Why Focus on Foster Care and Education?

For the more than 800,000 children and youth served in foster care each year in the United States, a quality education is vitally important. It not only provides children with a road map for future success, it can also serve as a positive counterweight to abuse, neglect, separation, and instability.

Unfortunately, for children and youth in foster care, a change in home placement frequently results in a change in school placement. The educational impact of every school change is significant. Each time students enter a new school they must adjust to different curricula, different expectations, new friends, and new teachers.

Positive, stable school experiences enhance a child's well-being, help them make more successful transitions to adulthood, and increase their chances for personal fulfillment and economic self-sufficiency, as well as their ability to contribute to society.

Facts and Figures*

- Less than **70%** of youth in foster care finish high school before leaving care.

- Children and youth in out-of-home care experience **one or two** placement changes per year on average.

- **Over a third** of young adults who aged out of foster care reported having had five or more school changes. (Three-state study.)

- Students in foster care score **16 to 20** percentile points below others in statewide standardized tests (Washington State study).

- Only about **three percent** of youth obtain a bachelor's degree within a few years of emancipation.

*For fact sheet citations visit:
www.casey.org/friendsandfamilies/partners

The National Working Group on Foster Care and Education

The mission of the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education is to promote successful educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care across the country.

The Working Group is committed to heightening awareness of the educational needs of children and youth in care and to promoting best and promising practices and reforms across the education, child welfare, and court systems.

The Working Group's goals are to promote:

- Educational stability for children and youth in foster care

- Seamless educational transitions for children and youth when education changes do occur

- High quality educational experiences, expectations and aspirations for young people in foster care

- Greater national attention to the disparate educational outcomes for young people in foster care, particularly youth of color

American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law/National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues
American Public Human Services Association
Casey Family Programs
Children's Defense Fund
Child Welfare League of America
Education Law Center—PA
Juvenile Law Center
National CASA Association
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
National Foster Care Coalition
National Foster Parent Association

For more information, please visit:
www.casey.org/friendsandfamilies/partners

For specific resources on legal and policy matters, please visit the new Legal Center for Foster Care and Education at:
www.abanet.org/child/education

Foster Care and Education

Tools and Resources for Improving the Education Success of Children and Youth in Foster Care

National Working Group on Foster Care and Education

Tools and Resources

This guide identifies key resources and tools designed to help judges, attorneys, caseworkers, CASAs/GALs, educators, caregivers, and youth themselves understand the diverse issues affecting a child's education, and ways to advocate and ensure positive educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care.

For additional resources, please visit www.casey.org/friendsandfamilies/partners, or www.abanet.org/child/education.

A Road Map for Learning: Improving Educational Outcomes in Foster Care
Casey Family Programs

This framework provides eleven key strategies designed to improve education for children and youth in foster care. Examples include achieving placement stability and transfer of accurate records; ensuring youth are both literate and prepared for postsecondary education; and promoting policies that support education. **Download at www.casey.org.**

Asking the Right Questions: A Judicial Checklist to Ensure that the Educational Needs of Children and Youth in Foster Care Are Being Addressed
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

This checklist and technical assistance brief outline questions that should be asked in a courtroom with respect to the educational needs of children and youth in foster care. **Download at www.ncjfcj.org.**

The Chafee Educational and Training Voucher Program: Six States' Experiences
National Foster Care Coalition

This report examines the implementation of the ETV Program in CA, ME, MT, NC, NY, and WY, highlighting programs and noteworthy practices. **Download at www.nationalfostercare.org.**

Educational Advocacy Curriculum
National Foster Parent Association

This training encourages and prepares foster parents to become educational advocates for the children and youth in their care, and is also useful for social workers. **Download at www.nfpainc.org.**

Education and Youth in Out-of-Home Care, an E-Learning Module
National CASA Association

This e-learning curriculum helps volunteer CASAs/GALs and program staff support the educational rights and needs of children and youth in foster care. **Email staff@nationalcasa.org.**

Endless Dreams
Casey Family Programs

The free video and training curriculum for educators increase awareness of the unique educational needs of youth in foster care and describe the implementation of policies, procedures, and practices that improve educational success. **Email contactus@casey.org.**

It's My Life: Postsecondary Education and Training
Casey Family Programs

This guide provides child welfare practitioners, educators, and advocates with practice approaches for improving college success for students in foster care. **Download at www.casey.org.**

Improving Educational Outcomes for Youth in Care: A National Collaboration
Child Welfare League of America

This monograph summarizes research findings on the academic achievement of youth in foster care and the role of education in successful transitions to independence. **Purchase at www.cwla.org/publications.**

Improving Educational Outcomes for Youth in Care: Symposium Summary Report
Child Welfare League of America

This report provides recommendations for the child welfare, judicial, and educational fields on how to support positive educational outcomes for youth in care. **Purchase at www.cwla.org/publications.**

Learning Curves: Education Advocacy for Children in Foster Care
ABA Center on Children and the Law, National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues

This book addresses a wide range of education advocacy topics and includes practice tips, psychological tests, resources, and excerpts from key federal laws and regulations. **Purchase at www.abanet.org/abastore.**

Make a Difference in a Child's Life and Toolkit for Change
TeamChild and Casey Family Programs

The *Make a Difference* manual teaches how to advocate for a youth's education. It covers topics such as basic education rights, special education law, and resources for young people making the transition to adulthood. *Toolkit for Change* enables states to adapt the manual, originally designed for Washington State, to other jurisdictions. **Visit www.teamchild.org.**

Mythbusting: Breaking Down Confidentiality and Decision-Making Barriers to Meet the Education Needs of Children in Foster Care
ABA Center on Children and the Law

Mythbusting is a free, online, searchable publication that addresses the issues surrounding confidentiality and other barriers that arise when advocating for the educational rights of young people in care. **Download at www.abanet.org.**

Planning Ahead for Educational Success: Interjurisdictional Provision of Public Education
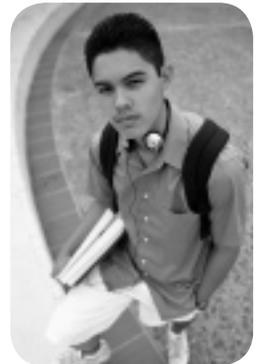AAICAMA, American Public Human Services Assoc.

This issue brief identifies how to secure necessary supports and services for interstate placement of children and youth in foster care. It includes an Interstate Education Checklist of things to consider before and during the placement process. **Download at www.aphsa.org/napcwa.**

PRIDE Curriculum Module on Education: Working Together to Improve Educational Outcomes for Youth in Care
Child Welfare League of America

This module, consisting of three 3-hour sessions, enhances participants' knowledge and skills, enabling them to fulfill the tasks of an educational advocate. It is for foster parents, adoptive parents, kinship families, child care staff, and volunteers involved in educational advocacy. **Visit www.cwla.org.**

Coming Soon

Education Blueprint
Legal Center for Foster Care and Education

This document provides strategies for system reform to enhance educational opportunity and achievement for children in foster care. It identifies goals for youth, indicators that appropriate policies are in place, suggested actions for various stakeholders, and examples of successful programs. **Visit www.abanet.org/child/education.**