

Fostering Student Success



A Technical Assistance Manual for
Foster Care Campus Coordinators and
School-Based Staff

2019-2020

The School Board of Palm Beach County, Florida

Fostering Student Success is a collaborative effort between the Department of Safe Schools and SEDNET Region 9, Palm Beach County, part of the Department of Exceptional Student Education.

A Special Thank You To:

ChildNet, Inc.



Everybody's A Teacher Committee, Palm Beach County





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Vision: The School District of Palm Beach envisions a dynamic collaborative multicultural community where education and lifelong learning are valued and supported, and all learners reach their highest potential and succeed in the global economy.

Mission: Foster Care Support Services, in the Department of Safe Schools, provides the level of support necessary to promote successful outcomes in school for our students in foster care.



Fostering Student Success

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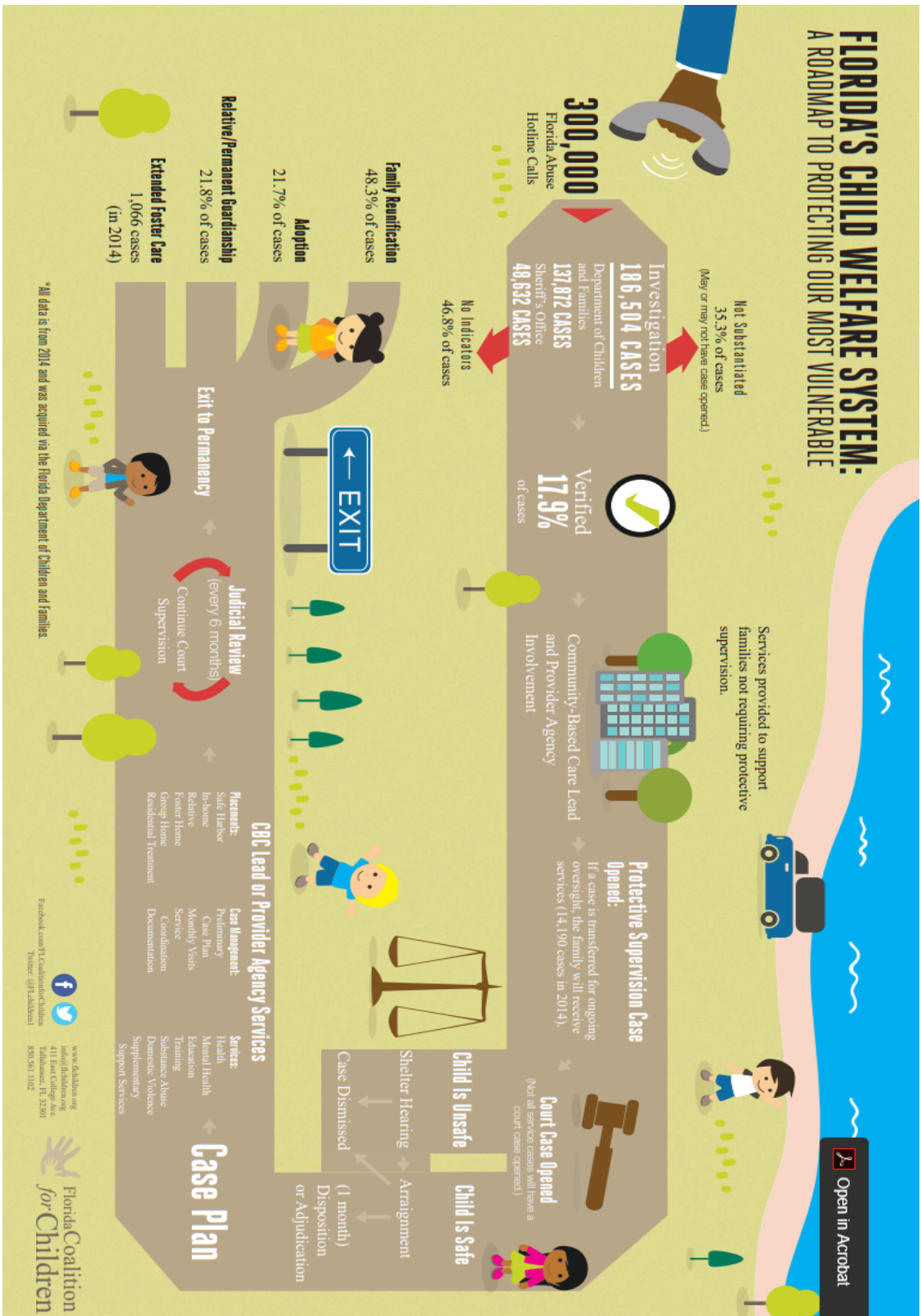
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Facts about Students in Care

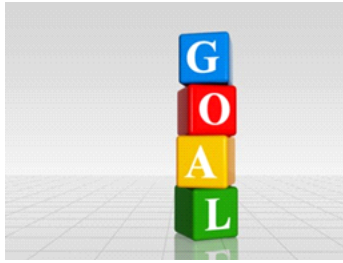
- Long term goals are important
 - Over 1/3 of youth in foster care did not receive a high school diploma or GED by the time they turned 19 years of age, as compared to less than 14% in a comparable national sample.
- Daily attendance is crucial for success
 - Students in care are twice as likely to be absent from school.
- Stability is important
 - 34% of students in foster care will experience at least 3 or more moves in a year.
- Positive behavior supports are important
 - Students in foster care are three times more likely to be suspended or expelled from school.
- Being trauma informed is important
 - Important to remember that traumatic events may be at the ‘heart’ of academic or social/emotional difficulties the students may face. FC³s should always promote the practice of thinking “What happened to this child?” rather than “What is wrong with this child?”



How a Student May Arrive into Care



Goals for Students in Care



- Every child starts school on the 1st day of school
- Aim for school stability
- Every child will have their academic needs identified and met
- Community stakeholders will work together to provide all children with the best academic foundation possible
- Every child will receive a high quality, early-learning environment
- Every child will benefit from trauma-informed practices used on their school campus.



Responsibilities of FC³


Responsibilities include:

- Receive a list of students at your school who are in care from the Foster Care Liaison.
- Facilitate gathering student information using the 'School Stability Checklist for Students in Out-of-Home Care' form.
- Welcome new students in care and provide campus tour.
- Serve as a resource to school personnel, as they support the academic and social/emotional learning of students in care.
- Share "Trauma-Informed Compassionate Classroom" information with the student's teacher(s).
- Complete the initial School Based Team (SBT) referral at the school, and follow up on progress.
- Communicate with FC³s at other schools to facilitate school-to-school transitions.
- Engage student in any extracurricular activities of interest.
- Become familiar with Florida's dependency law (F.S. § 39)
 - Home School
 - 30 days for records



Where to Turn?

For information, support, or questions...


	<p><u>Foster Care Liaison</u></p> <p>Mrs. Laura Shoemaker Department of Safe Schools 561-494-1449 Laura.Shoemaker@palmbeachschools.org</p>
	<p><u>SEDNET Project Manager/ ESE Specialist</u></p> <p>Mrs. Michelle Beatty Department of Exceptional Student Education 561-434-8147 Michelle.Beatty@palmbeachschools.org</p>
	<p><u>Community Based Care Educational Contact</u></p> <p>Mrs. Alisha Patterson-Major ChildNet 561-352-2500 ext. 2370 Apatterson-major@childnet.us</p>



Fostering Student Success

Where to Turn?

Roles of Supports Available Defined

	<p><u>Role of the Foster Care Liaison:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide schools with Salmon Forms and Dependency Shelter Orders• Update Foster Care tab in SIS• Process transportation to maintain school stability when feasible and in the student's best interest• Register children for free meals benefits through the School District's School Food Services Department• Make referrals to School-Based Team, for a review of current needs• Facilitate between community agencies and various stakeholders• Facilitate appropriate school placements when students transfer from out of county• Track foster care student educational outcomes
	<p><u>Role of the SEDNET Project Manager:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train and assign Educational Surrogates• Assist in obtaining an existing IEP when student transfers from out of county• Facilitate appropriate school placements when students transfer from out of county• Facilitate and collaborate with community agencies and various stakeholders• Support school sites which welcome a high number of students in care
	<p><u>Role of CBC Educational Contact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with School District, case manager, and other parties involved with student to determine if the student should remain in the school of origin and address transportation needs• Make referrals to School-Based Team, for a review of current needs• Complete school stability checklist of school-aged students coming into care• Contact school of origin and student's new school to assist with transition and ensure no gaps in communication• Ensure necessary school records and evaluations are sent with the student out of county• Track school changes• Facilitate and collaborate with community agencies and various stakeholders

Information Sharing

<p>Who can I share information with regarding the student in care?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent – even if child is out of their custody. Status of parental rights should be researched. • Foster Parents • Dependency Case Manager • Residential Group Home Staff • Guardians Ad Litem (GALs)
<p>What is FERPA? (Appendix A)</p>	<p>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act – A federal privacy law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have access to their children’s education records • seek to have the records amended • consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records, except as provided by law
<p>Why is the FERPA Amendment important?</p>	<p>The Amendment is important because it permits schools to share records of students in care, without parent consent, to case managers and child welfare agencies.</p>
<p>What form do I use as a release of information? (Appendix B)</p>	<p>Release of Student Information Form (PBSD 0313) can be received from child welfare agencies and used to request records from other schools and counties.</p>
<p>What is the Foster Care Interagency Agreement?</p>	<p>Agreement between the School District of Palm Beach County and seven other agencies. See next page.</p>
<p>Is there a list of child welfare agencies? (Appendix C)</p>	<p>ChildNet Subcontracted Service Providers</p>

Resources:

Appendix A: FERPA Resource – Guidance on Amendment

Appendix B: Release of Student Information PBSD 0313

Appendix C: ChildNet Subcontracted Service Providers

Foster Care Interagency Agreement

The goal of this Agreement is to bring judges, guardians, care managers, advocates, teachers and school administrators, and others together to develop an action plan that will improve the educational outcomes for our children.

To provide better outcomes for our students in care, the following agencies have agreed to more sharing of information and collaboration.

The Interagency Agreement is an agreement between 7 community agencies that are involved on a regular basis in the lives of the children.

- Department of Children & Families
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- School Board of Palm Beach County
- CareerSource, P.B.C.
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- Early Learning Coalition
- ChildNet, Inc.
- Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network



School Registration Information

Did you know...

- No foster child can be turned away for a lack of uniform, school records, or a recent physical/proof of shots
- School records can be gathered after registration
- By law, children in foster care have 30 days provide proof of physical/shots
- Unaccompanied minors in the U.S. can be enrolled in school
- All extenuating or hardship circumstances shall be reviewed by the principal/designee; and regardless of circumstances students **shall be admitted to school immediately** while the student's address is verified
- Depending on their situation, children are entitled to remain in their original school
- Schools with spare uniforms are permitted to share them with children in foster care
- Dependency Case Managers (DCM), Residential Group Home Staff, and Foster Parents are permitted to register students
- The latest report card and/or transcript is helpful for proper grade placement but is **NOT required**
- **Prior to any withdrawal from school of a youth in foster care, the School District Foster Care Liaison should be contacted.**

DCF School Registration Information – ‘The Salmon Form’ - A form provided by ChildNet, Inc.

One tool used by ChildNet is the ‘DCF School Registration Information’ form. It has also been referred to as the ‘Salmon Form’ because it was originally created to be printed on salmon colored paper.

This form provides schools with invaluable information when a child enters a foster home, residential shelter, or is placed with relatives. This form identifies appropriate and safe adults permitted to have contact with this child. This form must be accompanied by the New and Returning Student Registration Form (PBSD 0636).

Submission of the “Salmon Form” to a school causes the following to occur:

- The child is identified as a child under the jurisdiction of the dependency court and will be placed in the child's file.
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) review if the child is an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) student.
- Initiates a School Based Team referral to review present needs and discuss possible supports.



**DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN & FAMILIES**
School Registration Information



Completion Date: _____ Initial Updated

Shelter Date: _____ Out of Home Care In Home Care

First: _____ Last: _____

Gender: _____ DOB: _____ Grade: _____ Student ID: _____

Previous School: _____ Assigned School: _____

Name of Caregiver: _____ Relationship: _____

Caregiver Address: _____ Phone #: _____

Dependency Case Manager Name (DCM): _____

Office #: _____ Cell #: _____ Email: _____

DCM Supervisor's Name: _____ Office #: _____ Cell #: _____

Children's Legal Services Attorney Name (CLS) _____ Phone #: _____

Guardian Ad Litem Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Court Appointed Attorney Ad Litem Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Special Needs: ESE (must include IEP) ESOL SOCIAL MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

Comments:

Please Attach Educational Order

Have parental rights been terminated?	<input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> YES
Has the student been reunified with the parent?	<input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/> N/A	<input type="radio"/> YES
List persons that are prohibited from contact with student:	_____	

Date of last psychological reports?	<input type="radio"/> N/A	<input type="radio"/> YES, Date: _____
Date of last psychiatric reports?	<input type="radio"/> N/A	<input type="radio"/> YES, Date: _____
Date of last CBHA?	<input type="radio"/> N/A	<input type="radio"/> YES, Date: _____

Persons authorized to sign non-ESE school consent forms (Code of Conduct, Permission for Field Trips, etc.) include all CBC/Dependency representatives and the caregiver listed above.

