



Anderson Public School
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Anderson Public School



Foster Care Plan

07/01/2022

This plan is to address the requirement for foster care provisions under Title I of ESSA which require State Educational Agencies (SDE) and Local Educational Agencies (LEAS) to collaborate with Child Welfare Agencies (CWAs) to ensure educational stability and minimize educational disruptions for children in foster care.

Foster Care Plan

The Anderson Public School District is committed to provide all students with sound educational experiences. We recognize that foster children are at an increased risk of grade retention, gaps in academic achievement, low high school graduation rates, and postsecondary enrollment. These provisions promote greater stability for children in foster care so that they can continue their education without disruption, maintain important relationships with peer and adults, and have the opportunity to achieve college and career readiness.

The educational stability includes that (1) a child in foster care will remain in the child's school of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest to remain in that school and (2) if a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child will be immediately enrolled in the school of residence, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.

School District Assurances

Each placement of the child in foster care takes in account the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.

The state welfare agency will coordinate local educational agencies to ensure that the child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.

If it is not in the best interest of the child to return to the resident school, the child will immediately be provided the appropriate enrollment to the Anderson Public Schools

The local school will gather and maintain educational records and promptly send them to any district where the student moves.

Foster Care Child Liaison (POC)

The District will assign at least one person to serve as a Foster Care Child Liaison or Point of Contact (POC). The name of this person will be turned in annually to the OSDE through the online Grants

Management System by September 30th of each year. If additional staff members are needed to meet requirements, the district will make assignments as necessary. The Foster Child Liaison will work in the best interest of the child to ensure that all educational requirements are being met. The liaison that is assigned to the position will have access to available training and materials to keep them informed of any changes in the Foster Care Regulations. The liaison will work closely with state and tribal welfare agencies to:

- Coordinating with the corresponding child welfare agency;
- Leading the development of a process for making the best interest determination;
- Documenting the best interest determination;
- Facilitating the transfer of records and immediate enrollment;
- Facilitating data sharing with the child welfare agencies, consistent with FERPA and other privacy protocols;
- Developing and coordinating local transportation procedures;
- Managing best interest determinations and transportation cost disputes;
- Ensuring that children in foster care are enrolled in and regularly attend school;
- Providing professional development and training to school staff on the Title I provisions and educational needs of children in foster care.

Committee

A committee will meet to determine the appropriate placement of each foster care child. The committee will comprise of the site administrator or LEA representative, the Foster Care Liaison, and the member of the CWA. In emergency circumstances the CWA has the authority to make an immediate decision regarding the school placement, and then consult with the LEA and revisit the best interest determination of the child. The determining factors that may be evaluated include:

- Proximity of the resource family home to the child's present school;
- Safety considerations;
- Age and grade level of the child as it relates to the other best interest factors;
- Needs of the child, including social adjustment and well-being;
- Child's performance, continuity of education and engagement in the school the child presently attends;
- Child's special educational programming if the child is classified;
- Point of time in year;
- Child's permanency goal and likelihood of reunification;
- Anticipate duration of the placement;
- Preferences of the child;
- Preferences of the child's parent(s) or educational decision marker(s);

- The child's attachment to the school, including meaningful relationships with staff and peers;
- Placement of the child's sibling(s);
- Influence of the school climate on the child, including safety;
- Availability and quality of the services in the school to meet the child's educational and socioemotional needs;
- History of school transfers and how they have impacted the child;
- How the length of the commute would impact the child, based on the child's developmental stage;
- Whether the child is a student with a disability under the IDEA who is receiving special education and related services or a student with a disability under Section 504 who is receiving special education or related services and , if so, the availability of the required services in a school other than the school of origin; and
- Whether the child in an EL and is receiving language services, and if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin.

*Transportation will not be considered when determining a child's best interest.

In the event of a disagreement regarding school placement for a child in foster care, the child welfare agency should be considered the final decision maker in making the best interest determination. The child welfare agency is uniquely positioned to assess vital-non-educational factors such as safety, sibling placements, the child's permanency goal, and other components of the case plan. The child welfare agency also has the authority, capacity, and responsibility to collaborate with and gain information from multiple parties including parents, children, schools, and the court in making these decisions.

Enrollment of Students

Foster care parents, social workers or other legal guardians will be allowed to immediately enroll children in the local School. We understand that all necessary paperwork (birth certificate, shot records, academic records, special educations records, etc.) may not be immediately available and want to provide a smooth transition for the student into our district. We will contact the home school district for the records and make adaptations as needed. After enrollment the following guardianship or legal custody documents shall be provided for verification by the foster family or CWA:

- Power of Attorney
- Affidavit
- Court Order

IDEA Students

The IDEA, Part B directs schools districts must make a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) available to all eligible children with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). FAPE under IDEA includes the provision of special education and related services at no cost to the parents in accordance with a properly developed Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Each child's placement decision must be made by a group of knowledgeable persons. The District will operate in accordance with all state and federal laws regarding special education students. Special education services will be provided to foster care students as they are to all students following the guideline below.

