



**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**



A TECHNICAL GUIDE TO

**SCHOOL
STABILITY**



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Why School Stability Is Important

Considering the Best Interest of the Student

Children in foster care experience a disproportionately higher rate of residential and school instability than their peers. According to research, 75% of children in foster care experienced an unscheduled school change in one school year, compared to less than 40% of children not in foster care (1).

Another study discovered that students in care move one to two times per year, on average (2). School instability is a barrier to academic progress and can set students involved in the foster care system behind their peers who do not have foster care involvement. Instability is highly correlated with placement instability (3).

Legislative Mandates

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), contains key protections for children in foster care that require State and local educational agencies (SEAs and LEAs) to collaborate with child welfare agencies to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care (4). Additionally, California has had legislation in place since 2004 (AB 490) that requires local educational agencies to consider a student's right to remain at their school of origin; despite placement changes.

This guidance is designed to provide local educational agencies with best practices to ensure that children and youth involved in the foster care system experience minimal disruptions to their education, despite foster care placement instability.

(1) National Working Group on Foster Care and Education. (2014.) Fostering success in education: National factsheet on the educational outcomes of children in foster care. <http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/OurWork/NationalWorkingGroup.aspx>.

(2) Hahnel, J. & Van Zile, C. (2012). The Other Achievement Gap: Court-Dependent Youth and Educational Advocacy. *Journal of Law and Education*. 41(3), 435-481.

(3) Zorc, C. S., O'Reilly, A. L., Matone, M., Long, J., Watts, C. L., & Rubin, D. (2013). The relationship of placement experience to school absenteeism and changing schools in youth, school-aged children in foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35(5), 826-833.

(4) https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fysb/essa_letter_20161205.pdf.

FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

BID	Best Interest Determination
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate
CFTM	Child and Family Team Meeting
CSW	Children's Social Worker
CWA	Child Welfare Agency
DCFS	Department of Children and Family Services
ERH	Educational Rights Holder
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
GAL	Guardian Ad Litem
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program

FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

LEA	Local Educational Agency
Section 504	Accommodation plans under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for students with disabilities in general education classes
POC	Point of Contact
SCSW	Supervising Children's Social Worker
SEA	State Educational Agency
SOO	School of Origin
SOR	School of Residence
NPS	Non-Public School
STRTP	Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program
UCP	Uniform Complaint Procedures

FOSTER YOUTH DEFINITION

The definitions of students in foster care vary across LCFF funding, educational rights and transportation obligations. It's vital to understand that protective laws like Assembly Bill (AB) 490 apply beyond LCFF definitions. Moreover, the definition of transportation under the Every Student Succeeds Act is narrower than that of AB 490.

Assembly Bill 490

EC 48853.5

The broad school of origin definition includes children in juvenile court petitions (dependency or delinquency) and those taken into temporary custody under [WIC Section 309](#). Under this definition, a foster child:

- Has been removed from their home pursuant to [WIC Section 309](#);
- Is the subject of a petition filed under [WIC Section 300](#) (dependency) or [602](#) (delinquency); OR
- Has been removed from their home and are the subject of a petition filed under [WIC Section 300](#) or [602](#);
- Under the jurisdiction of a tribal court as defined under EC Section 42238.01(b)

Every Student Succeeds Act

The Every Student Succeeds Act requires that school of origin and transportation requirements under Section 1111(g)(1)(E) apply to all children in foster care within state education agency (SEA) schools. Under the Fostering Connections Act, "foster care" refers to 24-hour substitute care for children under the responsibility of a child welfare agency, including placements in:

- Foster family homes
- Foster homes of relatives
- Group homes
- Emergency shelters
- Residential facilities
- Childcare institutions
- Pre-adoptive homes

According to this definition, a child is considered in foster care, regardless of facility licensing, state payments, adoption subsidy or federal matching (45 CFR § 1355.20(a)).

SCHOOL OF ORIGIN

Definition of School of Origin

EC 48853.5

School of Origin: School of origin is defined as the school the student attended when they first entered foster care, the school the student, most recently attended and any school the student attended within the immediately preceding 15 months to which they have a connection. This includes the ability for the student to matriculate to their feeder schools.