Persons listed below are authorized to pick up this child: CBC responsible representative with official Children's Home Society or ChildNet ID that states "FS 409.1671, legislative intent is that DCF outsource foster care & related services. The person identified on this badge is a foster care Case Manager having met level 2 background screening requirements".

Caregiver: _____ Other: _____

Parental Rights/Educational Surrogates

Educational Surrogates

What is an Educational Surrogate?

An individual appointed to act in the place of parent in educational decision-making and safeguarding a student's rights under the IDEA. They must attend a training provided through the school district. See Appendix D "Get in the Game!".

Important to note:

- ⇒ An Educational Surrogate does not take care of the student
- ⇒ An Educational Surrogate is not financially responsible for the student

When/Why appoint the Educational Surrogate?

- The student is in care and parental rights terminated;
- Parent's whereabouts or identities are unknown;
- Case by case as determined by law;
- **And the student is eligible to receive services or is potentially eligible for IDEA/504.**

School Process

'CSI'



Complete Surrogate Parent Request Form - PBSB 1995

(Appendix E) and Surrogate Parent Checklist Form - PBSB 2035 (Appendix F)

Scan and email to SEDNET Project Manager/ESE Specialist – wait for a response

Include any specific details and make sure to answer what you can

Resources:

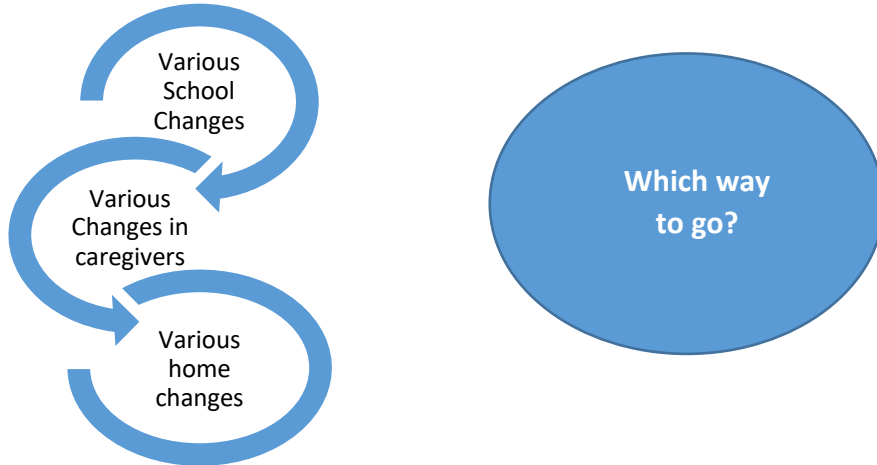
Appendix D: Brochure/DOE - Get in the Game!

Appendix E: Surrogate Parent Request PBSB 1995

Appendix F: Surrogate Parent Checklist PBSB 2035

Many Transitions of Students in Care

Parent's Home	➔	Foster Care Placement
Shelter	➔	Foster Care Placement
Foster Care Placement	➔	Residential Group Home
Foster Care Placement	➔	Parent's Home
Foster Care Placement	➔	Turning "18" (Aging Out)



Important things to note:

Can students remain in their home school if they move out of the SAC?	Yes, when transportation is feasible and in the best interest of the student
What happens when students turn 18 in foster care?	Now an adult the student may: Enter Extended Foster Care (ages 18 – 21) or leave care and become an independent student (See Appendix G "It's T Time")
Where will students live after age 18?	While in Extended Foster Care, students may live in independent living programs provided by Villages of Hope (Appendix H) and Vita Nova, (Appendix I) with relative/non relatives or in the community in their own residence
Will students have a child welfare case manager?	Yes, only those choosing to participate in Extended Foster Care
What if a student in my school turns 18 and has nowhere to go?	Provide The Spot (Appendix J) phone number (561) 689-0035, for youth resources

Resources:

- Appendix G: It's T Time
- Appendix H: Villages of Hope
- Appendix I: Vita Nova, Inc.
- Appendix J: The Spot

Frequently Asked Questions

<p>Why should schools ensure educational stability of youth in foster care?</p>	<p>See Appendix K “Foster Care & Education Issue Brief” (Educational Stability)</p>
<p>What is Trauma Informed Care and why should schools be aware?</p>	<p>See Appendix L Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators and Appendix M “Understanding Child Trauma”</p>
<p>Why should schools handle discipline of youth in foster care differently?</p>	<p>See Appendix N “Foster Care & Education Issue Brief” (School Discipline)</p>

Resources:

- Appendix K: Foster Care and Education Issue Brief (Educational Stability)
- Appendix L: Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators
- Appendix M: Understanding Child Trauma
- Appendix N: Foster Care and Education Issue Brief (School Discipline)

Frequently Asked Questions

<p>What is Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA)?</p>	<p>ESSA contains key protections for students in foster care to promote school stability and success. Agency collaboration includes: Department of Children and Families (DCF) and its subcontracted providers, Department of Education (DOE), and Local School Districts.</p>
<p>What are the basic educational goals needed to increase educational opportunities for youth in out-of-home care?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">See Appendix O “Guide to Improve Educational Opportunities for Florida’s Foster Youth”</p>
<p>Who decides when a student remains in their school of origin?</p>	<p>School staff will receive checklist from local child welfare agency, in collaboration with the School District’s Foster Care Liaison. Staff will complete the checklist, sign and return it promptly. See Appendix P “School Stability Checklist for Children in Out-of-Home Care”</p>

Resources:

Appendix O: Guide to Improve Educational Opportunities for Florida’s Foster Youth

Appendix P: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Appendix Q: School Stability Checklist for Students in Out-of-Home Care

Appendices

Appendices:

- Appendix A: FERPA Resource – Guidance on Amendment
- Appendix B: Release of Student Information PBSD 0313
- Appendix C: ChildNet Subcontracted Service Providers
- Appendix D: Brochure/DOE - Get in the Game!
- Appendix E: Surrogate Parent Request PBSD 1995
- Appendix F: Surrogate Parent Checklist PBSD 2035
- Appendix G: It's T Time
- Appendix H: Villages of Hope
- Appendix I: Vita Nova, Inc.
- Appendix J: The Spot
- Appendix K: Foster Care and Education Issue Brief (Educational Stability)
- Appendix L: Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators
- Appendix M: Understanding Child Trauma
- Appendix N: Foster Care and Education Issue Brief (School Discipline)
- Appendix O: Guide to Improve Educational Opportunities for Florida's Foster Youth
- Appendix P: School Stability Checklist for Children in Out-of-Home Care



Foster Care Campus

Coordinators (FC³)

Safe Schools

School District of Palm Beach County

APPENDIX A

Guidance on the Amendments to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act by the Uninterrupted Scholars Act May 2014

On January 14, 2013, the President signed into law the Uninterrupted Scholars Act (USA), Public Law 112-278, which amended the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. These amendments permit educational agencies and institutions to disclose personally identifiable information (PII) from the education records of students in foster care placement, without parental consent, to an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency (CWA) or tribal organization authorized to access a student's case plan "when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student." See 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L). The USA also amended FERPA to allow educational agencies and institutions to disclose a student's education records pursuant to a judicial order issued in specified types of judicial proceedings in which the parent is already a party, without requiring additional notice to the parent by the educational agency or institution. See 20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(2)(B). The Department has not yet amended the FERPA regulations, which are codified at 34 C.F.R. Part 99, to incorporate the provisions of the USA. Accordingly, this guidance represents the Department's current interpretation of the statutory changes to FERPA made by the USA, and does not address the applicability of State laws or regulations that may have more stringent provisions. In addition to discussing the direct impact on FERPA, this guidance also addresses how the USA amendment to FERPA affects the confidentiality provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by permitting disclosure without prior consent of PII from the early intervention and education records of infants and toddlers and children with disabilities.

The Department's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO) is issuing this guidance to provide State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, State and local child welfare agencies, tribal organizations, parents and eligible students, and other interested parties with information to implement the USA amendment to FERPA. It does not create or confer any rights for or on any person. This guidance does not impose any requirements beyond those required under applicable law and regulations. FPCO, the office that administers FERPA, and the Department's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), the office that administers the IDEA, are available to respond to questions regarding this guidance. If you are interested in commenting on this guidance, please e-mail us your comments at FERPA@ed.gov or call FPCO at (202) 260-3887. You also may write to FPCO or OSERS at the following addresses:

Family Policy Compliance Office	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education	U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.	400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-8520	Washington, D.C. 20202-7100



APPENDIX B
THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
DIVISION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Release or Transfer of Student Information

This form is used to facilitate communication of student information to authorized individuals.

Student ID # (Opt)	Student First Name	Middle	Last	Birth Date
Parent/Legal Guardian Name			School Name	

Request for: release of student records discussion of student/student records

Agency/Individual/Advocacy				
Contact Name	Phone #	Ext.	E-mail	
Mailing Address	City		State	Zip Code

Send Records To <i>(if address is different from above)</i>				
Contact Name	Phone #	Ext.	E-mail	
Mailing Address	City		State	Zip Code

List the specific information requested <i>(medical, psychological, psychiatric, educational records or student information)</i>

I understand the the purpose of this release is to facilitate the communication of student information to authorized individuals. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, as amended, protects the privacy of education records, and student related information. I understand and agree that this information will not be disclosed to any third party without the express consent of the parent or adult student.

Signature of person receiving records _____ Date _____

- I authorize: The School District of Palm Beach County other to
- release
 - receive the following medical, psychological, psychiatric, and/or educational records of the above named student
 - discuss student records or other student related information

This release is active from: date _____ to date _____ unless otherwise specified by the parties.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____
Date

Signature of Student if 18 Years of Age or Older _____
Date

The following is to be completed by the person releasing records

Print name of person releasing records _____
Phone No./PX

APPENDIX C

DCF / CHILDNET SUBCONTRACTED SERVICES 2019 — 2020	
Agency	Program
DEPENDENCY CASE MANAGEMENT	
Children's Home Society of Florida	Case Management Organization
RESIDENTIAL	
Foster Homes	
4KIDS of South Florida	Foster Family Group Program
Camelot Community Care	Enhanced Foster Care
Cayuga Centers	Enhanced Foster Care
Kids in Distress, Inc.	Traditional Foster Home Management
Mount Bethel Human Services Corporation, Inc.	Traditional Foster Home Management
National Youth Advocate Program	Enhanced Foster Care
Pinnacle Family Services Florida, Inc.	Enhanced Foster Care
Residential Group Care (RGC)	
HomeSafe	Residential Group Care - Boys/Girls
Jewish Adoption & Foster Care Options	Residential Group Care - Boys/Girls
Lutheran Services	Residential Group Care - Teen Boys & Girls
Place of Hope, Inc.	Residential Group Care - Sibling/Teens/ Pregnant & Young Parents
SOS Children's Villages, FL	Residential Group Care - Siblings
The Chrysalis Center	Residential Group Care - Boys/Girls
Shelter & Respite	
Grandma's Place, Inc.	Emergency Shelter (Boys/Girls)
Transitional Independent Living Services	
HomeSafe at Pond Place	Independent Living Services
Vita Nova, Inc.	Independent Living Services
Villages of Hope, Inc.	Independent Living Services
Other	
Best Foot Forward Foundation	Educational Support
Friends of Foster Children	Tutoring, Foster and Kinship Support

What Is a Surrogate Parent?

A surrogate parent is a person who is appointed to act in the interests of an **exceptional student** who does not have a parent who can make educational decisions. The surrogate parent works with the school to plan the child's **special education** services.

A surrogate parent does not take care of the child at home, like an adoptive parent or a foster parent does. A surrogate parent is not financially responsible for the child. A surrogate parent is more like a “school parent”—involved only in planning and making decisions about the child's special education.



What Is Special Education?

In Florida, special education is called **exceptional student education**, or **ESE**. It includes all the specially designed instruction, materials, and services provided to a student who has special learning needs to help the student make progress in school. Students who are eligible for ESE services are called **exceptional students**. They include students with **disabilities** and also students who are **gifted**.

Why Would a Child Need a Surrogate Parent?

There are many important decisions to be made about the education of exceptional students, particularly students with disabilities. It takes a **team** of people to make these decisions and to plan for the child's ESE services. In fact, there are several steps in the ESE process where a parent's participation or consent is vital and is even required by law. So, if the child's own parent is unknown or cannot be located, or if the child is a ward of the State, the child must have a surrogate parent.

The student may be a girl or a boy, anywhere from 3 to 21 years old. The student may have a learning disability, a physical impairment, a vision or hearing impairment, or other special learning needs, such as giftedness. The student may live in a group foster home, a juvenile justice facility, or another setting. Though each of these students is unique, they all need a surrogate parent to work with the school to meet their educational needs.

