



## Organizational Self-Study on Educational Stability

This self-study assessment tool can be used to review educational provisions related to Fostering Connections and overall policies and practices that support educational stability and continuity for children in foster care. The tool is designed to review overall administrative policies, identify strengths and challenges in ensuring educational stability for children and youth.

### ADMINISTRATIVE: LEGAL MANDATES/POLICY/PRACTICES

#### **Policies**

Does your agency have written policies that promote educational stability and continuity in the following areas? Check all that apply.

- Maintaining child's education record in the case file.
- Considering proximity and appropriateness of educational setting when making living placement determinations.
- Making determinations about whether it is in the best interest of the child to remain in the same school at the time of placement in foster care.
- Maintaining children in their current schools at the time of initial placement into foster care
- Keeping children in their same schools when they must change foster care placements
- Immediately enrolling children in new schools when they must change schools
- Ensuring complete school record is transferred when child changes schools.
- The inclusion of education plans in youth's case plan and transition plans
- The inclusion of youth in decisions regarding school changes
- Monitoring enrollment and ongoing attendance in school.

For all written policies, please provide the web links for review:

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If agency has written policies in these areas, in what ways has staff been informed of these policies and/or practices?

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## Education Stability and Continuity Practices

Are the child's educational needs addressed as part of the initial assessment at the time of placement?  Yes  No

How are educational needs documented and addressed in the case planning process?

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How often is the educational plan updated?

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How does the agency decide on the appropriateness of the child's current education setting?

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How does the agency make a best interest determination about school placement, when living placements change?

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Do you seek input from any of the following people or review educational records. Please check all that apply.

- The child/youth
- The parent
- The child's current caregiver
- The child's teacher
- Another school representative who has regular contact with the youth (identify \_\_\_\_\_)
- The child's tribe (tribal social worker), if this is an ICWA case
- Child's attorney, GAL and/or CASA
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reviews the child's educational records (which records? \_\_\_\_\_)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the assessment take into account any special education needs?

Yes  No

Does the assessment take into account the youth's extra curricular activities?  
 Yes  No

Does the agency have placement practices designed to place children in their same school:

At time of initial placement?  Yes  No

When children must change foster care placements?  Yes  No

If yes, what placement practices do you use?

\_\_\_\_\_

Rate you current level of success in keeping children in their same school:

	4=Very successful	3= Moderately successful	2=Somewhat successful	1= Not very successful
When they first enter foster care				
Subsequent living placement changes while in care				

When children are placed outside their school boundaries, does you agency work to keep children in their original schools?  Yes  No

If yes, how do you do this? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When deciding whether remaining in the child's current school is not in his/her best interest:

Do you consult with: (please check all that apply)

The child/youth

The parent

The child's current caregiver

The child's teacher

Another school representative (identify \_\_\_\_\_)

The child's attorney, GAL and/or CASA

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider: (please check all that apply)

The preference of the child

- The preference of the parent and/or educational decision maker
- The child's ties to their current school, including involvement in extracurriculars or connections with peers and adults
- The child's current educational program is not meeting their educational needs and interests
- The distance of and travel time associated with the commute will not have a positive impact the child's education
- The personal safety of the child
- Whether another school can better serve the child's unique educational needs and interests, including special education needs
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Does your agency give notice to all relevant individuals (child, parent, judge, school) about any decision regarding enrolling a child in a new school?  Yes  No

If yes, how is notice given?

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Does your agency have a process for resolving differences of opinion regarding the child's best interest with respect to the school he/she should attend?  Yes  No

If yes, how are disputes resolved? \_\_\_\_\_

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When it is determined that it is not in a child's best interests to remain in his/her original school, how often do the following occur?

- 4=Always
- 3=Often
- 2=Sometimes
- 1=Rarely

	4	3	2	1
The child is immediately enrolled in a new school without waiting on transfer of paperwork.				
The child's records are readily transferred to the new school.				
The child immediately begins attending school.				
The child immediately begins participating in school activities.				
If needed, immediate transportation is				

arranged for the child				
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What are your biggest challenges related to keeping children in the same schools when in their best interest?

