

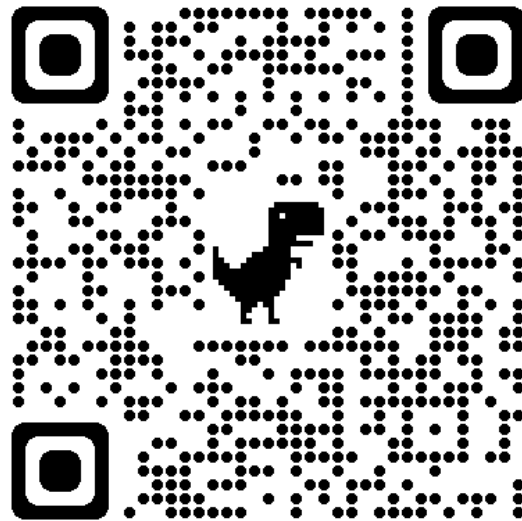


ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Foster Care Education: Basics

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Training Link



<https://www.azed.gov/sites/default/files/2023/09/FC%20Basics%2009.06.2023.pdf>

Objectives

Participants will...

- become familiarized with the statutory requirements to supports students in foster care within their LEA
- be able to utilize the tools derived from this training to collaborate with the child welfare agency to see school stability become a reality for our students in foster care

Common Acronyms

- SEA: State educational agency
- LEA: Local educational agency
- CWA: Child welfare agency
- ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act
- FCEP: Foster Care Education Program
- BID: Best interest determination
- POC: Point of Contact
- FC: Foster Care



Pre-Assessment

Pre-Assessment

1. Children in foster care are considered 'homeless' or McKinney-Vento eligible.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Pre-Assessment

2. The school of origin is the school the child is enrolled at when entering foster care or if already in foster care, the school the child is enrolled at the time of a foster care placement change.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Pre-Assessment

3. Which school should a student in foster care attend during the BID process?
 - a. New school
 - b. School that the biological parents choose
 - c. School of origin
 - d. School that the student in foster care chooses

Pre-Assessment

4. Which party is responsible for transporting a student in foster care to their school of origin?
- a. School of origin
 - b. New school
 - c. School of origin & new school splits responsibility
 - d. Child welfare agency
 - e. Foster caregiver
 - f. School of origin & child welfare agency share the responsibility

Pre-Assessment

5. If the outcome of the BID is that it is not in the best interest of the student in foster care to remain at their school of origin, then the new school should enroll that student as soon as all the typically required paperwork is turned in by the foster caregiver.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Foster Care Definition

- Definition
 - 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility
- Child welfare agencies
 - DCS
 - Tribal
 - local

Children in foster care are not considered 'homeless' or McKinney-Vento eligible.

“LEAs should collaborate with child welfare and other relevant agencies to ensure that all school staff are sensitive to the complex needs of foster youth, are informed about the impact that trauma has on a child’s ability to learn, and that the appropriate interventions and strategies are in place to support them to succeed in school.”

Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care by U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016