Surrogate parents are important members of the ESE team. They help our community meet the needs of exceptional students and fulfill our legal obligations.

What Does a Surrogate Parent Actually Do?

You may wonder what you would actually do as a surrogate parent. A surrogate parent does all the things that a parent would do as part of the ESE process, such as:

- Becoming familiar with the child's abilities, disabilities, needs, services, and goals (This may include **observing** and talking with the child in school, **gathering** information from written records, and **talking** with teachers.)
- Going to **meetings** and helping the team plan and make **decisions** about the child's education
- Signing papers giving **consent** for special education services
- Asking the school to **change** the child's special education services
- Attending **training** sessions

Remember, a surrogate parent does not take care of the child or support the child financially.

Use your skills, build relationships—and see the results in your own community and in the life of a child!

Do I Need to Be an Expert?

You do not need to be an expert on education.

The keys to being an effective surrogate parent are:

- ✓ Caring and wanting to do a good job
- ✓ Focusing on the child's needs, abilities, and goals
- ✓ Being willing to be part of a team
- ✓ Being willing to gather information from written records and from teachers and other people who work with the child
- ✓ Listening and asking questions
- ✓ Making positive suggestions
- ✓ Being flexible and trying to find several ways to reach a goal or solve a problem



How Much Time Will It Take?

It is hard to predict how much time you might spend on surrogate parent duties. For example, some school meetings are short; however, meetings can get complicated if team members disagree about important issues. It is important to know that there are many people in the school and the school district who will be available to help you become an effective surrogate parent.

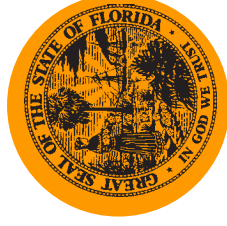
How Can I Join the Team?

Surrogate parents must:

- Be a citizen of the United States
- Be a resident of the state of Florida
- Be at least 18 years old
- Not work for the local school board or any agency involved in the education or care of the child
- Have no interest that conflicts with the interest of the child
- Be willing to participate in training

If you meet these requirements and want to become part of the ESE team, please fill out a surrogate parent application soon! The application will include a place for you to list references. The school district completes a background check on all surrogate parent applicants.

To learn more or to apply to be a surrogate parent, contact the local school board office and ask for the ESE office.



Florida Department of Education
Bureau of Exceptional Education
and Student Services

ESE 312846C

Get in the Game!

*Become a Surrogate Parent
for an Exceptional Student
in Our Community*

APPENDIX E



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION (ESE)

STUDENT NUMBER

Surrogate Parent Request

All requested information must be provided. FAX or PONY to: Surrogate Parent Coordinator, ESE at the Fulton-Holland Educational Services Center, A-203 Fax: **434-8384 (PX 48384)**

STUDENT NAME <i>(last, first, middle initial)</i>	DATE OF BIRTH / /	SEX	GRADE	CURRENT DATE / /
SCHOOL	ESE CONTACT	ESE CONTACT TELEPHONE () -		

- Are the whereabouts of the parent known? Yes No Don't Know
- Have parental rights been terminated by court order? Yes No Don't Know
If Yes, specify method of verification _____
- Is the student in Foster Care or a ward of the state? Yes No
 - With a foster family? *(specify)* _____
How long in current foster home? _____
 - In a group home? *(specify)* _____
How many students in the group home? _____
- Is this student presently receiving ESE services? Yes No
 - Eligibility(ies): _____
 - If not, is the student presently under consideration by the Child Study Team (CST) and being referred for evaluation? Yes No

Comments

Name of the Department of Children and Family (DCF) caseworker _____
Telephone Number () -

SIGNATURE OF PERSON COMPLETING FORM DATE TITLE TELEPHONE

TO BE COMPLETED BY DISTRICT ESE DEPARTMENT

Date Request Received / /

- Student meets criteria for surrogate parent:
Name of surrogate _____ Date Assigned / /
- Student does not demonstrate the need for a surrogate parent because:

SIGNATURE OF DISTRICT ESE REPRESENTATIVE DATE

APPENDIX F



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION (ESE)

Surrogate Parent Checklist

Name of Student (*last, first, middle initial*) _____

Student Number _____ Date ____/____/____

School _____

- Yes No 1. Are the whereabouts of the parent(s) known?
If **Yes, STOP**. Work through the parent(s).
If No, continue through checklist.
- Yes No 2. Is the student living with a person "acting as a parent" (relative, guardian, etc.) who is willing to be involved in the student's education?
If **Yes, STOP**. Work through the person acting in the capacity of the parent.
If No, continue through checklist.
- Yes No 3. Is the student a ward of the state?
If **No, STOP**. Work through the parent(s), person(s) acting in the capacity of a parent.
If Yes, continue through checklist.
- Yes No 4. Have the parental rights been terminated? (School must verify through DCF)
If **No, STOP**. Work through the parent(s).
If Yes, continue through checklist.
- Yes No 5. Is the student currently in a foster home and has the student been there at least three months?
If Yes, continue to # 6.
If No, continue to #7.
- Yes No 6. Is the foster parent willing to act as the parent regarding educational placement?
If **Yes, STOP**. Work through foster parent.
If No, continue through checklist.
- Yes No 7. Is the student currently living in a group home run by a community agency?
If **No, STOP**. Work through the parent(s), person(s) acting as parent, or foster parent (see #5).
If "Yes", continue through checklist.

If you have reached this point and have not had to "**STOP**", follow these procedures:

- Call Surrogate Parent Coordinator, PX 48626 or 434-8626 if there are any questions or extenuating circumstances to the case.
- Fill out *PBSD 1995 - Surrogate Parent Request* form and fax it to 434-8384 (Attn: Surrogate Parent Coordinator). Make sure the form is completely filled out.

it's T time

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Transition Time

Don't leave foster care without these 21 things



1 **Test your life skills, take the ACLSA.** Visit www.caseyife.org and take an online test that will help you see where your strengths (and needs) are when it comes to skills for living on your own.

3 **Build a Transition Plan.** It's T time! Put together a team of supportive adults in your life and build a transition plan. Check out www.fosterclub.com for more info.

4 **Get solid: understand what permanence is all about...** and get it if you can. You may have heard the word "permanence," but do you know what it is? Can you list the five types of permanency? Talk to your caseworker and find out what your permanency plan is (every youth should have one), or visit www.fosterclub.com.

6 **Find out about Chafee.** You may be eligible for assistance for paying for rent or other costs associated with living on your own. Talk to your caseworker, Independent Living Program or Chafee worker to find out how to apply.

7 **Get a rental reference from your foster home.** Consider creating a rental agreement with your foster home or group home for the last few months you're in foster care. If you are a good tenant, they could provide a reference for your first apartment. A reference can provide information about on-time rent payments, cleanliness and respect for the property and other tenants.

9 **Get your social security card and birth certificate.** These personal documents can be particularly hard to get if you wait... have your caseworker get you your own copies of these items before you leave care.

10 **Get state-issued photo ID.** You'll need photo ID for lots of things when you are living on your own: to rent an apartment, get a job, travel on an airplane, and much more. Even if you don't have a driver's license, make sure you get DMV or state-issued identification.

2 **Join the Independent Living Program.** Want FREE help applying for college, finding financial aid, getting scholarships, landing a job, and learning skills for life after foster care? How about some MONEY for renting your first apartment? Then the Independent Living Program (ILP) is for you! It's designed to help youth prepare for life on their own after foster care. To find an ILP near you, check out www.fosterclub.com and search for your state listings.

5 **Surround yourself with a safety net. Make a PACT with supportive adults.** Youth that are successful when they transition out of foster care have one thing in common: they have supportive adults in their lives that they can count on. Talk to a supportive adult in your life about a PACT. Learn more at www.fosterclub.com.

8 **Secure a place to live, have a backup plan.** Transitioning out of foster care to homelessness is never a good idea. Homelessness includes living in your car, camping, and even sleeping out on a couch at a friend's house. There's plenty of help in locating housing, but you have to do some of the legwork. Talk to your caseworker, Independent Living Program or Chafee worker.

11 **Get a copy of court docs that prove you were in care.** You may need this proof to qualify for special benefits, such as scholarships and financial aid for higher education.

13 **Save money.** Most young adults are taken by surprise by the cost of living on their own. Have an adult help you work out a monthly budget for life after foster care. Try to save enough money to cover three months of the budget, plus the move-in costs for your first apartment.

16 **Get a job.** This one's a no-brainer: of course you need a job before you set out on your own! And getting a job can be tougher than you think. Even if you are receiving funds from other government sources, no one is really self-sufficient until they earn their own living. It's best if you can gain work experience while you are still in care.

12 **Open a bank account (and savings, too!)** If possible, open a bank account EARLY (at least a year before you leave foster care) so that you have time to practice money management (it can be surprisingly tough). Learn to balance your checkbook.

14 **Get a High School diploma or GED.**

Once you're on your own, it can become very difficult to concentrate on school because you'll be busy making money to pay your way. Try to finish getting your GED or high school diploma while you're still in foster care — before you pile on all the extra worries of supporting yourself.

15 **Find out higher education.** The Federal Government has handed down millions of dollars for Scholarships and Educational Training Vouchers for foster youth! Best of all, in most cases this money can help pay for a Trade or Vocational school, housing, transportation, books, fees and other costs related to education. Find out how to access this money in your state at www.fosterclub.com.

Appendix G

How many things can you check off the list?

17 **Get medical coverage. See a doctor.** In some states, youth transitioning from foster care may be eligible for health coverage. Be sure to ask about this BEFORE you leave foster care — it may be too late if you wait! If you will be losing your health coverage, make sure you see the doctor for a check-up before you leave care. Make sure all your shots are up to date and that you are in the best health you can be in.

18 **Get mental health coverage. See a therapist before you leave care.** Youth transitioning from foster care may be eligible for mental health coverage. If you will be losing your mental health coverage, you may want to see a counselor before you leave care and get help coping with the stress and anxiety most youth have when transitioning out of foster care. And hey, if therapy is good enough for all those stars in Hollywood, then there's got to be something to it, right?

19 **Take daily living skills classes.** Get set for adulthood by learning skills for life after foster care! Ask your Independent Living Program (ILP) or caseworker about classes offered. Check out classes at your local Community College. Or ask your foster parent to work with you on life skills (they can download an entire book of ideas called Ready, Set Fly at www.caseyifefskills.org)

20 **Build an Independent Living Portfolio.** Keep a professional portfolio containing the following: completed sample job application and apartment rental application, resume, education records, awards and achievements, and copies of personal documents. For ideas, check out the FYI Binder at www.fosterclub.com.

21 **Find out if you can stay in care until you're 21.** You may have a lot to gain. What have you really got to lose? You may want to make a list of the pros and cons of staying in care or leaving. If you take a close look, you may just find out that there are many advantages to staying in care. If you prove your maturity and readiness, you may even be able to live on your own while you are in foster care — talk to your caseworker or judge.

Villages of Hope

There are over half a million children in America's foster care system. Many will reside in care far too long and eventually "age out" of the system. The sense of hopelessness and despair can be overwhelming and the impacts can be far greater than the immediate, visible effects.

Without basic life skills, youth who leave care can have difficulty finding safe housing, getting and keeping a steady job, staying healthy, and avoiding financial and legal trouble. There is often no one with whom they share small successes or from whom advice can be sought. Simple emergencies can easily escalate into full-blown crises.

Comprehensive and effective independent living transition services are key to helping youth function as productive citizens and to acquiring skills necessary for pursuing an education, finding a job, obtaining suitable housing, and protecting their health and well-being when they leave the foster care system. Our goal-oriented, voluntary program encompasses five areas of measurable growth and success, all closely monitored during a resident's stay in the program:

- Employment
- Education
- Financial Stability
- Health: Physical, Emotional, Spiritual
- Personal Responsibility

Extended Foster Care

Encompassing the five areas of growth, Extended Foster Care offers a dormitory-style housing facility supported by a live-in Residential Assistant. This E.F.C. program offers the next natural step of growth and independence for a young adult upon their 18th birthday. Our top priority for our E.F.C. residents is that they earn their high school diploma. This milestone immediately sets them ahead of peers from a similar background and motivates them to continue their path of success.



Independence • Stability • Development • Direction



Traditional Independent Living

With the support of an onsite Residential Manager and a Campus Coordinator, The Villages of Hope program provides ongoing direction, encouragement and training to ensure the highest possible success rate. Residents within the program live in a duplex, with their own bedroom. Weekly meetings are set up to ensure consistent growth and evaluation. Residents agree to actively participate in their individualized program for one year and are invited to reapply for an additional year if they have demonstrated progress in the five areas of the program.

