the needs of the youth and the ability of the caregiver; keep children in the school of origin, unless the child wants to move and it is in his or her best interest to do so; provide foster care advocates/liaisons in the schools in order to increase support and awareness of the importance of educational attainment and stability in the lives of foster/probation youth; and integrate special education training into the curriculum of schools of social work.

<http://www.abanet.org/child/rcjji/education/educationsummitreport2004.doc>

Promoting educational success for young people in foster care.

National Foster Youth Advisory Council.

2004

Publication Information: [S.I.]: National Foster Youth Advisory Council.

Distributed by: FosterClub, Inc.

753 First Avenue

Seaside, OR 97138

Tel: 503-717-1552 877-216-7379 (toll free)

celeste@fosterclub.com

Available from: <http://www.fyi3.com>

This report discusses key program components for promoting the educational success of young people in foster care. Information was gathered from members of the National Foster Youth Advisory Council who convened on two occasions during 2003, to address the many challenges facing young people in foster care with regard to education. Group members were asked to identify what strategies work and the range of supports that facilitated their educational success. The group articulated the following key components: caring people, permanency and a sense of stability, financial assistance, flexibility with educational planning, and programs promoting child and youth development. The following recommendations for future programs were made: connect youth with people resources, make sure youth have a place to call

home, let youth be involved in making decisions about their lives, get to know youth for who they are not what they are in, focus on strengths, help the adults in their lives to understand the child welfare system, connect youth with information and support in navigating many of the resources that exist, respect their privacy, teach youth to take care of themselves, and develop federal and state policies that promote success.

<http://www.abanet.org/child/rcjji/education/educationrevised2005.doc>

<http://www.fyi3.com/fyi3/Involved/YB/pdfs/educationStatement.pdf>

Ensuring educational rights and stability for foster youth [website]: [California] Assembly Bill 490 (effective 1/1/04): training and implementation package.

National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues

California Youth Connection.

Children's Law Center of Los Angeles.

National Center for Youth Law.

2003

Distributed by: National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues

740 15th Street, NW

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Available from: <http://www.abanet.org/child/>

This training and implementation package provides hearing officers, attorneys, advocates, school personnel, and others with information on the California Assembly Bill 490, a law designed to ensure all pupils in foster care have a meaningful opportunity to meet the challenging state pupil achievement standards to which all pupils are held. The law requires: children placed in group homes or foster family homes to be placed in the least restricted educational environment, foster children to be placed in a mainstream public school program unless it is in the best interest of the student to be placed in another educational program, foster children be allowed to continue their education in the same school for the duration of the school year, the establishment of an educational liaison for foster children, the transfer of students records within two business days after receiving a transfer request, and the right of a foster child to immediate enroll in a new school. The package contains a summary of the law, an explanation of the changes in law, and information on the roles and responsibilities of various parties under the new law. The specific roles and responsibilities of judges, attorneys, social workers and probation officers, caregivers, and schools are explained. Charts are also provided on California legislation related to the education of wards and dependents, on education related duties in California juvenile dependency cases, and on education related duties in California juvenile delinquency cases.

<http://www.abanet.org/child/rcjji/education/ab490.html>

Educating children in foster care.

Christian, Steve.

National Conference of State Legislatures.

2003

Publication Information: Washington, DC: National Conference of State Legislatures.

Distributed by: National Conference of State Legislatures

444 North Capitol Street NW Suite 515

Washington, DC 20001

Tel: 202-624-5400

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Available from: <http://www.ncsl.org>

School plays an important role in the lives of most children in foster care. For every child, education is critical to successful transition to adulthood. For children in foster care, positive relationships with supportive teachers, school-based counselors and classmates can offer a measure of protection from the disruption and uncertainty associated with out-of-home placement. The need of foster children for a stable education, however, is often neglected by an overburdened child welfare system that is concerned primarily with children's physical safety. During the past few years, education of foster children has

become a key issue on the agendas of various child welfare research and advocacy organizations and of some state policymakers. In addition, state performance in meeting the educational needs of children in the child welfare system is now being assessed as part of the federal Child and Family Service Review. This report provides a brief overview of this issue. It provides some background about the academic performance of children in foster care and describes what researchers have identified as major systemic obstacles to these children's academic success. It also examines what the Child and Family Services Reviews are saying about state performance in this area and describes some promising state initiatives to address foster children's educational needs. (Author abstract)

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/cpieducate.pdf>

Fostering student success: child welfare agency caseworker's procedures manual, 2003-2004.

Broward County, Florida. School Board.

Florida. Dept. of Children and Families.

ChildNet.

2003

Distributed by: School Board, Broward County, Florida

600 SE Third Ave.

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Tel: (754)321-0000

Available from: <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us>

Intended for Broward County caseworkers overseeing foster care children, this manual outlines school-based procedures designed to promote the academic achievement of these children. It provides a description of the school personnel who will assist caseworkers, and information on: school registration for foster care children, immunizations, placement changes and educational stability, school transition, special transportation, monitoring and individual planning for children with disabilities, the role of foster care parents and natural parents, surrogate parents, information sharing between caseworkers and school district staff, truancy, and discipline issues.

http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/dropoutprevention/2003-04_Caseworker_Manual.pdf

Los Angeles education summit on needs and challenges facing foster youth: "Identifying Obstacles and Forging Solutions" / Children's Law Center of Los Angeles.

2003

Publication Information: Los Angeles: Children's Law Center of Los Angeles.