- Educational placement will be determined annually and will be based on the child's IEP in accordance with the child's individual needs;
- The child will be placed in the least restrictive environment and unless they require some other arrangement they will attend the school that he/she would attend if not disabled;
- Timely and expedited evaluations and eligibility determinations for highly mobile children with disabilities will be made when possible;
- Children in foster care will have access to related aids and services that are designed to meet their educational needs;
- Children will have access to comparable services including summer and extended school year services if applicable;
- Children in foster care will not be discriminated against and are considered a protected group.

EL Students

The School District will ensure the English-Learning (EL) students in foster care will participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs by doing the following:

- Identifying and assessing all potential EL students in a timely, valid and reliable manner;
- Provide EL students with a language assistance program that is educationally sound and proven successful;
- Sufficiently staff and support the language assistance programs for EL students;
- Ensure the EL students have equal opportunities to meaningfully participate in all curricular and extra-curricular activities;
- Avoid unnecessary segregation of EL students;
- Ensure that EL students with disabilities are evaluated in a timely and appropriate manner for special education and disability-related services and that their language needs are considered in these evaluations and delivery of services;
- Meet the needs of EL students who opt out of language assistance programs;

- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of school districts language assistance programs following federal guidelines;
- Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of school district's language assistance program and progress of each student;
- Ensure meaningful communication with the parents of the students.

Transportation

The District will collaborate with the CWA to develop and implement clear written procedures governing how transportation is provided to maintain children in foster care in the schools or origin. The School will also work with the CWA to reach an agreement in regards to covering the transportation costs. The agreement will cover how the transportation will be provided, arranged and funded for the duration of the child's time in foster care. Each arrangement can/will vary greatly because the needs of each child should be considered in making the decision on transportation.

The regular transportation policies approved by the School District will be followed in transporting foster care students. Drivers will be appropriately licensed, certified and with the required DMV and background checks. Various public school vehicles may be used to transport students depending in the circumstances. Students that must be transports out of state will be board approved as required by State law.

Student Records

The Local School District will share education records with the CWA that are allowed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This allows educational agencies to disclose without parental consent educational records, including IDEA, of students in foster care to State and Tribal agencies.

~~ Foster Care ~~
Best Interest Determination -- Evaluation Form

Student's Name: _____

Student Identifier ("personally identifiable" number): _____

School and District of Current Attendance: _____

Previous School(s): _____

Grade Placement: _____

Date of Best Interest Determination Meeting: _____

Factors Considered: The student shall remain in the current school unless consideration of the following factors indicates that a change of school placement is in the child's best interest.

(Check all that apply.)

_____ The child's permanency goal, plan and expected date for achieving the permanency supports a change in school placement.

_____ The parents/prior custodians or child believe that changing schools is in the child's best interest. If so, state why? _____

_____ The length of the commute to return to the current school would negatively impact the child.

_____ The child's current school environment is negatively impacting the child (e.g., bullying, etc.) and the child wants to change schools. If so, state why _____

_____ The child has only attended the current school for a short time or is not attached to the school. (Consider: What are the child's ties to his or her current school, including significant relationships and involvement in extracurricular activities.)

_____ Safety considerations favor a change in school placement. If so, state why: _____

_____ Transferring schools will positively impact the child emotionally, socially or academically. (e.g., the child's siblings attend the new school).

_____ The new school will better meet the child's academic needs. (Consider: How is the child performing academically in the current school?

_____ What are the child's academic/career goals?

_____ Does the child's new school have programs and activities that address the unique needs or interests of the student that the current school does not have?)

_____ The new school will better meet the child's special education needs. (Consider: Is the child receiving any special education services from his or her current school?)

- _____ Does the child participate in other specialized instruction? (e.g., gifted program, career and technical program) that would be impacted by a school move?
 - _____ Does the new school have programs and activities that address the unique needs or interests of the student that the prior school does not have?)
 - _____ The timing of the school transfer will not undermine school success. (Consider: Would the timing of the school transfer coincide with a logical juncture in the child's academic or personal progress? (e.g., after an event that is significant to the child or end of the school year)
- Documentation and Records Attach any supporting documentation used in making this determination of best interest. Determination The student shall remain in the same school where the child is currently enrolled.

Name of School and District: _____.

Transportation to be provided by: _____.

Based on the best interest determination, a change in school placement is needed. The student shall be enrolled in the new school of current residence:

Name of School and District: _____.