Mommy-n-Me

Encompassing the same support systems and expectations as Traditional Independent Living, the Mommy-n-Me program supports a parenting young adult with the additional living space of a nursery, larger bathroom and in-unit washer and dryer. These residents also access specialized services for new parents as well as the opportunity to receive day care assistance, enabling them to take the next steps in their education or career.

Vita Nova, Inc.

Foster Care Independent Living Services

Homeless to Housed (...and everything in-between)



Housing



Independent Living



Oasis Resource Center



Thrift Store

For more information, go to www.vitanovainc.org



The Spot is a safe and non-judgmental drop in center for homeless youth ages 18-25. For homeless youth who are unaware of where to go or not sure how to get started, the Spot is here to help. We welcome youth in off the streets in an effort to link them to resources and programming aimed at eliminating or reducing the risk of homelessness.

At the Spot, youth will receive assessment, life skills training and linkages to meet housing, health care, employment, education and overall wellness needs. The Spot team members are enthusiastic, encouraging, understanding and ready to partner with youth.

The Spot team members include:

- Intake and Assessment Specialist
- Housing Coordinator
- Health Care Coordinator
- Employment Coordinator
- Case Managers (3)

If you are a youth in need of services, please stop by or call to schedule a time that is convenient for you!

If you are a community partner and know of a youth in need of services, please send them our way!

The Spot

2724 N. Australian
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
(561) 689-0035

Hours:

Monday and Wednesday 9:00-6:30.

(Please arrive no later than 5:30 to begin intake process)

Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays 9:00- 5:00

(Please arrive no later than 4:00 to begin intake process)

Foster Care & Education

Q&A

SCHOOLS AS MANDATORY PARTNERS IN ENSURING EDUCATIONAL STABILITY

Q: What is “educational stability” and why is it important for youth in care?

A: More than half of all children in foster care are school age. Sadly, these children move often – from their parents’ home to foster care, from foster home to foster home, and sometimes to relatives or group care settings.

If these children are forced to change schools whenever their living situation changes (often resulting in enrollment delays at each new school), their education can be catastrophically interrupted. Unless there is a child-centered reason for a school change, these children should remain in the same school even when they move outside of the school district or the school attendance area. This is known as “educational stability” (also called “school stability”), and it is mandated by the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act which went into effect in 2008.

Q: What does the Fostering Connections Act require?

A: Child welfare agencies must include a plan for ensuring educational stability in every child’s case plan. The educational stability plan must contain an assurance that a child’s living placement considers the appropriateness of the child’s current school and its proximity to the placement. The law also requires an assurance that the child welfare and local education agencies have coordinated to ensure that the child remains in the same school or, if remaining in that school is not in the child’s best interest, that the child is

enrolled immediately in the new school with all education records.

Q: How effectively has Fostering Connections’ educational stability mandate been implemented in states and what have been the hurdles to full implementation?

A: On May 29, 2014, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report on how well states are implementing the Fostering Connections Act, including the educational stability requirement <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-14-347>. The GAO found that meaningful progress has been made in many states, but that significant challenges remain. Educators, child welfare staff, and youth reported that a significant number of students are still changing schools. Thirty-seven states reported that the lack of required coordination between educational agencies and child welfare agencies poses a challenge – and in nineteen states a *major* challenge – to ensuring educational stability.

Q: Do state and local education systems have a responsibility to help ensure educational stability for youth in care?

A: Yes. On May 30, 2014, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services issued a joint letter to Chief State School Officers and Child Welfare Directors clarifying that **state and local education agencies have a clear legal duty to help**

implement the educational stability mandate. The letter states that “the Fostering Connections Act imposes specific obligations” on both child welfare agencies and local educational agencies. It directs state education agencies to remind local education agencies of their obligation to collaborate and coordinate with child welfare agencies.

Prior to this guidance, some states interpreted Fostering Connections to apply only to child welfare agencies receiving funds under Title IV-E.

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/fostering-connections-letter>. The letter notes that this interpretation led to inconsistent implementation of the Act, including caseworkers in one state reporting that “the default option for youth is to change schools.”

The May 2014 letter emphasizes the importance of educational stability for children in foster care and notes that implementation requires a partnership between education and child welfare agencies. Without the required coordination and assurances from local education agencies, the state’s federal funding under Title IV-E could be at risk.

In closing, the letter urges child welfare agencies to work together to develop policies and procedures that ensure educational stability, and immediate enrollment when a change is needed, in time for the 2014-2015 school year.

Q: What can advocates do to ensure that the child welfare agency and local education agency in their community are working together to implement the educational stability mandate?

A: Begin by assessing whether coordination between your child welfare agency and local education agency is already underway.

- If the agencies are already collaborating effectively, share the May 2014 joint letter with them. Congratulate the agency staff on the progress they are making, and note how such progress was praised in the letter.
- If no, or inadequate, coordination is underway, share the letter with both the child welfare and local education agencies. Ask for the opportunity to meet with key staff to discuss why

coordination is needed and how agencies can begin addressing educational stability for children in foster care. Be sure you include leaders from both education and child welfare in the meeting so school and child welfare officials know you are ready to help them. You can use such meetings to develop state or local level protocols or procedures for collaborating on educational stability, transferring school records promptly, and collecting and analyzing relevant data.

Q: Where can I get more information about the education rights of youth in care?

A: A dedicated Web page, Students in Foster Care, is now active on the U.S. Department of Education Website <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/foster-care/index.html>. This Web page provides information on relevant laws, guidance, and technical assistance materials related to educational support for students in foster care.

Additionally, the Legal Center for Foster Care and Education is available to provide training, technical assistance, sample tools and resources, and other help relating to the implementation of the Fostering Connections Act. For more information, visit <http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/AreasofFocus/FosteringConnections.aspx>.

FACT: One out of every 4 children attending school has been exposed to a traumatic event that can affect learning and/or behavior.

FACT: Trauma can impact school performance.

- Lower GPA
- Higher rate of school absences
- Increased drop-out
- More suspensions and expulsions
- Decreased reading ability

FACT: Trauma can impair learning.

Single exposure to traumatic events may cause jumpiness, intrusive thoughts, interrupted sleep and nightmares, anger and moodiness, and/or social withdrawal—any of which can interfere with concentration and memory.

Chronic exposure to traumatic events, especially during a child’s early years, can:

- Adversely affect attention, memory, and cognition
- Reduce a child’s ability to focus, organize, and process information
- Interfere with effective problem solving and/or planning
- Result in overwhelming feelings of frustration and anxiety

FACT: Traumatized children may experience physical and emotional distress.

- Physical symptoms like headaches and stomachaches
- Poor control of emotions
- Inconsistent academic performance
- Unpredictable and/or impulsive behavior
- Over or under-reacting to bells, physical contact, doors slamming, sirens, lighting, sudden movements
- Intense reactions to reminders of their traumatic event:
 - Thinking others are violating their personal space, i.e., “What are you looking at?”
 - Blowing up when being corrected or told what to do by an authority figure
 - Fighting when criticized or teased by others
 - Resisting transition and/or change

FACT: You can help a child who has been traumatized.

- Follow your school’s reporting procedures if you suspect abuse
- Work with the child’s caregiver(s) to share and address school problems
- Refer to community resources when a child shows signs of being unable to cope with traumatic stress
- Share Trauma Facts for Educators with other teachers and school personnel

This project was funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.

What can be done at school to help a traumatized child?

- Maintain usual routines. A return to “normalcy” will communicate the message that the child is safe and life will go on.
- Give children choices. Often traumatic events involve loss of control and/or chaos, so you can help children feel safe by providing them with some choices or control when appropriate.
- Increase the level of support and encouragement given to the traumatized child. Designate an adult who can provide additional support if needed.
- Set clear, firm limits for inappropriate behavior and develop logical—rather than punitive—consequences.
- Recognize that behavioral problems may be transient and related to trauma. Remember that even the most disruptive behaviors can be driven by trauma-related anxiety.
- Provide a safe place for the child to talk about what happened. Set aside a designated time and place for sharing to help the child know it is okay to talk about what happened.
- Give simple and realistic answers to the child’s questions about traumatic events. Clarify distortions and misconceptions. If it isn’t an appropriate time, be sure to give the child a time and place to talk and ask questions.
- Be sensitive to the cues in the environment that may cause a reaction in the traumatized child. For example, victims of natural storm-related disasters might react very badly to threatening weather or storm warnings. Children may increase problem behaviors near an anniversary of a traumatic event.
- Anticipate difficult times and provide additional support. Many kinds of situations may be reminders. If you are able to identify reminders, you can help by preparing the child for the situation. For instance, for the child who doesn’t like being alone, provide a partner to accompany him or her to the restroom.
- Warn children if you will be doing something out of the ordinary, such as turning off the lights or making a sudden loud noise.
- Be aware of other children’s reactions to the traumatized child and to the information they share. Protect the traumatized child from peers’ curiosity and protect classmates from the details of a child’s trauma.
- Understand that children cope by re-enacting trauma through play or through their interactions with others. Resist their efforts to draw you into a negative repetition of the trauma. For instance, some children will provoke teachers in order to replay abusive situations at home.
- Although not all children have religious beliefs, be attentive if the child experiences severe feelings of anger, guilt, shame, or punishment attributed to a higher power. Do not engage in theological discussion. Rather, refer the child to appropriate support.

There are students in your school who have experienced trauma.

Consider Amy. Her teacher brought the third grader, who had been a model student, to the school nurse, complaining that she was not paying attention or completing her work. Quiet and withdrawn in the nurse’s office, Amy eventually said, “May I tell you something?” She then proceeded to talk about seeing her cat hit and killed by a car. She was both sad and frightened, couldn’t make sense out of what had happened, and was having nightmares.

Another example is John. He is constantly in trouble at school, and appears to have significant problems grasping fourth grade material. His mother describes the violence that is pervasive in both their home and neighborhood. She reports that John has witnessed his father repeatedly beating her, and has been a victim himself of his father’s rages. During first grade he was placed in foster care. John has also seen gun violence in his neighborhood.

What do these two very different individuals have in common? They have both been exposed to trauma, *defined as an experience that threatens life or physical integrity and that overwhelms an individual’s capacity to cope.* Generally, traumatic events evoke feelings of extreme fear and helplessness. Reactions to traumatic events are determined by the subjective experience of the child, which could be impacted by developmental and cultural factors. What is extremely traumatic for one student may be less so for another.

Students who have experienced traumatic events may have behavioral or academic problems, or their suffering may not be apparent at all.

Some students show signs of stress in the first few weeks after a trauma, but return to their usual state of physical and emotional health. **Even a child who does not exhibit serious symptoms may experience some degree of emotional distress, and for some children this distress may continue or even deepen over a long period of time.**

Some traumatic experiences occur once in a lifetime, others are ongoing. Many children have experienced multiple traumas, and for too many children trauma is a chronic part of their lives. Students who have experienced traumatic events may experience problems that impair their day-to-day functioning.

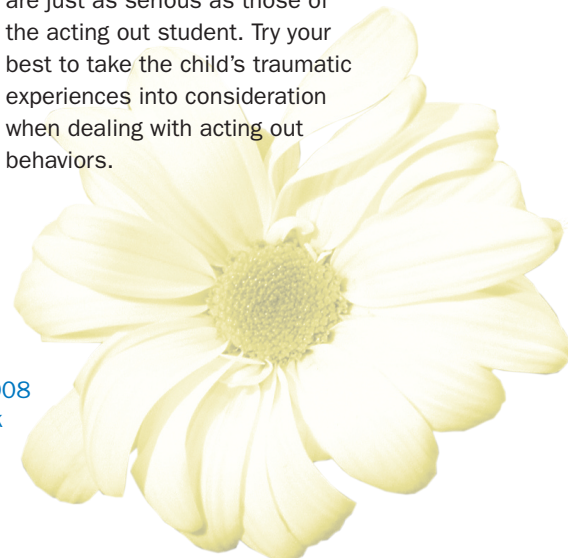
Situations that can be traumatic:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Abandonment, betrayal of trust (such as abuse by a caregiver), or neglect
- The death or loss of a loved one
- Life-threatening illness in a caregiver
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Automobile accidents or other serious accidents
- Bullying
- Life-threatening health situations and/or painful medical procedures
- Witnessing or experiencing community violence (e.g., drive by shooting, fight at school, robbery)
- Witnessing police activity or having a close relative incarcerated
- Life-threatening natural disasters
- Acts or threats of terrorism

Be alert to the behavior of the students who have experienced one or more of these events.

Be aware of both the children who act out AND the quiet children who don’t appear to have behavioral problems.

These students often “fly beneath the radar” and do not get help. They may have symptoms of avoidance and depression that are just as serious as those of the acting out student. Try your best to take the child’s traumatic experiences into consideration when dealing with acting out behaviors.



