

# Department of Child Safety

ESSA and the DCS

# DCS Mission & Vision

The **mission** of the DCS is to successfully engage children and families to ensure safety, strengthen families and achieve permanency.

The **vision** of the DCS is that children will thrive in environments free from abuse and neglect.

The DCS is the state agency responsible for investigating reports of child abuse and neglect when the alleged perpetrator is the child's own parent/guardian.

# What does DCS do?

The DCS is the state agency responsible for investigating reports of child abuse and neglect when the alleged perpetrator is the child's own parent/guardian.

The DCS is also responsible for providing services to help families address the issues that brought the family to our attention.

When children cannot remain safely in their homes, out-of-home placements are provided along with other services to help the family resolve the safety threats that caused the child to be removed from the home.

# DCS Investigations Statistics

Over a six month period, the DCS Hotline received 24,537 calls that met the **statutory criteria for a report** of child abuse/neglect.

- **71% of those calls alleged some form of neglect**
- 25% of those calls alleged some form of physical abuse
- 3% alleged sexual abuse
- 1% alleged emotional abuse

During this time period, **6,141 children were removed** from their parent/caretaker and placed into out-of-home care.

*(DCS Child Welfare Reporting Requirements, October, 2015 - March 2016)*

# DCS Foster Care Statistics

- On March 31, 2016 **18,906 children were in foster care** (all placement types).
  
- 59% or 11, 204 of these children were age 5 through 17. For those children:
  - 74% (8,251) were residing with relatives or with a licensed foster family.
  - 16% (1,809) were residing in congregate (group home) care
  
- During this time period, 5,668 children exited foster care. 2,836 were school age (6-17) exited foster care; 59% were returned home and 38% were adopted or entered a permanent guardianship.

*(DCS Child Welfare Reporting Requirements, October, 2015 - March 2016)*

# Foster Care Placement (living arrangement)

Youth in foster care experience multiple changes to where they live during their time in foster care. On average, children in foster care move 1 to 2 times per year. Multiple changes in a child's foster care placement often results in changes to the school they attend. When children move schools, they lose...

- Connections to supportive adults
- Friendships
- Class credits
- Education services (in some instances)
- Involvement in extra-curricular/enrichment activities (i.e. school band, clubs, sports)

**Children who are in foster care for multiple years and those who exit foster care to adulthood lose even more....**

**Youth who remain in foster care and experience multiple foster care placement changes (and school changes) have poorer outcomes in numerous areas including:**

- Homelessness: More than one in five alumni (22%) experienced homelessness after leaving foster care
- Mental Health: More than half of the alumni (54%) had clinical levels of at least one mental health problem, such as depression, social phobia, panic syndrome, post-traumatic stress disorder (25% **twice as high as for U.S. war veterans**), or drug dependence
- Education: 29% of the alumni who completed high school did so by passing GED tests, which impacts post-secondary enrollment, achievement and life-long earnings.
- Employment and Finances: Many alumni are in fragile economic situations. One-third of the alumni (33%) had household incomes at or below the poverty level.

*(Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study, 2005)*

# Resources through DCS to support education needs of foster youth

- ✓ Books/Tuition Allowance: \$82.50 per year: *For books, supplies, course fees, student services and physical education fees/equipment. May be approved for special pre-school and college level, technical and vocational classes.*
- ✓ Supplemental School Tuition: \$165 per session: *For use during summer sessions or interim sessions at year round schools.*
- ✓ Graduation: \$220 maximum: *Available for High School only for cap, gown, ring, yearbook, and other graduation related fees.*
- ✓ Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF) – private foundation with funding accessed through an application (submitted by DCS Specialist (aka case manager) or foster caregiver).

# DCS Role in ESSA

Engage cooperatively and collaboratively with the SEA and LEAs to make decisions about:

- ✓ **Best Interests Determinations:** *Children in foster care enroll or remain in the school of origin unless there is a determination that it is not in his or her **best interest** to attend the school of origin.*
- ✓ **Transportation:** *How transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the time in foster care.*
- ✓ **Immediate Enrollment:** *Ensure the child is immediately enrolled in the new school (if not in the child's best interests to remain in the school of origin).*
- ✓ **Point of Contact:** *Including coordinating with SEA and LEAs to develop a process for implementation, and serving as the primary POC between schools, families, and other service providers.*
- ✓ **Effective Collaboration:** *including establishing a structure for notifying schools when a child enters foster care and collaborating with the LEAs to meet the needs of the child, cross-training with SEA and LEAs*

# Contact Information

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