

Foster Care School Enrollment

WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL STABILITY FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE?

Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. § 6312(c)(5), Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, 20 U.S.C. § 6312(c)(5) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (FERPA), and other related State laws and regulations require public school systems and local departments of social services to work together to support the educational stability and success of children in foster care. As part of the collaboration, the Local Education Agency (LEA) shall allow a child in foster care to remain at the school of origin unless the child welfare agency determines that it is in the best interests of the child to attend the school serving the geographical attendance area of the out of home placement.

WHAT IS FOSTER CARE?

Foster Care is the 24 hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the Child Welfare Agency (CWA) has placement and care responsibility. This care includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, homes of relatives through kinship care, group facilities, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes.

Foster care **does not include** the placement of a child in any of the following placements: a detention facility; a forestry camp; a training school; a State-owned and State-operated facility that accommodates more than 25 children; or any other facility operated primarily for the detention of children who are determined to be delinquent..

WHO ARE THE CHILD WELFARE AGENCY (CWA) AND LEA'S FOSTER CARE LIAISON?

The LEA Foster Care Liaison and CWA staff people are designated to work in connection with the identification, enrollment, and provision of support to students who are in foster care. For more contact information please see: <http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DSFSS/SSSP/PPW/index.aspx>.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND LEA?

The LEA in collaboration with the local department of social services are to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The purpose of this Agreement is to establish joint procedures by which the Parties will support the educational stability, school enrollment, transportation, and opportunity for school success of students in foster care, consistent with the requirements set forth in federal and State laws and regulations.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CWA AND THE LEA SCHOOL?

In the MOA, on page 5, §VI C, the CWA personnel shall present the student to the receiving LEA for enrollment. The school shall **immediately** enroll the student even if the CWA personnel does not have the entire school record.

WHAT MUST THE CWA PERSONNEL PRESENT AT THE TIME OF ENROLLMENT?

The CWA shall provide documentation that the child is under the authority of the local department of social services or juvenile services. The worker shall provide the parts of the most recent court order establishing legal custody or **a letter on the letterhead of the placement agency that has custody of the child explaining that the child is in under their care.** Also, a written statement of the address of the out-of-home placement shall be presented. The written statement need **not** be in the form of a lease, utility bills, etc..

WHAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MUST THE PERSON ENROLLING THE FOSTER STUDENT PROVIDE?

Additionally, the person authorized to enroll the student shall provide a photo identification at the time of enrollment.

WHERE CAN I GET ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

Contact the Student Services and Strategic Planning Branch, Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy, Maryland State Department of Education at 410-767-0295.