Awareness



DCS Stats

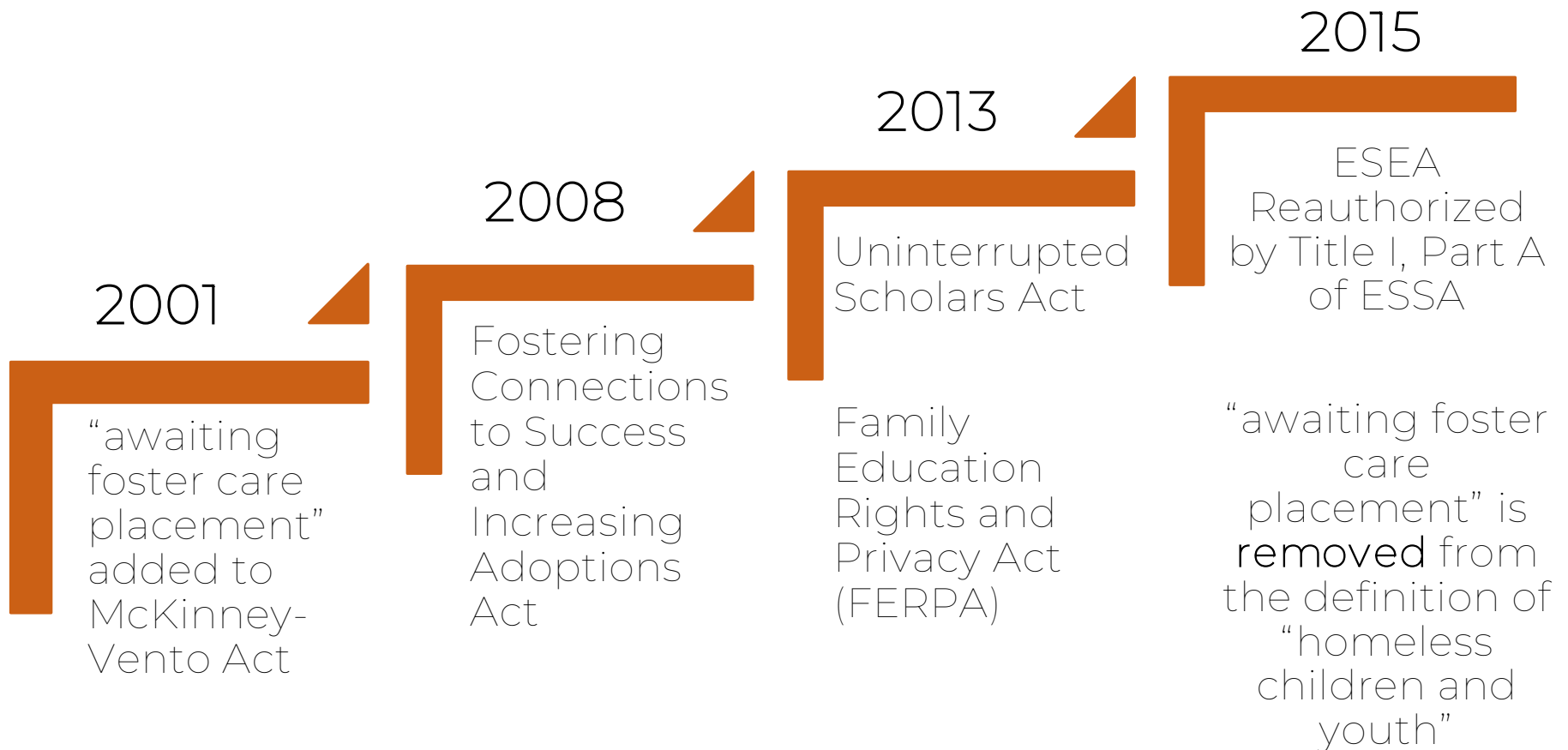
- Total Youth in Care
 - 10,810
 - Kinship- 4,821
 - Foster Family- 2,993
 - Congregate Care- 1,884
- School Age Youth (4-18+)
 - 7,699
- Total FC Moves (FY23)
 - 25,860
 - 70.85 moves per day avg.
 - 2.37 moves per kid avg.

*Taken from DCS Monthly Operational Outcomes Data Report on their website

School Stability Rationale

- Friendships
- Class Credits
- Education Services
- Delayed Enrollment
- School Discipline
- Graduation Rate

Main Foster Care Education Provisions History





Quick Summary

Fostering Connections Act

The child welfare agency must have
a plan for school stability

CWA Assurances

- placement considers the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement; **and**
- coordination to ensure that the child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement; **or**
- if remaining in such school is not in the best interests of the child, the CWA and LEA provide immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school, with all the educational records of the child provided to the school

- School of Origin
- Best Interest Determination (BID)
- Transportation
- Immediate Enrollment

ESSA Foster Care School Stability Assurances



Question for Zoom Chat

How many schools did you attend from Kindergarten – 12th grade?



School of Origin

“...any such child enrolls or remains in such child’s school of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in such child’s best interest to attend the school of origin, which decision shall be based on all factors relating to the child’s best interest, including consideration of the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement...”

20 U.S. Code 6311 (g)(1)(E)(i)

Foster Care Education Program

School of Origin



School of Origin

A child in foster care is to enroll or remain in the school of origin



School of Origin

- The school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care, including preschool
- OR –
- The school in which the child is enrolled at the time of change in foster care placement (ESEA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(i))

When a withdrawal is sought from school of origin...