Distributed by: ABA Center on Children and the Law

The National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues 740 15th Street NW

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Available from: <http://www.abanet.org/child/rcji/education>

This report summarizes recommendations from an education summit held on May 16, 2003, and attended by over one hundred Los Angeles educators, child welfare experts, advocates, and community leaders. The summit sought to identify key issues, challenges, and possible reforms relating to the educational needs of foster youth. Break-out groups explored barriers and possible reforms to ensuring school and placement stability; providing access to, and transfer of, education records; administration and monitoring of nonpublic schools; the development of an academic support network for foster youth; and creation of a foster youth literacy initiative. Recommendations from the groups include: placement decisions for foster youth should be based, at least in part, on the need to maintain the youth's school stability; social workers should be trained to consider school stability, educational integrity, educational attainment, and school readiness in placement and other related decisions impacting foster youth; replacements should be timed to avoid disruption of the youth's academic, enrichment and extracurricular activities; multidisciplinary teams should be created to provide training for adults and children regarding the educational rights and unique needs of dependent youth; teachers should receive mandatory training to ensure better understanding of the needs of foster children and how to best work with the parents and caregivers of foster children; parents, caregivers, and children should have a voice at every stage of the educational planning for dependent youth; advocacy organizations, caregivers, the court, child welfare

workers and the schools need to collaborate in recruiting and training volunteer education advocates for foster children; resource guides should be provided to assist children and adults in identifying and accessing services; school and child welfare policies and forms should be updated; and the education and child welfare systems should clarify who bears the responsibility for decision-making and implementation of critical changes at each step of a dependent child's education. More specific recommendations in these areas are provided.

http://www.abanet.org/child/rcjji/education/ed_summitrec.pdf

Education Advocacy in Child Welfare Cases: Key Issues and Roles.

McNaught, Kathleen.

National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues.

2002

Child Law Practice

21 (9) 129-130, 134-139

Publication Information: ABA Center on Children and the Law, Washington, DC.

Reprints available from: ABA Center on Children and the Law

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Sponsoring Organization: National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues (DHHS)

The first in a series of articles about education advocacy for children in foster care, this discussion outlines important issues for advocates and decision makers. The steps will help to ensure that children receive the necessary education services to reduce the risk of homelessness, poverty, and adult court involvement. Educational outcomes also are required as part of the federal Child and Family Service Review process. Recommendations include obtain access to school records, communicate with the school system, maintain stable school placements whenever possible, explore early intervention opportunities for young children, encourage older children to stay in school and continue their education, advocate for special services as needed, and monitor the fairness of discipline practices. 23 endnotes.

Improving Educational Outcomes for Youth in Care.

Yu, E. Day, P. Williams, M.

2002

Publication Information: CWLA Press, Washington, DC ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center

Available from: Child Welfare League of America

440 First St., NW Third Floor

Washington, DC 20001-2085

books@cwla.org.

Sponsoring Organization: Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support

Published as part of the Improving Educational Outcomes for Youth in Care project, this monograph summarizes research findings about the academic achievement of youth in the custody of the child welfare system and the role of education in successful transitions to independence. The report highlights the significant number of children in care who repeat grades, score below grade level in reading and math, and drop out of school. Risk factors for educational problems are identified, including changes in placement, teacher attitudes, school policies, and the relationship between the child welfare agency and the school system. Studies also have found that poor educational achievement can lead to low paying jobs, homelessness, and lack of medical care. Youth in care suggest that placement stability, a safe and stable school environment, and interagency coordination would improve their educational experience and opportunities. They also desire greater involvement in decision making and support from teachers and adults. Child welfare agencies, schools, and the judicial system should promote school stability and provide training for professionals in the educational needs of foster youth. Numerous references.

How children's foster care experiences affect their education.

Conger, Dylan. Rebeck, Alison.

Vera Institute of Justice.

2001

Distributed by: Vera Institute of Justice

233 Broadway, 12th Floor

New York, NY 10279

Tel: (212) 334-1300

Available from: <http://www.vera.org/>

Sponsoring Organization: New York City Administration for Children's Services.

Each day, child welfare officials make decisions about what types of homes to place children in, whether they should be moved to new homes, and whether and when they should be returned to their families.

This report indicates that several of these choices influence children's educational outcomes and calls attention to children in foster care who show a marked change in certain school outcomes after they enter care. This study examined the relationship between children's foster care experiences and their performance in school. Using a combined database of school and child welfare records on more than 16,000 foster children, the authors compared children's attendance rates, school transfers, and third through eighth grade test scores according to their foster care experiences, including length of stay in care, type of foster home, runaway history, placement history, reason for placement, and year of entry into care. Foster care experiences had the strongest effect on attendance and school transfers but only minor effects on children's reading and math exams. Additionally, a school transfer slightly increased attendance, had no effect on reading scores, and reduced math scores by a very small amount. They found that while foster children have very poor attendance rates compared to students in the general population, several groups of children improved their attendance after they entered foster care, including those who were young, entered care because of abuse or neglect, remained in care for at least the entire school semester after they entered, had stable placements, and were placed in family-like homes. These children's foster care experiences appear to increase this aspect of school stability. Other children's attendance dropped after foster care placement. In particular, attendance declined for children who had short stays in foster care or who returned home during the school semester. This finding suggests that discharge planning conferences should consider the possible risks associated with returning children home during the school session and that they ensure sufficient aftercare services to help families maintain their children's school stability. Being older upon entering care was also a risk factor for poor attendance, indicating the potential for special services to adolescents. Overall, foster children's attendance has improved over the past five years an indication that ACS reforms may be benefiting some children. (Author abstract modified)

http://www.vera.org/publication_pdf/147_183.pdf