What you might observe in Elementary School students:

- Anxiety, fear, and worry about safety of self and others (more clingy with teacher or parent)
- Worry about recurrence of violence
- Increased distress (unusually whiny, irritable, moody)
- Changes in behavior:
 - Increase in activity level
 - Decreased attention and/or concentration
 - Withdrawal from others or activities
 - Angry outbursts and/or aggression
 - Absenteeism
- Distrust of others, affecting how children interact with both adults and peers
- A change in ability to interpret and respond appropriately to social cues
- Increased somatic complaints (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, overreaction to minor bumps and bruises)
- Changes in school performance
- Recreating the event (e.g., repeatedly talking about, “playing” out, or drawing the event)
- Over- or under-reacting to bells, physical contact, doors slamming, sirens, lighting, sudden movements
- Statements and questions about death and dying
- Difficulty with authority, redirection, or criticism
- Re-experiencing the trauma (e.g., nightmares or disturbing memories during the day)
- Hyperarousal (e.g., sleep disturbance, tendency to be easily startled)
- Avoidance behaviors (e.g., resisting going to places that remind them of the event)
- Emotional numbing (e.g., seeming to have no feeling about the event)

Some children, if given support, will recover within a few weeks or months from the fear and anxiety caused by a traumatic experience. However, some children need more help over a longer period of time in order to heal, and may need continuing support from family, teachers, or mental health professionals. Anniversaries of the event or media reports may act as reminders to the child, causing a recurrence of symptoms, feelings, and behaviors.

Mental health counseling that has been demonstrated to be effective in helping children deal with traumatic stress reactions typically includes the following elements:

- Education about the impact of trauma
- Helping children and caregivers re-establish a sense of safety
- Techniques for dealing with overwhelming emotional reactions
- An opportunity to talk about and make sense of the traumatic experience in a safe, accepting environment
- Involvement, when possible, of primary caregivers in the healing process

There are students in your school who have experienced trauma.

Consider Joy. Her teacher brought the sixth grader to the school nurse because she was complaining of a stomachache. The teacher was concerned about Joy’s complaint and explained to the nurse that, while Joy had always been an enthusiastic and hardworking student, recently she had not been paying attention or completing her work. In the nurse’s office, Joy was quiet and withdrawn, but eventually admitted that she had witnessed a girl being beaten by another student the previous day. She was sad, frightened, and afraid for her safety.

Another example is Trent. He is constantly getting into fights at school and appears to have significant problems understanding and completing his work. Trent was removed from his home in third grade and placed with his paternal grandmother. When contacted by the teacher about his problems in school, his grandmother explains that prior to coming to live with her, Trent lived in a community ridden with gang violence. His father was part of a gang and Trent used to see gun battles among gang members in his neighborhood. The grandmother also admits that Trent’s father was very aggressive and may have physically abused Trent when he was younger.

What do these two very different individuals have in common? They have both been exposed to trauma, defined as *an experience that threatens life or physical integrity and that overwhelms an individual’s capacity to cope*. Generally, traumatic events evoke feelings of extreme fear and helplessness. Reactions to traumatic events are determined by the subjective experience of the child, which could be impacted by developmental and cultural factors. What is extremely traumatic for one student may be less so for another.

Some students show signs of stress in the first few weeks after a trauma, but return to their usual state of physical and emotional health. Even a child who does not exhibit serious symptoms may experience some degree of emotional distress, and for some children this distress may continue or even deepen over a long period of time.

Some traumatic experiences occur once in a lifetime, others are ongoing. Many children have experienced multiple traumas, and for too many children trauma is a chronic part of their lives. Students who have experienced traumatic events may experience problems that impair their day-to-day functioning.

Students who have experienced traumatic events may have behavioral or academic problems or their suffering may not be apparent at all.

Situations that can be traumatic:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Abandonment, betrayal of trust (such as abuse by a caregiver), or neglect
- The death or loss of a loved one
- Life-threatening illness in a caregiver
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Automobile accidents or other serious accidents
- Bullying
- Life-threatening health situations and/or painful medical procedures
- Witnessing or experiencing community violence (e.g., drive-by shooting, fight at school, robbery)
- Witnessing police activity or having a close relative incarcerated
- Life-threatening natural disasters
- Acts or threats of terrorism

Be alert to the behavior of students who have experienced one or more of these events. **Be aware of both the children who act out AND the quiet children who don’t appear to have behavioral problems. These students often “fly beneath the radar” and do not get help.** They may have symptoms of avoidance and depression that are just as serious as those of the acting out student. Try your best to take the child’s traumatic experiences into consideration when dealing with acting out behaviors.

What you might observe in Middle School students:

- Anxiety, fear, and worry about safety of self and others
- Worry about recurrence or consequences of violence
- Changes in behavior:
 - Decreased attention and/or concentration
 - Increase in activity level
 - Change in academic performance
 - Irritability with friends, teachers, events
 - Angry outbursts and/or aggression
 - Withdrawal from others or activities
 - Absenteeism
- Increased somatic complaints (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, chest pains)
- Discomfort with feelings (such as troubling thoughts of revenge)
- Repeated discussion of event and focus on specific details of what happened
- Over- or under-reacting to bells, physical contact, doors slamming, sirens, lighting, sudden movements
- Re-experiencing the trauma (e.g., nightmares or disturbing memories during the day)
- Hyperarousal (e.g., sleep disturbance, tendency to be easily startled)
- Avoidance behaviors (e.g., resisting going to places that remind them of the event)
- Emotional numbing (e.g., seeming to have no feeling about the event)



Some children, if given support, will recover within a few weeks or months from the fear and anxiety caused by a traumatic experience. However, some children need more help over a longer period of time in order to heal, and may need continuing support from family, teachers, or mental health professionals. Anniversaries of the event or media reports may act as reminders to the child, causing a recurrence of symptoms, feelings, and behaviors.

Mental health counseling that has been demonstrated to be effective in helping children deal with traumatic stress reactions typically includes the following elements:

- Education about the impact of trauma
- Helping children and caregivers re-establish a sense of safety
- Techniques for dealing with overwhelming emotional reactions
- An opportunity to talk about and make sense of the traumatic experience in a safe, accepting environment
- Involvement, when possible, of primary caregivers in the healing process

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There are students in your school who have experienced trauma.

Consider Nicole. Her teacher noticed that the tenth grader, who had previously been a very outgoing and popular student, suddenly appeared quiet, withdrawn, and “spaced out” during class. When the teacher approached her after class, Nicole reluctantly admitted that she had been forced to have sex on a date the previous week. She was very embarrassed about the experience and had not told anyone because she felt guilty and was afraid of what would happen.

Another example is Daniel. Daniel has become increasingly aggressive and confrontational in school. He talks throughout classtime and has difficulty staying “on task.” When approached by the teacher, his mother describes the constant neighborhood violence that Daniel is exposed to. He has witnessed a gun battle among gang members in the neighborhood and his mother suspects that he is in a gang. She is worried that he may be using drugs and alcohol. The mother also admits that during fifth grade, Daniel was placed in foster care due to physical abuse by his father and constant domestic violence in the home.

What do these two very different individuals have in common? They have both been exposed to trauma, defined as *an experience that threatens life or physical integrity and that overwhelms an individual’s capacity to cope*. Generally traumatic events evoke feelings of extreme fear and helplessness. Reactions to traumatic events are determined by the subjective experience of the adolescent, which could be impacted by developmental and cultural factors. What is extremely traumatic for one student may be less so for another.

Some students show signs of stress in the first few weeks after a trauma, but return to their usual state of physical and emotional health. Even an adolescent who does not exhibit serious symptoms may experience some degree of emotional distress, and for some adolescents this distress may continue or even deepen over a long period of time. Some traumatic experiences occur once in a lifetime, others are ongoing. Many adolescents have experienced multiple traumas, and for too many adolescents trauma is a chronic part of their lives. Students who have experienced traumatic events may experience problems that impair their day-to-day functioning.

Be alert to the behavior of students who have experienced one of these events. **Be aware of both the adolescents who act out AND the quiet adolescents who don’t appear to have behavioral problems.** These students often “fly beneath the radar” and do not get help. They may have symptoms of avoidance and depression that are just as serious as those of the acting out student. Try your best to take the adolescent’s traumatic experiences into consideration when dealing with acting out behaviors.

Situations that can be traumatic:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Abandonment, betrayal of trust (such as abuse by a caregiver), or neglect
- The death or loss of a loved one
- Life-threatening illness in a caregiver
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Automobile accidents or other serious accidents
- Bullying
- Life-threatening health situations and/or painful medical procedures
- Witnessing or experiencing community violence (e.g., drive-by shooting, fight at school, robbery)
- Witnessing police activity or having a close relative incarcerated
- Life-threatening natural disasters
- Acts or threats of terrorism

What you might observe in High School students:

- Anxiety, fear, and worry about safety of self and others
- Worry about recurrence or consequences of violence
- Changes in behavior:
 - Withdrawal from others or activities
 - Irritability with friends, teachers, events
 - Angry outbursts and/or aggression
 - Change in academic performance
 - Decreased attention and/or concentration
 - Increase in activity level
 - Absenteeism
 - Increase in impulsivity, risk-taking behavior
- Discomfort with feelings (such as troubling thoughts of revenge)
- Increased risk for substance abuse
- Discussion of events and reviewing of details
- Negative impact on issues of trust and perceptions of others
- Over- or under-reacting to bells, physical contact, doors slamming, sirens, lighting, sudden movements
- Repetitive thoughts and comments about death or dying (including suicidal thoughts, writing, art, or notebook covers about violent or morbid topics, internet searches)
- Heightened difficulty with authority, redirection, or criticism
- Re-experiencing the trauma (e.g., nightmares or disturbing memories during the day)
- Hyperarousal (e.g., sleep disturbance, tendency to be easily startled)
- Avoidance behaviors (e.g., resisting going to places that remind them of the event)
- Emotional numbing (e.g., seeming to have no feeling about the event)

Students who have experienced traumatic events may have behavioral or academic problems, or their suffering may not be apparent at all.



Some adolescents, if given support, will recover within a few weeks or months from the fear and anxiety caused by a traumatic experience. However, some adolescents need more help over a longer period of time in order to heal and may need continuing support from family, teachers, or mental health professionals. Anniversaries of the event or media reports may act as reminders to the adolescent, causing a recurrence of symptoms, feelings, and behaviors.

Mental health counseling that has been demonstrated to be effective in helping adolescents deal with traumatic stress reactions typically includes the following elements:

- Education about the impact of trauma
- Helping adolescents and caregivers re-establish a sense of safety
- Techniques for dealing with overwhelming emotional reactions
- An opportunity to talk about and make sense of the traumatic experience in a safe, accepting environment
- Involvement, when possible, of primary caregivers in the healing process

This information sheet summarizes material found in the “In-Depth General Information Guide to Childhood Traumatic Grief” and “In-Depth Information on Childhood Traumatic Grief for School Personnel,” available at www.NCTSN.org.

Childhood traumatic grief is a condition that some children develop after the death of a close friend or family member. Children who develop childhood traumatic grief reactions experience the cause of that death as horrifying or terrifying, whether the death was unexpected or due to natural causes. Even if the manner of death is not objectively sudden, shocking, or frightening to others, children who perceive the death this way may develop childhood traumatic grief.

For some children and adolescents, responses to traumatic events can have a profound effect on the way they see themselves and their world. They may experience important and long-lasting changes in their ability to trust others, their sense of personal safety, their effectiveness in navigating life challenges, and their belief that there is justice or fairness in life.

It's important to keep in mind that many children who encounter a shocking or horrific death of another person will recover naturally and not develop ongoing difficulties, while other children may experience such difficulties. Every child is different in his or her reactions to a traumatic loss.

Identifying Traumatic Grief in Students

Children at different developmental levels may react differently to a loved one's traumatic death. But there are some common signs and symptoms of traumatic grief that children might show at school. Teachers may observe the following in the student:

- Being overly preoccupied with how the loved one died
- Reliving or re-enacting the traumatic death through play, activities, and/or artwork
- Showing signs of emotional and/or behavioral distress when reminded of the loss
- Attempting to avoid physical reminders of the traumatic death, such as activities, places, or people related to the death
- Withdrawing from important aspects of their environment
- Showing signs of emotional constriction or “numbing”
- Being excessively jumpy or being easily startled
- Showing signs of a lack of purpose and meaning to one's life

How School Personnel Can Help a Student with Traumatic Grief

Inform others and coordinate services

Inform school administration and school counselors/psychologists about your concerns regarding the student. Your school district or state may have specific policies or laws about dealing with emotional issues with children. If you feel a student could benefit from the help of a mental health professional, work within your school's guidelines and with your administration to suggest a referral.

Answer a child's questions

Let the child know that you are available to talk about the death if he or she wants to. When talking to these children, accept their feelings (even anger), listen carefully, and remind them that it is normal to experience emotional and behavioral difficulties following the death of a loved one. Do not force a child to talk about the death if he or she doesn't want to. This may be more harmful than helpful for the child.

Create a supportive school environment

Maintain normal school routines as much as possible. A child with traumatic grief can feel that life is chaotic and out of his or her control. It's beneficial for the child to have a predictable class schedule and format. The child may also need extra reassurance and explanation if there is a change. Staff should look for opportunities to help classmates who are struggling with how best to help and understand a student with traumatic grief.