- Caregivers may try to withdraw students in foster care without going through the BID process
- LEA registrar staff should not withdraw the student & notify the LEA Foster Care POC
- The LEA Foster Care POC should ensure that the student's school of origin rights are protected & that there is a BID conducted for the student
 - students in foster care should remain in their school of origin throughout the BID process

School of
Origin





Best Interest Determinations

Best Interest Determination



A child in foster care is to enroll or remain in the school of origin

- **unless** a determination is made that it is not their best interest to attend the school of origin
- the decision shall be based on all factors relating to the child's best interest, including the following:
 - appropriateness of the current educational setting
 - the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement

Best Interest Determination (BID)



- Definition
 - a holistic assessment to determine whether the child in foster care should remain in their school of origin or if it is in their best interest to be immediately enrolled in the new school

It is important to note that the cost of transportation should not be considered in the BID

The student should remain at the school of origin during the BID process

Purpose of the BID



The BID is to specifically assess if it is in the best interest of the child in foster care to remain at their school of origin

The BID should NOT be viewed as a choice between the school of origin & the new school

Children should continue attending the school of origin during the BID process

Question for Zoom Chat

What should be considered in determining if remaining at the school of origin is in the best interest of a child in foster care?

Considerations of the BID



- Projected duration of out-of-home placement
- Child's academic, developmental, & socialization needs
- How a school change will affect learning or credit attainment
- Safety of the child
- Wishes of parent, caregiver, & child
- Toll of commute, distance, and time of travel to/from school

When to Conduct a BID



The BID process should be executed every time a child either:

- enters foster care, or
- changes their foster care living arrangement

The BID may be conducted via a virtual meeting, conference call, email correspondence, etc.

BID Prep Form



School of Origin BID Preparation Form

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Information

LEA Name: _____

School Site: _____

LEA Foster Care Point of Contact: _____ **Email:** _____

School Address: _____

Child in Foster Care Information

Child Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ **State Student ID:** _____

Date of FC Move: _____ **Grade:** _____

Residence School Address: _____

School of Origin Input for BID

- **How well connected is the child to the school and/or school staff?**
(i.e., how long attending the school, positive relationships with school staff, any sense of belonging or fitting in, etc.)

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- **How is the child performing academically?**
(i.e., passing/failing classes, reading/writing/math at grade level, etc.)

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Required BID Participants



- Child welfare agency
- School of origin

The child welfare agency should be considered the final decision maker if there is not consensus & should lead the BID process.

DCS uses this [BID form](#) to guide the process.

Ameliorating BID Participants



- Potential new school
- Foster caregiver
- Child in foster care
- Bio or adoptive parents
- Surrogate parent
- CASA
- SEA foster care point of contact



Transportation

“(B) by not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act, **develop and implement clear written procedures** governing how transportation to maintain children in foster care in their **school of origin** when in their best interest will be **provided, arranged, and funded** for the duration of the time in foster care, which procedures shall—

“(i) ensure that children in foster care needing transportation to the school of origin will promptly receive transportation in a **cost-effective** manner and in accordance with section 475(4)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 675(4)(A));...”

20 U.S. Code 6312 (c)(5)(B)(i)

Transportation



“(ii) ensure that, if there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation to maintain children in foster care in their schools of origin, the local educational agency will provide transportation to the school of origin if—

“(I) the local child welfare agency agrees to reimburse the local educational agency for the cost of such transportation;

“(II) the local educational agency agrees to pay for the cost of such transportation; or

“(III) the local educational agency and the local child welfare agency agree to share the cost of such transportation;”

20 U.S. Code 6312 (c)(5)(B)(ii)

Transportation



- If transportation is required for a student in foster care to remain at their school of origin, the LEA and the child welfare agency will share the responsibility of that transportation
- The transportation must be prompt & cost-effective
 - The [Foster Care Transportation Procedure](#) will help illuminate the most prompt & cost-effective modality of transportation for a particular student in foster care
- The LEA Foster Care POC should be empowered to activate transportation to the school of origin, when it is necessary

