

Fostering Connections: FAQ For Educators

What is fostering connections?

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 requires child welfare agencies to have a plan for ensuring the educational stability of the child while in foster care including the child remaining in the school in which the child is enrolled at time of placement unless it is not in the best interest of the child.

Title 1, Part A (Title 1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) now contains key protections for children in foster care that require State and Local Education entities to collaborate together to ensure educational stability.

Under FOSTERING CONNECTIONS:

- Youth in foster care are entitled to remain in their same school when feasible. Youth foster care placement decisions take school stability into account and school stability is a priority whenever possible and is in the best interest of the child
- Youth in foster care have the right to immediate enrollment and are guaranteed seamless transitions between schools and school districts when school moves occur. School district must make every effort to obtain school records as soon as possible.
- Youth in foster care have the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Transportation may be available either through the county, the school district or a shared cost between the county and school district when a child is returning to the school of origin.
- Youth in foster care automatically qualify for free school meals.

What happens when a child exits foster care and the home is in a different district?

The team will need to determine what is in the best interest of the child. The child has the right to remain in the school of origin for the remainder of the school year, however, individual circumstances need to be taken into consideration.

What can I do to support a student who is in foster care?

- Maintain short written list of classroom rules.
- Contact the previous school to find out about academics, strengths and challenges.
- Find out who the educational decision maker is and reach out to this person to ensure that you are both on the same page.
- Remember that many children in foster care can find it difficult to trust adults and may have experienced trauma. Consistency and patience is important.
- Help students develop self-advocacy skills.
- Assist older students with post-secondary planning.
- Connect students to appropriate supports within the school and the community.
- Encourage students to participate in after school activities and special school events.
- Maintain homework/school supply kits. Contact the homeless liaison/fostering connections coordinator if you need school supplies for students placed in foster care at 651-407-7559.
- Remember students may not have access to internet.
- Please keep the homeless liaison/fostering connections coordinator updated if there are attendance issues or bussing issues.
- Offer support throughout the day as needed.
- Work with the homeless liaison/fostering connections coordinator to waive any fees or provide supplies that could be a barrier to full participation in field trips, extra-curricular or classroom activities. The Homeless Liaison/fostering connections coordinator can be reached at 651-407-7559.