Raise the awareness of school staff and personnel

Teachers and school staff may misinterpret changes in children's behaviors and school performance when they are experiencing childhood traumatic grief. Although it is always a priority to protect and respect a child's privacy, whenever possible it may be helpful to work with school staff who have contact with the child to make sure they know that the child has suffered a loss and may be experiencing difficulties or changes in school performance as a result. In this way, the school staff can work together to ensure that children get the support and understanding they need.

Modify teaching strategies

Balance normal school expectations with flexibility. You might avoid or postpone large tests or projects that require extensive energy and concentration for a while following the death. Be sensitive when the student is experiencing difficult times—for example, on the anniversary of a death—so that you can be supportive and perhaps rearrange or modify class assignments or work. Use teaching strategies that promote concentration, retention, and recall and that increase a sense of predictability, control, and performance.

Support families

Build a relationship of trust with the student's family. On a personal level, be reliable, friendly, consistently caring, and predictable in your actions. Keep your word, and never betray the family's trust. It can be helpful for the school or district to designate a liaison who can coordinate the relationship among teachers, the principal, the guidance counselor, other appropriate school personnel, the family, and the child.

Make referrals

Consider referral to a mental health professional. Traumatic grief can be very difficult to resolve, and professional help is often needed. If possible, the student and him or her family should be referred to a professional who has considerable experience in working with children and adolescents and with the issues of grief and trauma.

For more information

Additional information about childhood traumatic grief and where to turn for help is available from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network at (310) 235-2633 and (919) 682-1552 or at www.NCTSN.org.

“There is a cost to caring.” - Charles Figley

Trauma takes a toll on children, families, schools, and communities. Trauma can also take a toll on school professionals. **Any educator who works directly with traumatized children and adolescents is vulnerable to the effects of trauma**—referred to as *compassion fatigue* or *secondary traumatic stress*—being physically, mentally, or emotionally worn out, or feeling overwhelmed by students’ traumas. The best way to deal with compassion fatigue is early recognition.

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS:

- 1. Be aware of the signs.** Educators with compassion fatigue may exhibit some of the following signs:
 - Increased irritability or impatience with students
 - Difficulty planning classroom activities and lessons
 - Decreased concentration
 - Denying that traumatic events impact students or feeling numb or detached
 - Intense feelings and intrusive thoughts, that don’t lessen over time, about a student’s trauma
 - Dreams about students’ traumas

- 2. Don’t go it alone.** Anyone who knows about stories of trauma needs to guard against isolation. While respecting the confidentiality of your students, get support by working in teams, talking to others in your school, and asking for support from administrators or colleagues.

- 3. Recognize compassion fatigue as an occupational hazard.** When an educator approaches students with an open heart and a listening ear, *compassion fatigue* can develop. All too often educators judge themselves as weak or incompetent for having strong reactions to a student’s trauma. Compassion fatigue is not a sign of weakness or incompetence; rather, it is the cost of caring.

- 4. Seek help with your own traumas.** Any adult helping children with trauma, who also has his or her own unresolved traumatic experiences, is more at risk for compassion fatigue.

- 5. If you see signs in yourself, talk to a professional.** If you are experiencing signs of compassion fatigue for more than two to three weeks, seek counseling with a professional who is knowledgeable about trauma.

- 6. Attend to self care.** Guard against your work becoming the only activity that defines who you are. Keep perspective by spending time with children and adolescents who are not experiencing traumatic stress. Take care of yourself by eating well and exercising, engaging in fun activities, taking a break during the workday, finding time to self-reflect, allowing yourself to cry, and finding things to laugh about.

Resource: Figley, C.R. (1995). *Compassion fatigue: Coping with secondary traumatic stress disorder in those who treat the traumatized*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, Inc.

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Understanding Child Trauma



Child trauma occurs more than you think.

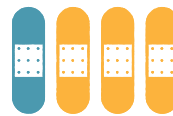
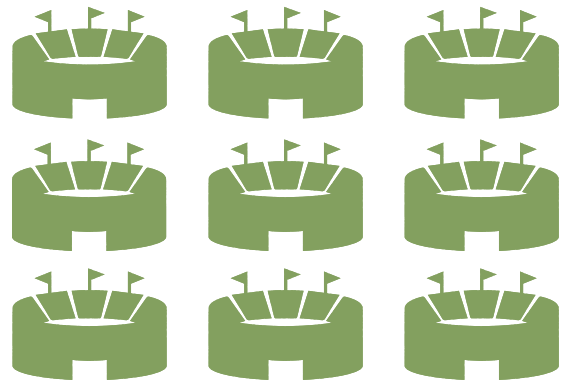
More than **TWO THIRDS OF CHILDREN** reported at least 1 traumatic event by age 16.¹ Potentially traumatic events include:

- PSYCHOLOGICAL, PHYSICAL, OR SEXUAL ABUSE
- COMMUNITY OR SCHOOL VIOLENCE
- WITNESSING OR EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
- NATURAL DISASTERS OR TERRORISM
- COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
- SUDDEN OR VIOLENT LOSS OF A LOVED ONE
- REFUGEE OR WAR EXPERIENCES
- MILITARY FAMILY-RELATED STRESSORS (E.G., DEPLOYMENT, PARENTAL LOSS OR INJURY)
- PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ASSAULT
- NEGLECT
- SERIOUS ACCIDENTS OR LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESS

The national average of child abuse and neglect victims in 2013 was **679,000, or 9.1 victims per 1,000 children.**²



Each year, the number of youth requiring hospital treatment for physical assault-related injuries would fill **EVERY SEAT IN 9 STADIUMS.**³



1 IN 4 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS was in at least **1 PHYSICAL FIGHT.**⁴



1 in 5 high school students was bullied at school; **1 IN 6 EXPERIENCED CYBERBULLYING.**⁵



19% of injured and 12% of physically ill youth have post-traumatic stress disorder.⁶



More than half of U.S. families have been affected by some type of disaster (**54%**).⁷

¹ Copeland, W.E., Keeler G., Angold, A., & Costello, E.J. (2007). Traumatic Events and Posttraumatic Stress in Childhood. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 64(5), 577-584.
² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2015). Child maltreatment 2013. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cm2013.pdf>
^{3,4,5} National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: Division of Violence Protection (2014). Taking Action to Prevent Youth Violence: A Companion Guide to Preventing Youth Violence: Opportunities for Action. <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/pdf/opportunities-for-action-companion-guide.pdf>
⁶ Kahana, S., Feeny, N. C., Youngstrom, E. R., & Drotar, D. (2006). Posttraumatic stress in youth experiencing illnesses and injuries: An exploratory meta-analysis. *Traumatology*, 12, 148-161. doi: 10.1177/1534765606294562
⁷ Save The Children (2014). 2014 National Report Card on Protecting Children in Disasters. http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/SC-2014_DISASTERREPORT.PDF



Understanding Child Trauma



It's important to recognize the signs of traumatic stress and its short- and long-term impact.

The signs of traumatic stress may be different in each child. Young children may react differently than older children.



PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

- Fear being separated from their parent/caregiver
- Cry or scream a lot
- Eat poorly or lose weight
- Have nightmares



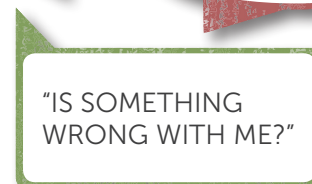
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

- Become anxious or fearful
- Feel guilt or shame
- Have a hard time concentrating
- Have difficulty sleeping



MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL CHILDREN

- Feel depressed or alone
- Develop eating disorders or self-harming behaviors
- Begin abusing alcohol or drugs
- Become involved in risky sexual behavior



THE BODY'S ALARM SYSTEM

Everyone has an alarm system in their body that is designed to keep them safe from harm. When activated, this tool prepares the body to fight or run away. The alarm can be activated at any perceived sign of trouble and leave kids feeling scared, angry, irritable, or even withdrawn.

HEALTHY STEPS KIDS CAN TAKE TO RESPOND TO THE ALARM:



- Recognize what activates the alarm and how their body reacts
- Decide whether there is real trouble and seek help from a trusted adult
- Practice deep breathing and other relaxation methods



IMPACT OF TRAUMA

The impact of child traumatic stress can last well beyond childhood. In fact, research has shown that child trauma survivors may experience:

- Learning problems, including lower grades and more suspensions and expulsions
- Increased use of health and mental health services
- Increased involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems
- Long-term health problems (e.g., diabetes and heart disease)

TRAUMA is a risk factor for nearly all behavioral health and substance use disorders.

Understanding Child Trauma



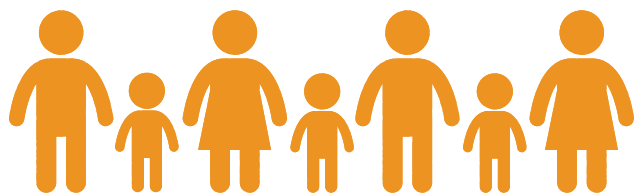
There is hope. Children can and do recover from traumatic events, and you play an important role in their recovery.

"I AM STRONG."

"I AM A GOOD KID WHO HAD A BAD THING HAPPEN."

"PEOPLE CARE ABOUT ME."

"IT'S NOT MY FAULT."



A CRITICAL PART OF CHILDREN'S RECOVERY IS HAVING A SUPPORTIVE CAREGIVING SYSTEM, access to effective treatments, and service systems that are trauma informed.

GET HELP NOW

<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>
<http://nctsn.org/resources/get-help-now>
<http://www.healthcaretoolbox.org>



Not all children experience child traumatic stress after experiencing a traumatic event. With support, many children are able to recover and thrive.

As a caring adult and/or family member, you play an important role.

REMEMBER TO:

- Assure the child that he or she is safe.
- Explain that he or she is not responsible. Children often blame themselves for events that are completely out of their control.
- Be patient. Some children will recover quickly while others recover more slowly. Reassure them that they do not need to feel guilty or bad about any feelings or thoughts.
- Seek the help of a trained professional. When needed, a mental health professional trained in evidence-based trauma treatment can help children and families cope and move toward recovery. Ask your pediatrician, family physician, school counselor, or clergy member for a referral.
- Visit the following websites for more information:
 - <http://www.samhsa.gov/child-trauma>
 - <http://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence>
 - <http://www.nctsn.org>

NCTSN

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SAMHSA
www.samhsa.gov

Foster Care & Education

Issue Brief

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE & YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE: NEW FEDERAL GUIDANCE FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION AND JUSTICE CAN HELP¹

Why should schools avoid harsh disciplinary practices, especially for children in foster care?

Youth in the child welfare system are disproportionately suspended, expelled, and placed in separate disciplinary school or programs. This occurs for many reasons. A history of child abuse or neglect and removal from the home can traumatize children and negatively affect their school behavior. Many of these children encounter frequent disruptive school and placement changes, social stigma and isolation in school, and do not receive needed educational supports such as special education. Disciplinary actions taken against children in care can often have far more significant consequences than intended for other students—impacting their permanency goals. In contrast non-exclusionary and supportive approaches to dealing with disruptive behavior can benefit all students. But these approaches are especially important for these youth and can help them stay in school and improve their educational outcomes.

What does federal law say about school discipline?

Federal laws prohibits schools receiving federal funding from discriminating in the administration of student discipline based on race, color, or national origin.² The Department of Education's Office for

¹ U.S. DEPT. ED., *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline*, Washington, D.C. (2014), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf> (hereinafter "Guidance").

² e.g. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 100, prohibit discrimination based on race, color, or national origin by recipients of Federal financial assistance.



Civil Rights (OCR) and the Department of Justice have the responsibility for enforcing these laws.³ The Departments initiate investigations of student discipline policies and practices at particular schools, districts, and states based on complaints the Departments receive from students, parents, community members, and others about possible race, color, national origin, language, sex, religion, and disability discrimination in student discipline.⁴

What is the goal of the new Guidance?

In January 2014, the Departments of Justice and Education issued new Guidance designed to assist states, districts, and schools in developing and implementing policies, practices, and strategies that improve school climate and comply with federal law.⁵ Research shows that schools can effectively ensure school safety when the school climate is positive and the discipline is non-discriminatory, fair, and consistent.⁶ In contrast, exclusionary practices like suspensions and expulsions rob students of classroom time and may lead to outcomes like truancy, decreased social development, dropping out, involvement in the juvenile justice system, and delayed employment.⁷ Moreover, nationwide data shows racial disparities in school discipline; for example, African American students are suspended or expelled at three times the rate as their white peers.⁸

What does the Guidance say?

