

School Foster Care Point of Contact (POC)

Roles and Responsibilities



Purpose

School Foster Care Points of Contact (POC) serve as a bridge between state and local education and child welfare systems to ensure educational stability for students in foster care. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 requires local education agencies (LEAs) to identify and establish a local-level School Foster Care Point of Contact to facilitate implementation of, and compliance with, the federal Title I, Part A protections provided to youth in foster care by the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Knowledge

School Foster Care Points of Contact (POC) should be versed in ESSA's Title I, Part A foster care provisions as well as other laws, regulations, state and local policies, and guidance governing education services for youth in foster care. The POC should have an understanding of the public education system and how to access school-based resources (including transportation) for youth in foster care. An understanding of, or willingness to learn about the child welfare/ foster care system is also important for the POC.

Roles and Responsibilities

Individuals identified as the School Foster Care Point of Contact should have the capacity (time, access to school resources) to adequately fulfill the below-mentioned anticipated roles and responsibilities to ensure educational stability, best interest, and school success of students in foster care.

- Serve as the school district foster care point of contact to promote educational stability for students in foster care, including supporting best practices for local policies and procedures that remove barriers to education for youth in foster care.
- Coordinate regularly with County Children and Youth Agency (CCYA) Education Liaisons to implement ESSA's Title I, Part A provisions, which includes collaboration, participation in school placement best interest determinations (BID), provision of transportation, and facilitation of immediate enrollment and records transfers.
- Ensure school district representation in the BID process for youth in foster care within an appropriate timeframe.
- Encourage a cooperative process with all parties involved to complete the enrollment and records transfer process, when changing schools is in the student's best interest.

- Serve as a resource/link to school administration and staff, parents, foster parents, and other providers to ensure educational stability policies and procedures are followed and documented at all times.
- Facilitate communication between the CCYA Education Liaison and other foster care liaisons, such as the child's caseworker, as needed.
- Ensure the CCYA receives current educational information of a student to promote educational stability.
- Ensure that youth in foster care are enrolled in and regularly attending school.
- Understand local transportation plan procedures/policies and responsible for communicating proposed changes with transportation plan partners, as well as submitting any/all transportation plan changes to PDE.
- Assist in coordinating local transportation procedures for youth in foster care to remain in the school of origin by notifying the school of origin transportation designee and communicating identified options with the placing CCYA.
- Participate in local, regional, and statewide training to ensure understanding of regulations and processes as they pertain to the enrollment and educational stability of youth in foster care.
- Train school district staff about the benefits of educational stability and ESSA's Title I, Part A provisions for youth in foster care.
- Assist in the resolving disputes, as needed, including ensuring that disputes among agencies do not interrupt the educational stability of youth in foster care.
- Serve as a "connector" or assign a "connector" for youth in foster care so that they are aware of and able to access school-based resources.
- Provide an opportunity for dialogue with older youth in foster care about college and career pathways, including PA's Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program (created by Act 16 of 2019).
- Connect youth in foster care requiring special education services to appropriate district staff to ensure equitable access to appropriate services, in addition to meeting compliance with relevant special education laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 and the Uninterrupted Scholars Act of 2013 as it relates to ensuring educational stability for youth in foster care.