

Educational Stability for Youth in Foster Care in Pennsylvania



School Stability Promotes Resilience

Frequent school changes are linked to lower academic performance, higher rates of grade retention and absenteeism, and lower graduation rates.

Further, youth in foster care placement can encounter trauma and adversity. A positive, stable school experience provides structure and nurtures an environment where students can learn and grow.

With fewer school disruptions, youth are provided with a familiar setting for learning, remain connected to school peers and supports, are more likely to access appropriate coursework, and remain on a path to achieve college and career readiness.

Transportation

Youth in foster care placement are entitled to receive transportation in order to ensure educational stability. School and child welfare partners work together to implement clear procedures to ensure that transportation is provided, arranged, and funded when foster youth require transportation to remain in their school of origin.



Best Interest of the Child is Paramount

Collaboration is the keystone to providing stability for youth in foster care placement. When youth enter or change placement, youth are presumed to remain in their current educational setting unless a collaborative best interest determination (BID) among meaningful parties produces an alternative decision.

A collaborative BID must take place each time school placement may be impacted due to entry or change in foster care placement. BIDs are child-centered and do not consider costs.

If determined to be in the child's best interest to enroll into a new school, the school of origin, placing child welfare agency, and the enrolling school must collaborate to ensure that the student is immediately enrolled in his or her new school. Enrollment must not be denied or delayed if documents normally required for enrollment have not been provided.