The federal Guidance urges school districts to make changes to their discipline policies to eliminate these disparities and other problems.⁹ It also provides resources for creating safe and positive school environments, boosting student academic success, and closing widening achievement gaps.¹⁰ Specifically, the Guidance urges schools to:

³ OCR enforces Title VI with respect to schools and other recipients of Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education; Footnote 2 of the Dear Colleague letter, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html>. DOJ's Office for Civil Rights at the Office of Justice Programs (OJP OCR) enforces Title VI through its administrative process. See http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/about/ocr/pdfs/OCR_TitleVI.pdf. DOJ also enforces Title VI upon referral from another Federal funding agency, or through intervention in an existing lawsuit. DOJ also coordinates the enforcement of Title VI government-wide.

⁴ Footnote 3 of the Dear Colleague letter, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html> gives definitions of terms in the Guidance like race, policy, program, and school.

⁵ Specifically, the Guidance clarifies how districts can meet their obligations under Title IV and Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, which relate to fair and nondiscriminatory treatment among schools and recipients of federal aid.

⁶ School Climate topics and subtopics at National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments website, under contract from U.S. DEPT. OF ED. to the AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH, <http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/school-climate> (last visited Mar. 26, 2014).

⁷ AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOC. ZERO TOLERANCE TASK FORCE, *Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in Schools: An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations*. 63 AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST 9, 856 (2008).

⁸ Statistics are drawn from data collected by the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) for the 2011-12 school year. This data can be found at <http://ocrdata.ed.gov>.

⁹ School Climate and Discipline Guidance at 1.

¹⁰ U.S. DEPT. ED., *Directory of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources* Washington, D.C. (2014), available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/appendix-1-directory.pdf>.



- Use exclusionary discipline *only as a last resort*. If students are removed from class, they should receive “meaningful instruction, and their return to the classroom should be prioritized;”¹¹
- Reduce the number of suspensions, expulsions, and arrests by providing *targeted supports* and interventions with a proven track record of success (like restorative practices and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports);¹²
- Provide students with enhanced/increased access to counselors, school psychologists, and school nurses;¹³
- Establish *clear parameters for school and local police*; they should not be involved in “routine” school discipline matters;¹⁴ and
- Collect and maintain *disaggregated data* on school discipline and report it publicly.¹⁵

What resources does the Guidance provide?

The Guidance includes the following “tools” to assist schools:¹⁶

- A *Dear Colleague* letter on civil rights and discipline (describes the current disparities in school discipline and describes how schools can meet their legal obligations under federal law in the administration of student discipline);
- A *Guiding Principles* document (describes key principles and related action steps that can help to improve school climate and school discipline);
- A *Directory of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources* (indexes the extensive federal technical assistance and other resources related to school discipline and climate available to schools and districts); and
- A *Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations* (catalogues the laws and regulations related to school discipline in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico and compares laws across jurisdictions).

How can schools effectively implement the Guidance for children in care?

1. Connect students in the child welfare system with supportive adults

The Guidance notes that a prerequisite of a good school climate is “respectful, trusting, and caring relationships” between students and adults in the schools.¹⁷ The Guidance stresses that the school’s

¹¹ Guidance, Principle 2, 14-16.

¹² Guidance, Principle 1, 5-6.

¹³ Guidance, Principle 1, 6-8.

¹⁴ Guidance, Principle 1, 8-10.

¹⁵ Guidance, Principle 1, 11; Principle 3, 17-18.

¹⁶ These resources are referred to as the “Guidance Package” and can be found at the Department’s website at www.ed.gov/school-discipline (last visited Mar. 26, 2014).

¹⁷ Guidance, Principle 1, at 5.



discipline policies and practices should engage that network of caring adults to be “partners in the discipline process.”¹⁸

Because of their past traumas, young people in the child welfare system often find it difficult to form trusting relationships, and they often lack a “network of caring adults” engaged with their education. Sadly, children in care often experience multiple placements and frequent school changes, sometimes during the school year. Schools can help smooth these transitions by designating a single point of contact at the school and training that individual about the needs and opportunities available for youth in care. This point of contact can be a resource for communication and collaboration with the child welfare agency;¹⁹ prevent discipline issues by identifying educational or behavioral health supports; ensure prompt school enrollment and accurate class assignment. That person can also make sure that credits transfer and that the student has access to the full range of course offerings and extra-curricular activities. In short, that person can be the “partner” in the discipline process that the Guidance recommends.²⁰

2. Implement culturally sensitive and trauma-informed school discipline practices

The Guidance states that school discipline should support all students, including those at risk for trauma, social exclusion, or behavioral incidents.²¹ At-risk students include students in foster care, of color, with disabilities, and potential dropouts.²² The Guidance recommends evidence-based prevention strategies,²³ social and emotional learning opportunities,²⁴ and regular training for all school personnel on how to engage students in positive behavior.²⁵ School discipline should employ “clear, developmentally appropriate, and proportional consequences” that help students “learn from their mistakes, improve their behavior, and achieve academically.”²⁶

The Guidance contrasts this type of “instructional discipline” with “zero-tolerance” discipline policies (a specific consequence for specific action regardless of circumstance).²⁷ The Guidance cautions that zero tolerance policies “may prevent the flexibility necessary to choose appropriate and proportional

¹⁸ Guidance, Principle 2, Action Step 2, at 12

¹⁹ See Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 5 at 8 (highlighting that collaboration with the child welfare agency can help youth in care).

²⁰ See Guidance, Principle 2, Action Step 2, at 12 (explaining the importance of involving partners in the development and implementation of discipline policies).

²¹ Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 1, at 6.

²² Those with such risks also include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students, homeless and unaccompanied youth, corrections-involved students, pregnant and parenting students, migrant students, English language learners, and others. Principle 1, Action Step 1, at 6.

²³ Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 2, 6-7, e.g. tiered supports.

²⁴ Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 3, at 7, e.g. encouraging partnerships with mental health agencies or employing school counselors, school psychologists, behavioral interventionists, school social workers, and school nurses.

²⁵ Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 4, at 7.

²⁶ Guidance, Principle 2, at 11-13.

²⁷ Guidance, Principle 2, Action Step 3, at 13.



consequences.”²⁸ While these approaches are advantageous for all students, they are particularly critical for youth in care who, as a result of past trauma, are more likely to engage in disruptive behavior in school and to need special understanding and supports.²⁹ Cross-systems collaboration is needed to ensure that the help provided by the child welfare agency complements the help provided at school.³⁰ Research has also shown that addressing the needs of traumatized youth, regardless of whether they are in care, can have positive consequences for all students in a school.³¹

3. Make sure there is an engaged education decision-maker for all children in care

School policies should include appropriate procedures for students with disabilities and procedural protections that meet legal requirements for all students.³² For most students, the parent participates in school proceedings and makes education decisions for the child in the school discipline arena. But this doesn’t work for children in care if there are no engaged parents to act on their behalf. For example, when a parent is unavailable or unwilling to make special education decisions, federal special education law – the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – requires that schools ensure that there is another qualified individual to participate in the special education process. That person is needed to provide mandatory consents, participate in the development of the child’s program, and agree or disagree with the child’s proposed Individual Education Program.³³

Education decision-makers can play an important role in general education decisions as well, such as where a child should attend school, whether the child should remain in the same school, or even whether the child can go on a field trip. Education decision-makers can and should play a key role in ensuring that any disciplinary responses to a child are appropriate. For a child with disabilities, the education decision-maker is a vital part of ensuring that a child is not disciplined for manifestations of his or her disability, and that the child’s procedural rights are protected.³⁴

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ See NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK, *The Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators* (2008) available at http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/Child_Trauma_Toolkit_Final.pdf (providing school administrators, teachers, staff, and concerned parents with basic information about working with traumatized children in the school system).

³⁰ See e.g., Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 5, at 8 (highlighting that partnerships with child welfare agencies can help schools better support students in foster care).

³¹ Catherine P. Bradshaw, et al., *Examining the Effects of School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on Student Outcomes Results from a Randomized Controlled Effectiveness Trial in Elementary Schools*. 12 J. POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS 3, 133–48, (2010), available at http://www.wrightofer.com/uploads/2/0/5/6/20561318/examining_the_effects_of_school-wide_positive_behavioral_interventions.pdf.

³² Guidance, Principle 2, Action Step 4, at 14.

³³ For more information on this issue, see Janet Stotland, et al., *Special Education Decisions for Children in Foster Care: Everyone Has a Role*, 26 ABA Child Law Practice 2, 21-26 (2007), available at http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/portals/0/dmx/2012/08/file_20120829_141730_LTccZs_0.pdf.

³⁴ For more on this issue, see NATIONAL DISSEMINATION CENTER FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, “Questions and Answers about IDEA: Parent Participation” <http://nichcy.org/schoolage/qa-series-on-idea/qa2> (last visited Mar. 26, 2014).



Moreover, youth in care may inadvertently be punished when there is no parent to play an advocacy role. For example, the Guidance underscores that an “individualized” discipline determination should be made.³⁵ If a parent is not available to help clarify the child’s “individualized” needs, the school should identify another decision-maker with knowledge of the child’s strengths and weaknesses.

4. Be vigilant about the special needs of youth in residential placements

Some youth in the child welfare system attend school on-site at residential placements such as group homes or residential mental health facilities³⁶. Although the Guidance does not address this issue directly, its language and underlying policy goals suggest that attendance in the local public school is preferable to an alternative school setting and that the positive disciplinary approaches described in the Guidance should apply in alternative settings as well.³⁷ The Guidance asserts that:

- Removal should be a last resort because there “may be more effective alternatives,”³⁸ collateral costs are high,³⁹ and removal is delegitimized as punishment if it is used too widely.⁴⁰
- Academic instruction in alternate settings should be “meaningful.”⁴¹ Such instruction should be “comparable . . . to that provided to students in the regular school program” and should follow appropriate procedures for youth with disabilities.⁴²

³⁵ Guidance, Principle 3, Action Step 1, at 16.

³⁶ Many of these schools do not meet federal education standards because they do not receive Federal financial assistance like local school districts, local educational agencies (LEAs), charters, or “alternative” schools. Some states have recognized this discrepancy in standards and presume against transitioning students to on-grounds schools. *See e.g.* Pennsylvania under 24 P.S. § 13-1306; PA DEPT. ED. & PA DEPT. PUBLIC WELFARE, *Bulletin regarding Educational Programs for Students in Non-Educational Placements*,

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pa_codes/7501/educational_portions_of_non-educational_placements/507372 (last visited Mar. 27, 2014).

³⁷ Guidance, Principle 2, 14-16. (“Research suggests that time spent in rigorous and relevant instruction can impact student achievement.”). For additional information, *see* ED’s Guidance, *Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document* (2012) available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/seclusion/restraints-and-seclusion-resources.pdf>

³⁷ Many of these schools do not meet federal education standards because they do not receive Federal financial assistance like local school districts, local educational agencies (LEAs), charters, or “alternative” schools. Some states have recognized this discrepancy in standards and presume against transitioning students to on-grounds schools. *See e.g.* Pennsylvania under 24 P.S. § 13-1306; PA DEPT. ED. & PA DEPT. PUBLIC WELFARE, *Bulletin regarding Educational Programs for Students in Non-Educational Placements*,

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pa_codes/7501/educational_portions_of_non-educational_placements/507372 (last visited Mar. 27, 2014).

³⁸ Schools may find that approaches such as restorative justice are more effective ways to prevent misbehaviors than exclusionary discipline sanctions like suspensions and expulsions. Guidance at 12.

³⁹ Students who are frequently expelled or suspended are less likely to graduate on time and more likely to repeat a grade, drop out, or become involved in the juvenile justice system. High rates of suspension are linked with lower school-wide academic achievement. Communities bear the costs of grade retention and dropouts. Guidance at 15.

⁴⁰ *See* Guidance, Principle 2, Action Step 5 (“Reserve for Serious Infractions”).

⁴¹ Guidance, Principle 2, Action Step 5, at 15.

⁴² *Id.*



- Transition back to the regular classroom should be a “high priority.” To facilitate that return, schools should “strive to provide individually tailored intensive services and supports for students entering the classroom from alternative school placements or the juvenile justice system.”⁴³

It follows, then, that foster youth are best-served when they remain in the least restrictive environment rather than being removed or transitioned out to treatment facility’s on-grounds school.

The Guidance explicitly acknowledges the need for support for youth returning from both alternative placements and the juvenile justice system.⁴⁴ As schools develop their approaches for supporting the smooth transition back from these placements, school personnel will be well-positioned to address similar issues affecting youth in residential settings.

On-grounds schools may be run by a school district or state educational agency, or may be run as a private school. In the first case, this Guidance applies, and districts should ensure that on-grounds schools are following the Guidance. For schools run privately, these recommendations are instructive and will help to position their students for success.

5. Build school staff’s capacity to support youth in care

School personnel (including administrators) need training and feedback to respond to student misconduct fairly, equitably, and without regard to a student’s personal characteristics (*e.g.*, race, color, national origin, religion, disability, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or status as an English language learner, migrant, or homeless student). Although the Guidance does not explicitly include involvement with the child welfare system as such a “personal characteristic,” school staff need to understand the implicit or unconscious biases and the harms associated with using or failing to counter stereotypes that children in care experience.⁴⁵

To the extent that School Resource Officers or police are within schools, the Guidance is clear that the officers should be trained on child and adolescent development, age-appropriate responses, disability concerns, and conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques.⁴⁶ Such training will benefit youth in care who have a disproportionately high rate of referral to the juvenile justice system. These police should be familiarized with the specific challenges and needs of youth in foster care and trauma-informed responses.