If the case closes for a student in foster care in grades K - 8, inclusive, before the end of the school year, they have the right to continue at their school of origin for the remainder of the academic year. Students in grades 9 - 12 have the right to remain at their school of origin until graduation.

LEAs and county placing agencies such as DCFS are “encouraged to collaborate to ensure maximum use of available federal funds, explore public-private partnerships and access any other funding sources to promote the well-being of foster children through educational stability.”

According to AB 723, if a student, defined as a foster youth, attends a non-public school (NPS), that NPS can be considered the student's school of origin. The NPS would have to agree that the program would become the students's school of origin. This law will commence the 2024-25 school year.

(An act to amend Sections 48853.5, 56366.1 and 56366.10 of the Education Code relating to pupil placement).

TYPES OF NOTIFICATIONS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Upon receipt of the DCFS 1399 form, please contact your Foster Youth Liaison.

LA County DCFS 1399 Form

This will come from a DCFS staff member.

If you have not received this form or have any issues, please reach out to the DCFS YES Inbox at: youth.education.support@dcfs.lacounty.gov

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

NOTIFICATION TO SCHOOL OF STUDENT'S INVOLVEMENT WITH DCFS AND DEPENDENCY COURT
Please check mark appropriate boxes below:
 Dependency Court Non-Court(Voluntary) Home of Parent Out-of-Home Placement

NOTIFICATION TO SCHOOL DISTRICT OF STUDENT'S PLACEMENT IN A GROUP HOME OR RESIDENTIAL FACILITY

REQUEST FOR TRANSFER OF STUDENT AND APPROPRIATE RECORDS FROM THE SCHOOL-OF-ORIGIN TO THE NEW SCHOOL PURSUANT TO EDUCATION CODE §49069.5

NOTIFICATION TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF A SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT'S PLACEMENT IN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

NOTIFICATION TO SCHOOL OF STUDENT'S RETURN TO HOME OF PARENT (HOP)

DATE: _____ CLIENT ID NUMBER: _____ COURT NUMBER: _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Last First M.I.

Date of Current Placement: _____

SCHOOL-OF-ORIGIN (CURRENT SCHOOL):
 Name: _____ School District: _____
 Address: _____ Telephone: _____
City State Zip FAX: _____
 Grade Level: _____

NEW SCHOOL:
 Name: _____ School District: _____
 Address: _____ Telephone: _____
City State Zip FAX: _____
 Grade Level: _____

Child Living with Parent OHC Caregiver (Out-of-Home Care)
 Name: _____ Address: _____ Telephone: _____
City State Zip

Person with Ed. Rights and DSDM: Parent Other (Developmental Services Decision Maker)
 Name: _____ Address: _____ Telephone: _____
City State Zip

Does the child have an IEP on file? (If yes, please attach a copy) YES NO UNK.
 Is the child involved with Regional Center? YES NO UNK.
 Does the child have Special Health Care Needs? YES NO UNK.
 Is Child Receiving Mental Health Services? YES NO UNK.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTACT INFORMATION:
 CSW Email: _____ Tel#: _____
 RSCSW Email: _____ Tel#: _____
 Regional Office Name: _____ Tel#: _____
 *Call 323-980-1700 for Student's Attorney's Name and Phone Number

CONFIDENTIAL CASE RECORD, PURSUANT TO WIC § 827 AND ORDER OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY JUVENILE COURT
 DCFS 1399 (Revised 02/17) Side 1

Records Request

There may be times when an LEA receives a "notification" from the Educational Passport System (EPS) as a request for records from the new school/or school of residence.

Document Library

Document Viewer Uploads Requests Utilities

Request to Upload My Pending Requests My Approved Requests Denied Requests

Student Search
 Note: Birthdate (in mm/dd/yyyy format) and partial First Name and Last Name or SSID is required
 Last Name First Name DOB SSID
 Last Name First Name Date of Birth SSID

Selected Student
 Student Name DOB
 SSID Gender
 Local Id Grade

Request to Upload
 District To Upload: Select a District
 Comments (Optional)

Pre-Defined Document Selections
 Select School Exit Packet
 Initial IEP, Progress Reports, CELDT(unofficial), AB 216 Approved, Immunization Record, Transcripts
 Select AB 490 Package
 Folders IEP/Request for Service, Student Accountability / Progress Reports and Documents from Folder Health/Medical Development
 1) Immunization Records

TYPES OF NOTIFICATIONS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

INITIAL PLACEMENT NOTIFICATION (IPN)



The IPN is sent to a Children’s Social Worker. Below is an example of the email the CSW receives.