Transportation





Immediate Enrollment

- If the provided BID documentation states that it is not in best interest for the student to remain at their school of origin...
- then the school would **immediately enroll** the student, even without typically required enrollment paperwork
- the student in foster care would **immediately begin attending class** while the foster caregiver attempts to provide the typically required enrollment paperwork
 - i.e., proof of immunization, birth certificate, etc.
 - the new school will request the school records from the previous school

Immediate Enrollment



- When there's a new student in foster care seeking enrollment...
 - caregivers may try to enroll students in foster care without going through the BID process
 - LEA registrar staff should notify their Foster Care POC
 - the LEA POC will collaborate with the school of origin's Foster Care POC to ensure the following:
 - the student's school of origin rights are protected
 - that there is a BID conducted for the student
 - students in foster care should remain in their school of origin while throughout the BID process

Immediate Enrollment





Points of Contact

“(5) collaborate with the State or local child welfare agency to—

“(A) designate a **point of contact** if the corresponding child welfare agency notifies the local educational agency, in writing, that the agency has designated an employee to serve as a point of contact for the local educational agency”

20 U.S.C. § 6312 (c)(5)(A)

Foster Care Points of Contact



Foster Care Points of Contact

LEA & Child Welfare Agency Points of Contact

- LEA Points of Contact
 - Use this form to update https://forms.office.com/r/u96qgSfNx_b
- DCS Points of Contact
- Tribal Foster Care Points of Contact



Roles & Responsibilities

- LEAs are to designate a **Foster Care Point of Contact (POC)** to ensure school stability for students in foster care
- Responsibilities of the Foster Care POC:
 - collaborate with the child welfare agency for BIDs, school stability, & transportation to the school of origin
 - facilitate records transfer
 - ensure that the new school immediately enrolls after the BID process
 - train school staff on ESSA foster care school stability assurances

Roles & Responsibilities



- The Foster Care POC will need to be able to:
 - initiate transportation to the school of origin for a student in foster care
 - enroll students in foster care immediately, if the outcome of the best interest determination was to not remain in the school of origin
 - assist in the receiving/sending of school records for students in foster care
 - access the AzEDS FSTR – Student Foster Care Report. They will need the ADE Connect role of Foster Care Liaison
 - provide professional development for all LEA staff on the ESSA foster care school stability assurances

Roles & Responsibilities





Identification

- Best practices to identify students in foster care
 - the child welfare agency will provide the caregiver with paperwork to give to schools verifying the student's foster care status.
 - for DCS, this document is called a [Notice to Provider](#)
 - Utilize the **State Match** within [Direct Certification](#) if the LEA is participating in the National School Lunch Program
 - health and nutrition staff that access this report can filter out the students in foster care and give those results to the Foster Care POC
 - allowable through [PL 112-278 Sect. 2](#)

Identification



- Best practices in identifying students in foster care:
 - Foster Care POC can run the FSTR – Student Foster Care Report in AzEDS
 - the ADE Connect role titled Foster Care Liaison is needed to access this report
 - the LEA Entity Administrator can assign this role.
 - Train all LEA staff to **notify the Foster Care POC** when they become aware of a child in foster care
 - Foster Care POC should **maintain their own spreadsheet** of the students in foster care & cross reference between all other data points

Identification





Special Education

IDEA Parent Succession



- Bio Parent
- Foster Parent
- Guardian Generally Authorized
- Individual Acting in Place
- Surrogate Parent

DCS may attend IEP meetings but may not sign IEPs, act as the IDEA Parent, or officially request an evaluation



Post-Assessment

Post-Assessment Answers

1. Children in foster care are considered 'homeless' or McKinney-Vento eligible.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Post-Assessment Answers

2. The school of origin is the school the child is enrolled at when entering foster care or if already in foster care, the school the child is enrolled at the time of a foster care placement change.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Post-Assessment Answers

3. Which school should a student in foster care attend during the BID process?
 - a. New school
 - b. School that the biological parents choose
 - c. School of origin
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Post-Assessment Answers

4. Which party is responsible for transporting a student in foster care to their school of origin?
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 - b. New school
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Post-Assessment Answers

5. If the outcome of the BID is that it is not in the best interest of the student in foster care to remain at their school of origin, then the new school should enroll that student as soon as all the typically required paperwork is turned in by the foster caregiver.
- a. True
 - b. False

Thank You!



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