⁴³ *Id.* at 15-16.

⁴⁴ Guidance, Principle 2, Action Step 5, at 16 (“To facilitate return, schools should strive to provide individually tailored intensive services and supports.”).

⁴⁵ For further discussion of the types of training, *see* Guidance at 16-17.

⁴⁶ Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 5, at 8.



6. Schools should collaborate with local mental health offices, child welfare agencies, and other stakeholders to align resources, prevention strategies, and intervention services

The Guidance underscores that appropriately designed partnerships with local mental health offices, child welfare agencies, and other stakeholders can assist schools in supporting students in foster care.⁴⁷ It further explains that such partnerships can help schools identify students coping with trauma or with mental health or emotional issues; allow schools to expand interventions offered as part of a school's tiered supports;⁴⁸ ensure a continuum of care between school and community-based mental health providers; and fill the gap when schools lack mental health professionals.⁴⁹

The Guidance suggests that schools and agencies develop written agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to formalize these partnerships.⁵⁰ The MOUs should clarify roles, areas of responsibility, procedures, scope of work, staffing and leadership, and lines of communication and “can also prove essential to ensuring that data-sharing complies with privacy laws.”⁵¹ But, the Guidance cautions that MOUs should be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect the needs of the community and of the signing agencies.⁵²

Under the federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2009*, child welfare agencies are required to collaborate with schools to ensure that youth are enrolled in school and can remain in that school even if they change living placements.⁵³ As a result, many jurisdictions already have MOUs in place at the state, local, or school district level directed to these issues. In such jurisdictions, partnering agencies should examine their MOUs to assess whether they sufficiently

⁴⁷ Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 5, at 8; Note that “[a]ppropriate” refers to compliance with privacy laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), and the Federal Drug and Alcohol Regulations (42 CFR Part 2).

⁴⁸ Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 2, at 6.

⁴⁹ Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 5, at 8 (“These partnerships can also ensure the smooth delivery of services between school and community-based mental health providers, and fill in staffing gaps for schools facing shortages of school-based mental health professionals”).

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 9

⁵¹ *Id.*

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ The child’s case plan must contain: “(I) an assurance that the State [or local child welfare agency] has coordinated with appropriate local educational agencies ... to **ensure that the child remains** in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement; or (II) if remaining in such school is not in the best interests of the child, assurances by the State agency and the local educational agencies to provide **immediate and appropriate enrollment** in a new school, with all of the educational records of the child provided to the school.” 42 U.S.C.A. 675(1)(G)(ii)(emphasis added). See LEGAL CENTER FOR FOSTER CARE AND EDUCATION, *State Implementation Checklists for Education Provisions of Fostering Connections Act*, available at

http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/child/education/publications/fc_implementation_checklists_final.auth_checkdam.pdf.



address the issues of positive discipline and support.⁵⁴ For jurisdictions that haven't yet established MOUs, this is an opportunity to develop them.

7. Collect and publish data on youth in care to create and evaluate programs

Discipline prevention strategies should be evidence-based and data-driven.⁵⁵ The Guidance explains that schools should regularly collect, review, and analyze information about all discipline incidents to “prevent, identify, reduce, and eliminate discriminatory discipline and unintended consequences.”⁵⁶ This collection should be in addition to the data collected for the Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC).⁵⁷ The Guidance also lists the types of demographic information and incident information that should be collected.⁵⁸ Although the Guidance states that schools should “analyze the data to assess the impact [school] discipline policies and practices [have] on students, especially students of color, students with disabilities, and students at risk for dropping out of school, *trauma*, social exclusion, or behavior incidences.” (Emphasis added)⁵⁹ By separately assessing the progress of youth in the child welfare system, schools will be better positioned to address the needs of this highly vulnerable group of students.⁶⁰ Data sharing is an effective way to monitor the consequences of school discipline across systems and for specific student populations.

⁵⁴ Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 5, at 8-9.

⁵⁵ Guidance, Principle 1, Action Step 2 at 5-6 (“Prioritize the use of evidence-based prevention strategies, such as tiered supports, to promote positive student behavior”). This action step highlights Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which is a behavioral framework anchored by components, including data-driven decision-making systems, professional development opportunities, school leadership, state and district policies, and evidence-based instructional strategies. For additional information about PBIS, see the PBIS website hosted by ED’s Office of Special Education Programs at <http://www.pbis.org>.

⁵⁶ Guidance, Principle 3, Action Step 2 at 17-18 (“Use proactive, data-driven, and continuous efforts, including gathering feedback from families, students, teachers, and school personnel to prevent, identify, reduce, and eliminate discriminatory discipline and unintended consequences”).

⁵⁷ Guidance at 17; The CRDC collects data (de-identified, not personally identifiable information) from a sample of school districts on key education and civil rights issues in our nation’s public schools, including student enrollment, disciplinary actions, and educational programs and services, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, sex, limited English proficiency and disability. More information about the CRDC is available at <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/>.

⁵⁸ Examples of items to collect, Guidance at 17.

⁵⁹ Guidance at 16 –18.

⁶⁰ LEGAL CENTER FOR FOSTER CARE AND EDUCATION, *Solving the Data Puzzle: A “How to” Guide on Collecting and Sharing Information to Improve Educational Outcomes for Children in Out-of-Home Care*, available at http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/Database.aspx?EntryId=1543&Command=Core_Download&method=inline .



Every Student Succeeds Act Guide to Improve Educational Opportunities for Florida's Foster Youth

Youth in out-of-home care have the right to a free, appropriate and high quality education guaranteed by the Florida Constitution as well as several state and federal laws, including the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. ESSA amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, which was last reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002. ESSA now contains key protections for students in foster care to promote school stability and success, and requires collaboration with child welfare partners, which should include: Department of Children and Families (DCF) and its subcontracted providers, Department of Education (DOE), and Local School Districts. Below are the basic educational goals needed to increase educational opportunities for youth in out-of-home care.

1. Educational Stability

Summary of Problem

Problem: Youth in out-of-home care frequently move to a new home, and each move typically results in a change in school. Not only does a youth have to adjust to the new curriculum and learning environment, but he/she may not receive credit for work already completed, resulting in lower grades, lower test scores, grade retention, and potentially dropping out of school. A youth must also develop new relationships with teachers, administrators, and peers, creating further instability in the youth's life. Multiple school transfers can also prevent or interrupt the provision of special education services.

Goal: Youth in out-of-home care should remain in their school of origin, unless it is not in their best interest to do so. If it is not in their best interest to remain in their school of origin, youth in foster care are enrolled in their new schools without delay.

2. Seamless Transition between Schools (Regardless of School District)

Summary of Problem

Problem: The diminished educational and emotional progress caused by changing schools is magnified when the transfer does not happen smoothly. In this process, school records can be lost or incomplete. There can be delays in enrollment caused by not having or failing to transfer school or immunization records. Other issues include a lack of required school uniforms or other supplies. Youth are also affected when schools have different schedules or graduation requirements which, without special attention, cause youth to lose credits and fall behind.

Goal: A child in out-of-home care will have a seamless transition when it is determined that it is in his or her best interest to change schools.

3. School Readiness

Summary of Problem

Problem: Children in out-of-home care have higher rates of physical, developmental and mental health problems. They often enter care with unmet needs. Caregivers and early learning staff may not be aware of the needs of those youth or how to obtain appropriate screenings and services.

APPENDIX O

Goal: For children in out-of-home care, developmental and educational needs are addressed and the appropriate evaluations are completed in a timely manner.

4. Full Participation in the School Experience

Summary of Problem

Problem: Youth in out-of-home care are sometimes excluded from academic programs, extracurricular activities and school events. Even if the exclusion is not intended, the conditions for participation may make it difficult if not impossible for youth in out-of-home care to join in. In addition, many group homes have rules and practices that preclude youth from participating in activities and events. These opportunities are critical not only for the youth's social and academic development, but are necessary for admission to certain post-secondary schools.

Goal: Youth have the opportunity and support to fully participate in all aspects of the school experience.

5. Supports to Prevent Dropout, Truancy & Disciplinary Actions

Summary of Problem

Problem: Youth in out-of-home care have higher rates of truancy, disciplinary problems and school dropout that negatively impact their learning experience and ability to make successful transitions, whether to permanency or to adulthood.

Goal: Youth need supports and services to prevent school dropout, truancy and disciplinary actions and any other barriers that would preclude the child from transitioning successfully into permanency and adulthood.

6. Youth are Involved, Engaged and Empowered

Summary of Problem

Problem: Youth in out-of-home care are often disconnected from the planning and decision-making about their involvement in the child welfare system. Youth experience better outcomes when they are involved in the decisions that affect their lives. Many youth in foster care who have special educational needs are at risk of transitioning to adulthood without the on-going support of a permanent family; therefore, their need to be empowered to advocate for themselves is even more critical.

Goal: Youth are involved and engaged in all aspects of their education and educational planning, and are empowered to be advocates for their education needs and pursuits.

7. Consistent Adult Support & Educational Decision Maker

Summary of Problem

Problem: Youth in out-of-home care may not have a consistent adult to advocate for educational services and to support educational goals in the way a parent typically would do so. For youth with disabilities, the need for an education decision-maker is even more acute because only certain individuals can act as a "parent" and request special education testing and services. Not having a legally authorized education decision-maker can hold up evaluations and appropriate special education services.

APPENDIX O

Goal: Local School Districts will appoint educational surrogate parents for all eligible youth in care. Additionally, there will be assurances that training offered for surrogates is also offered to caregivers, Guardian Ad Litem, and others who may act as a parent, whether appointed by schools or Courts.

8. Youth with Disabilities are Identified Early & Served Appropriately

Summary of Problem

Problem: A number of youth in the child welfare system have undiagnosed disabilities. Children in shelter status are to be referred for a Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment within seven calendar days of being removed from their household.

In the school setting, numerous factors contribute to the under-identification of youth with educational disabilities, such as: youth may not have educational advocates to take the place of parents in requesting evaluation; youth may change schools so rapidly that teachers do not have enough time to identify concerns; and trauma-related behaviors might mask educational disabilities.

Goal: Youth who have or are suspected of having a disability receive prompt and appropriate assessments, Individual Educational Plans, and accommodations, supports and related services consistent with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (IDEA) and applicable state law.

9. Trauma-Sensitive School Environments

Summary of Problem

Problem: Most youth who enter out-of-home care have experienced some form of trauma that will have long-lasting effects on their physical, developmental and mental health. School personnel who are not aware of the youth's background may not understand reactive behaviors and may refer the youth to law enforcement for criminal prosecution. Such conduct has the consequence of placing youth who are the victims of abuse and neglect into the Department of Juvenile Justice system.

Goal: Youth are educated in a trauma-sensitive environment that recognizes the root cause of inappropriate behaviors and provides appropriate behavioral supports that create a safe environment conducive to learning.

APPENDIX P

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY
SAFE SCHOOLS



School Stability Checklist for Students in Out-of-Home DCI Care DRAFT

Student #	Student Name	Date
Current School Name		Current School #
SAC School Name for new home address		SAC School #

Purpose: The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the State of Florida to ensure protections for youth in foster care. These include school stability consideration, transportation and agency collaboration. Maintaining the child's school stability while in out-of-home care is first priority, unless remaining in the school of origin is not in the best interest of the child.

Instructions: Please provide feedback on the following factors regarding the student identified. The factors below shall be considered in determining whether or not remaining in the current school is in the student's best interest.

BEST INTEREST FACTORS	YES	NO	COMMENTS
1. Does the student desire to remain in the current school?			
2. Does the student have a sibling(s), close friends, and/or a mentor at the current school?			
3. Is the student involved in extra-curricular activities in the current school (i.e. clubs, sports)? If yes, describe.			
4. Is the student receiving supplemental or intensive interventions monitored through the School Based Team or Child Study Team (i.e. academic, behavior, social emotional)?			
5. Is the student currently receiving services from a co-located bid agency provider at the current campus?			
6. Are there similar or the same academic programs, CHOICE, and/or quality of services at the receiving school, if student transfers?			
7. Does the student have a Section 504 plan?			
8. Has a psycho-educational evaluation been initiated at the current school, or consent provided for an evaluation?			
9. Does the student have an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?			
10. Does the student have known medical needs during the school day? If yes, describe.			
11. Has the student transferred schools often and it's impacted him/her?			
12. Will the length of the commute negatively impact student?			

School Representative (e.g., Teacher, School Counselor, ESE Coordinator, AP, etc.)

Printed Name	Employee ID	Title	Signature	Date

Please scan and return completed form to:

The School District of Palm Beach County Foster Care Liaison, Laura Shoemaker (laura.shoemaker@palmbeachschools.org)