Initial Placement Notification

Hello CSW,
 You are receiving this email because an Initial Placement Packet was requested for your youth below.
 Per policy, the DCFS 1399 needs to be sent to the youth’s school; this ensures the school knows the youth’s foster care status as well as the new caregiver information. A copy should also be provided to the caregiver as well as the youth’s Education Rights Holder (caregiver’s information should be redacted if confidential).

School of Origin

All foster youth have the legal right to remain in their School of Origin. The School of Origin for a newly detained youth is the school the youth was attending at the time he/she was detained. Youth should remain in their School of Origin until a Best Interest Determination (BID) discussion can be held, at which point the Education Rights Holder (ERH) decides whether it is in the best interest of the child to remain in their school of origin.

CSW Recommended Steps

1. Keep the youth in their School of Origin unless the Education Rights Holder (ERH) decides it is not in the youth’s best interest to remain there.
2. Contact your office Education Specialist to consult about School of Origin and transportation options. Transportation options include Education Travel Reimbursement for the caregiver, school district transportation, public transportation or HopSkipDrive (if applicable). HopSkipDrive is available on a case-by-case basis and to be used only as a last resort. For your convenience, the Education Specialist is included on this email.
3. Make sure the youth has an active and available ERH. The ERH will be needed soon to participate in the Best Interest Determination (BID) discussion to decide whether or not it is in the youth’s best interest to remain in their school of origin. If the youth does not have an active and available ERH, then one will need to be assigned by Court. Consult policy about Appointment of an Educational Representative, if needed.
4. Be on the lookout for subsequent emails that connect you with the school district about this youth.

These steps will help ensure some stability for this youth while so many other disruptions may be taking place. Thank you for helping this youth.

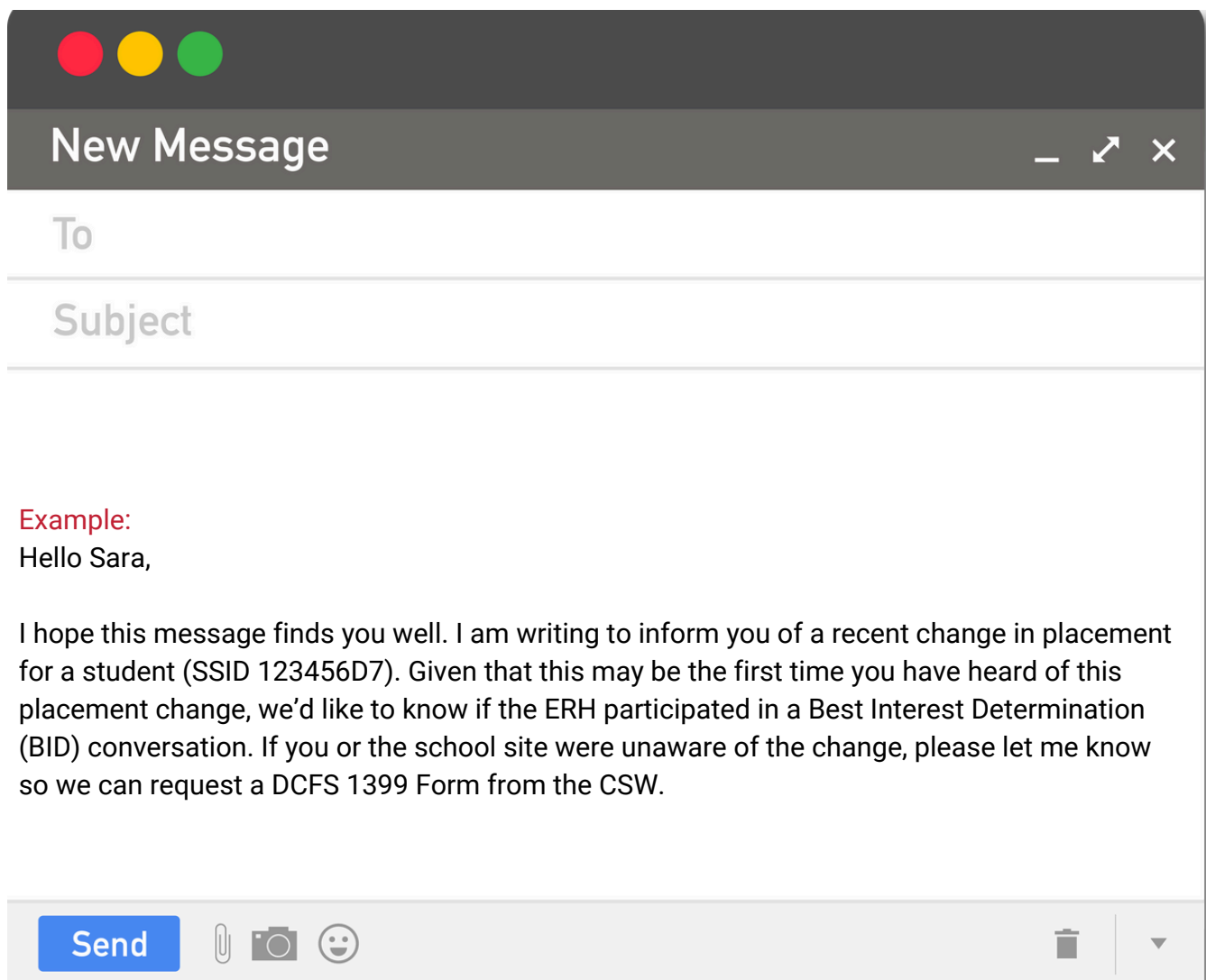
Student Name:	Date of Birth:	Child Client ID:	Office:	CSW Name:	SCSW Name:	Education Specialist:

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of LACOE. Please do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and expected the message.

TYPES OF NOTIFICATIONS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE FROM ED SPECIALIST

Below is a sample email that will be sent from an Education Specialist to a Foster Youth Liaison, notifying the LEA about a recent placement change and requesting a BID meeting.



The screenshot shows an email composition window with a dark header bar containing three colored circles (red, yellow, green) and the text "New Message". To the right of the header are icons for minimize, maximize, and close. Below the header are two input fields: "To" and "Subject". The main body of the email contains the following text:

Example:
Hello Sara,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to inform you of a recent change in placement for a student (SSID 123456D7). Given that this may be the first time you have heard of this placement change, we'd like to know if the ERH participated in a Best Interest Determination (BID) conversation. If you or the school site were unaware of the change, please let me know so we can request a DCFS 1399 Form from the CSW.

At the bottom of the window is a toolbar with a blue "Send" button, icons for attachments, camera, and emojis, and a trash can icon on the right.

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION

EC 48853.5(F)

The best interest determination (BID) includes the appropriateness of the current educational setting and proximity of placement (ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(E)(1)). The BID is to be facilitated by the school of origin, Foster Youth Liaison, in collaboration with the ERH and the student (when appropriate). The ERH makes the final decision to waive the student's school of origin rights.

What to Consider When Determining a Student's Best Interest

Legislation does not specify what to consider when waiving the right to the school of origin. In practice, considerations may include the student's unique strengths and needs.

Considerations include but are not limited to:

- Where does the student want to attend school?
- Which school does the education rights holder prefer the student to attend?
- How is the student performing (academically, socially and behaviorally)?
- Is the student involved in extracurricular activities at their school of origin?
- Does the school of origin or school of residence offer unique programs to meet the student's needs?
- How far is the school of origin from the new placement?
- Are there any safety concerns related to where the student attends school?
- How many schools has the student attended since entering care?



The student's CSW is not a mandatory participant, however, it is best practice to include them, as they can provide valuable case information that may be considered in the best interest determination.

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION

EC 48853.5(F)

How to Facilitate a Best Interest Determination Meeting

A best interest determination (BID) can be conducted in various formats—ideally in person, virtually or through a conference call. If all participants cannot meet simultaneously, they can be consulted individually. The crucial aspect is that the educational rights holder makes the final decision on school placement, prioritizing mutual understanding.