- Lack of placement resources near school
- Transportation costs
- Lack of transportation providers
- Lack of public transportation
- Long distances between placements and school
- School residency or other requirements prevent enrollment
- School resistance to enrolling student
- Lack of records or guardianship form
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

For children in foster care, who is the child's education decision maker in your state?

Who can have the authority to make education decisions for children in care (check all that apply)

- The parent(s)
- The child welfare agency (for general education decisions only)
- The foster parent/caregiver
- The court appoints a decision maker
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Not certain

Does your agency have a process for determining how education decision makers are identified?  Yes  No

Describe \_\_\_\_\_

Does the agency inform the youth, the school, and other interest parties about who has the authority to make educational decisions?

Yes  No

Does the agency have a process for ensuring that:

All young children receiving Title IV-E foster care have access to early intervention/early childhood education services?  Yes  No

If yes, what is your process?

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All children receiving Title IV-E foster care are enrolled in school full time or have already completed high school  Yes  No

If yes, what is your process?

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All children receiving Title IV-E adoption assistance are enrolled in school full time or have already completed high school  Yes  No

If yes, what is your process?

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How does the agency track any educational moves throughout the child's stay in the foster care system?

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### Transitioning Youth

How does the agency educate youth on available educational options?

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How are young people involved in decision making and planning involving their educational needs?

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Does your agency include a plan for secondary and post-secondary education in each transition plan for youth in foster care?  Yes  No

How would you rate the quality of secondary and post secondary education plans for youth who are transitioning from foster care?

4=Consistently excellent	3= Of moderate quality	2=Of poor quality	1=Need considerable improvement

Does the agency include holiday and summer housing arrangements as part of the post secondary educational planning process?  Yes  No

How are young people supported as they begin their post-secondary goals?

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Does the agency offer mentoring or other emotional supports for the post secondary student? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

**COLLABORATION**

**STATE OR LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY**

Does the agency (at the state level) collaborate with the state education agency to ensure education stability and continuity for children and youth in foster care?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the agency (at the local level) collaborate with local education agencies to ensure educational stability and continuity for children and youth in foster care?  
\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the agency work with community resources to ensure that students who do change schools are provided with tutoring or other supports to catch up with their peers?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Does your collaborative effort with education agencies include any of the following? Please check all that apply.

- \_\_\_ Interagency taskforce, workgroup, or committee
- \_\_\_ A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or interagency agreement or other document institutionalizing the collaboration
- \_\_\_ School-based child welfare staff, including special Indian Education staff, such as Johnson O'Malley program staff
- \_\_\_ Designated child welfare staff to work with schools on the educational needs of children and youth in foster care
- \_\_\_ Designated school staff to work with the child welfare agency on the education needs of children and youth in foster care.
- \_\_\_ Interdisciplinary training with child welfare and education
- \_\_\_ Sharing educational data
- \_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How do you rate your level of collaboration with education agencies?

4=Excellent	3=Good	2= In the beginning stages	1=Not developed

What challenges do you face around collaboration with schools, districts and education agencies?

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**JUVENILE COURT**

Does the agency include educational information in its reports to the courts?

4=Always	3= Most of the time	2=Occasionally	1=Rarely

Do the juvenile courts use model orders or protocols that facilitate the court's review and orders regarding the educational needs of children and youth in foster care?

- Yes
- No
- Not certain

Do the juvenile courts address the educational needs of children and youth in foster care in each hearing?

4=Always	3= Sometimes	2=Rarely	1=Never

Do the juvenile courts typically ask about:

- The child's enrollment in school  Yes  No
- The child's transportation to school  Yes  No
- The child's attendance in school  Yes  No
- The child academic performance  Yes  No
- Any changes in school placements  Yes  No
- Any special education issues  Yes  No
- The youth's post-secondary education goals  Yes  No

Do the juvenile courts ask children/youth about their educational needs and experiences?

