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ABA Center on Children and the Law
National Resource Center on Legal
and Judicial Issues

Legal Center for Foster Care and
Education

Studies across the country, show children in foster care are struggling academically

Research shows that youth in care :

- ❑ graduate high school at low rates and are less likely to complete high school compared to their non-foster care peers.
 - ❑ have significantly higher rates of dropping out or incarceration.
 - ❑ High rates of reading below grade level.
 - ❑ Much more likely to repeat a grade.
 - ❑ Alarming few enter post secondary education, and even fewer obtain a bachelor's degree.
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School Stability and Children in Foster Care

- ❑ Federal data indicate that school age children in foster care in FY 2009 experienced an average of 3.38 living placements.
- ❑ One study showed that over two thirds of children in care changed schools shortly after initial placement in care.
- ❑ Studies have found that highly mobile children score lower than stably housed children on standardized tests in reading, spelling and math.
- ❑ In a national study of 1,087 foster care alumni, youth who had even one fewer placement change per year were almost twice as likely to graduate from high school before leaving care.

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008

- ❑ Amends Title IV (Parts B and E) of the Social Security Act
- ❑ Broad-reaching amendments to child welfare law
- ❑ Important provisions promoting education stability and enrollment for youth in care
- ❑ Changes child welfare law, but cannot be fully realized without collaboration from education system

Fostering Connections: education provisions summary

- Every child's **case plan** must include "assurances that the placement of the child in foster care takes into 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."
- Child welfare agency must coordinate with school to **ensure** child remains in the same school unless **not** in the child's best interest.
- Child welfare agency **may** use federal funds to provide reasonable travel for children to remain in their school of origin. (CWPM 8.1(B))
42 U.S.C. 675(1)(C)

Fostering Connections: education provisions summary continued

- If remaining in same school is **not** in child's best interests, child's case plan must include assurances that the child welfare agency and local education agency will:
 - provide immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school; with
 - all of the educational records of the child provided to the school.



Contact Information

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