How to make a Best Interest Determination Recommendation

The Foster Youth Liaison, in consultation with and with the agreement of, the student in foster care and their educational rights holder, may recommend, in accordance with the student's best interests, that their right to attend the school of origin be waived and the student should be immediately enrolled in the school of residence.

Before recommending to move a student in foster care from their school of origin, the Foster Youth Liaison shall provide the student and their educational rights holder with a written explanation stating the basis for the recommendation and how it serves the student's best interests. If there is a dispute when making a decision, the student remains at their school of origin until it is resolved, per the current dispute resolution process.

How to Document the Best Interest Determination Meeting

The best interest determination can be documented in several places. It is highly encouraged that the Foster Youth Liaisons use the Los Angeles Educational Passport System (EPS), as you can indicate participants, dates and decisions in a safe online location. However, some LEAs may use their student information system (SIS) and include the decision in the student's cumulative folder.

How to Notify the Appropriate Parties after the Best Interest Determination

After the ERH determines the student's best interest, inform all parties of the outcome in writing.

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION

PARTICIPANTS

Mandatory

per EC 48853.5



District Liaison (District of Origin)

- Coordinate and convene the meeting
- Maintain an advisory role regarding placement and SOO
- Provide feedback on student
- Maintain and distribute documentation



Educational Rights Holder

- Provide input regarding the student
- Makes final decision regarding SOO



Student (when appropriate)

- Communicate their school preference

Highly Encouraged



Children's Social Worker (CSW)

- Provide relevant case information*



Others

- Child's Attorney, Caregiver, IEP Team, General Education Teacher(s), Counselor, School Psychologist, *Ed Specialists or other outside agencies and advocates.



District Liaison (District of Residence)

- Participate in BID and provide information regarding services available at the school

*While not mandatory, they provide valuable input for BID meetings.

CONTACT INFORMATION



01- County Social Worker

Educational Passport System (EPS). If the information is not included, email the DCFS YES Inbox - youth.education.support@dcfs.lacounty.gov and they will provide the CSW information.



02- Minor's Attorney

To find the student's attorney's name and phone number within Los Angeles County, call The Children's Law Center at 323-980-1700.



03- Educational Rights Holder (ERH)

EPS stores JV 535 forms issued by the court, signifying a shift in the ERH. If this data isn't in EPS, send an inquiry to the DCFS YES Inbox - youth.education.support@dcfs.lacounty.gov.

Please note, by sending an inquiry to the DCFS, YES inbox, this does NOT fulfill the notification process. The YES inbox, only provides information and will not forward onto the minor's CSW.



04- Tribal Social Worker

This information comes from self-identification by the family or tribe.

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION FOR SCHOOL OF ORIGIN & TRANSPORTATION

MEETING FORM

Time & Location:

Student's Name: _____ **Date :** _____ **Current Grade:** _____

New Placement Address: _____ **LEA of Residence:** _____

School of Residence & Address: _____ **School(s) of Origin & Address(es):** _____

District(s) of Origin: _____

Date of Enrollment: _____ **How long has the student attended the SOO?** _____ **Miles from placement to SOO:** _____ **Time of travel to SOO:** _____

1. BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION FOR SCHOOL OF ORIGIN CHECKLIST	Yes	No
Does the student have strong ties to SOO (siblings, friends, extracurricular activities)?		
Is the student underperforming academically and a school transfer could cause the student to fall further behind?		
Is the student having anxiety related issues related to placement/school change?		
Would removing the student from their SOO have a negative affect on their social/emotional state?		
Are there safety concerns related to remaining in the SOO?		
Does the transfer timing conflict with important points, like testing, semester end or school year end?		
Will the distance of the commute to the SOO negatively impact the student's education and/or special needs?		
Is the student's new placement temporary / uncertain / relative / long term (if yes to one, circle)?		
Will the continuity offered by remaining in their SOO be beneficial?		
Will a new school setting offer benefits to the student's academic and social well being?		
Best Interest Determination for School of Origin		
Based on the best interest determination, the student shall remain at their school of origin.		
Based on the best interest determination, the student and ERH waive their right to school of origin, and the student will be enrolled in the school of residence. The student will enroll in the school of residence on: _____ Records transferred to new school on: _____		
<p><i>Note: If a change in educational placement is needed, enrollment and all educational records should be provided to the new school/district immediately.</i></p>		
A determination could not be made. The student will remain in their school of origin until a determination can be made.		