4=Always	3= Sometimes	2=Rarely	1=Never

How do you rate your level of collaboration with the juvenile courts on educational issues?

4=Excellent	3=Good	2= In the	1=Not developed
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		beginning stages	

**SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

What funding is used to pay for transportation of children to their original schools when they are placed outside their original school boundaries? Please check all that apply.

- Title IV-E foster care maintenance
- Title IV-E administration
- Other child welfare funding
- Education funding (state or local district? \_\_\_\_\_)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How are children and youth in foster care transported to their schools of origin? Please check all that apply.

- School bus
- Public transportation (public bus, other public transport)
- Foster parent or caretaker vehicle
- Privately contracted transportation services (vans, cars, taxis)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Does the agency collect educational information on each child/youth at time of placement in foster care?  Yes  No

If yes, what types of information are collected? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Does the agency track educational data on each child/youth beginning at the time of placement in foster care and continuing throughout the child's/youth's stay in foster care?  Yes  No

If yes, do the data include: (please check all that apply)

- Any changes in school placement
- Full time attendance in school
- Grade advancement/retention
- Need for special education services
- High school graduation

If data is not collected through the state agency, do you have localities that that collect and share data? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

What type of professional development activities are used to build staff's knowledge, skills and abilities in meeting the education needs of children and youth in foster care? Check all that apply:

- \_\_\_ Classroom Training
- \_\_\_ Online training
- \_\_\_ Teleconferences
- \_\_\_ Webcasts
- \_\_\_ Clinical Consultation
- \_\_\_ Coaching
- \_\_\_ Mentoring
- \_\_\_ Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Is there a specific training on educational stability and continuity practices?  
\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

If yes, what knowledge, skills and abilities does this training address?

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Which of the following staff receive educational stability and continuity training?

	YES	NO
Foster care staff	___	___
Kinship staff	___	___
Adoption staff	___	___
Mental health staff	___	___
Supervisors	___	___
Administrators	___	___
Legal staff	___	___
CASA	___	___
Foster Family Agency staff	___	___

How is your professional development program administered? Check all that apply

- \_\_\_ Internal staff development trainers
- \_\_\_ External trainers (university partners, community)

**OTHER AGENCY INITIATIVES**

What other initiatives do you have that are relevant to educational stability and continuity practices?

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**AGENCY STRENGTHS**

Based on the above self assessment, what do you see as your agency's strengths in promoting educational stability and continuity for children and youth in care? Check all that apply.

**STRENGTHS**

- Placement practices that keep children in their original school districts
- Practices that facilitate education decision making for children/youth in foster care
- Practices that ensure full time attendance in school
- Collaboration with education agencies
- Provision of school transportation
- Collaboration with juvenile courts
- Collaboration with youth
- Training for staff on educational policies and practices
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**AGENCY CHALLENGES**

Which of the following are challenges that your agency faces in achieving education stability and continuity for children and youth in foster care? Check all that apply

- Placement practices that keep children in their original schools
- Practices that facilitate education decision making for children/youth in foster care
- Practices that ensure full time attendance in school

- School transportation
- Collaboration with education agencies
- Collaboration with juvenile courts
- Collaboration with youth
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What do you need to overcome these challenges?

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What resources are currently available to help you to overcome these challenges?

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**Technical Assistance and Training Needs**

Based on this assessment, how can the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections be of assistance: Check all that apply

- Policy review
- Policy development
- Best practices in achieving education stability and continuity
- Best practices in ensuring the full time school attendance of children/youth in foster care
- Implementation of policy and practices
- Data analysis
- Curriculum design strategies
- Caseworker training
- Supervisory Training
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Sources: Adapted from CPYP Agency Self-Assessment Tool on Youth Permanency.

Checklist 1: Setting the Stage (2009) Legal Center For Foster Care and Education. American Bar Association & Casey Family Programs

Checklist 2: Education Obligations and Considerations Under the Fostering Connections Act. (2009) Legal Center For Foster Care and Education. American Bar Association & Casey Family Programs