Note: If it is determined that it is in the student's best interest to remain in their school of origin, please complete the transportation questionnaire below.

2. TRANSPORTATION TO SCHOOL OF ORIGIN QUESTIONNAIRE		Yes	No
Does the student have an IEP or 504 Plan?			
Is the student receiving door-to-door transportation as a provision of their IEP?			
Is the student residing outside of the LEA?			
Is the student residing outside of the SELPA?			
Is the caregiver able to transport the student to their school of origin?			
Has the caregiver been offered travel reimbursement from DCFS?			
Is the student able to ride public transportation?			
Are there any bus routes that stop near the student's current placement?			
The most appropriate transportation plan for this student:			
Caregiver will transport the student to and from school.			
DCFS will provide caregiver with travel reimbursement.			
LEA of origin will provide transportation to and from school. <input type="checkbox"/> The student has transportation written into their IEP and will continue to be transported. <input type="checkbox"/> LEA will arrange busing for transportation. <input type="checkbox"/> Other arrangements include: _____			
Student will be provided with a bus pass to ride public transportation to and from school.			
A private car vendor will transport the student per the long-term transportation MOU.			
Other arrangements include: _____			

Student				
District Liaison				
Educational Rights Holder (ERH)				
Children's Social Worker (CSW)				
Resource Parent				
School Counselor				
Minor's Attorney				
School of Residence Representative				
CASA				
STRTP Staff				
Other				

TRANSPORTATION

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires every state educational agency to collaborate with the state child welfare agency to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care, including assurances that they remain in their school of origin (SOO) when determined to be in their best interest.

ESSA also provides an opportunity to share responsibility for arranging transportation to a student's school of origin. Further, it requires LEAs receiving Title I, Part A funds to collaborate with State or local child welfare agencies to develop and implement clear written procedures governing how transportation to maintain children in their school of origin will be provided, arranged and funded. Those procedures must ensure that:

- Students in foster care who need transportation will receive it promptly, in a cost-effective manner and in accordance with the State's ability to use Title IV-E (foster care) funds.
- If no additional costs are incurred in providing school of origin transportation for students in foster care, the LEA should provide the transportation.
- If there are additional costs incurred, the LEA will provide transportation only if:
 - the local child welfare agency agrees to reimburse the expenses;
 - the LEA agrees to pay the costs or
 - the LEA and local child welfare agency agree to share the cost.

The mode of transportation selected should be an individualized decision considering what is developmentally appropriate for each child or youth.

TRANSPORTATION

CONTINUED

Some students will require transportation to remain in their school of origin, when in their best interest.

Who is Eligible to Receive Transportation?

Students who are placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency (including probation) has placement and care responsibility.

Note: If a student returns to the home of their parent(s), they are entitled to remain in their SOO through the end of the academic year unless they are in high school. In this case, they can stay in their SOO through graduation. Best practice is to support the student and family with transportation. However, the LEA's responsibility to provide transportation ceases.

Considerations in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County has opted to use a cost-share option which includes the following:

- Transportation costs via a private car vendor are split evenly between DCFS and the LEA
- Dispute resolution process

Any LEA may contract individually with a private transportation vendor and incur 100% of the total cost.

If your LEA is interested in signing on to the Long-Term Transportation Plan to Ensure School Stability for Foster Care Youth, contact Jennifer Higuchi, hwangj@dcs.lacounty.gov or Daisy Garza, garzad2@dcs.lacounty.gov.



Transportation is a related service in the IEP for students with disabilities, not for accessing school of origin transportation without justification.

TRANSPORTATION

CONTINUED

Stop-Gap Transportation

A temporary method of transportation until the best interest of the student is determined.

Immediate option which ensures SOO (school last attended) rights to the student the day after removal from their home or after a change of placement.

This is intended to be temporary and should only be used until a best interest determination has been established and a long-term method of transportation has been identified.

Long-Term Transportation

Developing a long-term transportation plan.

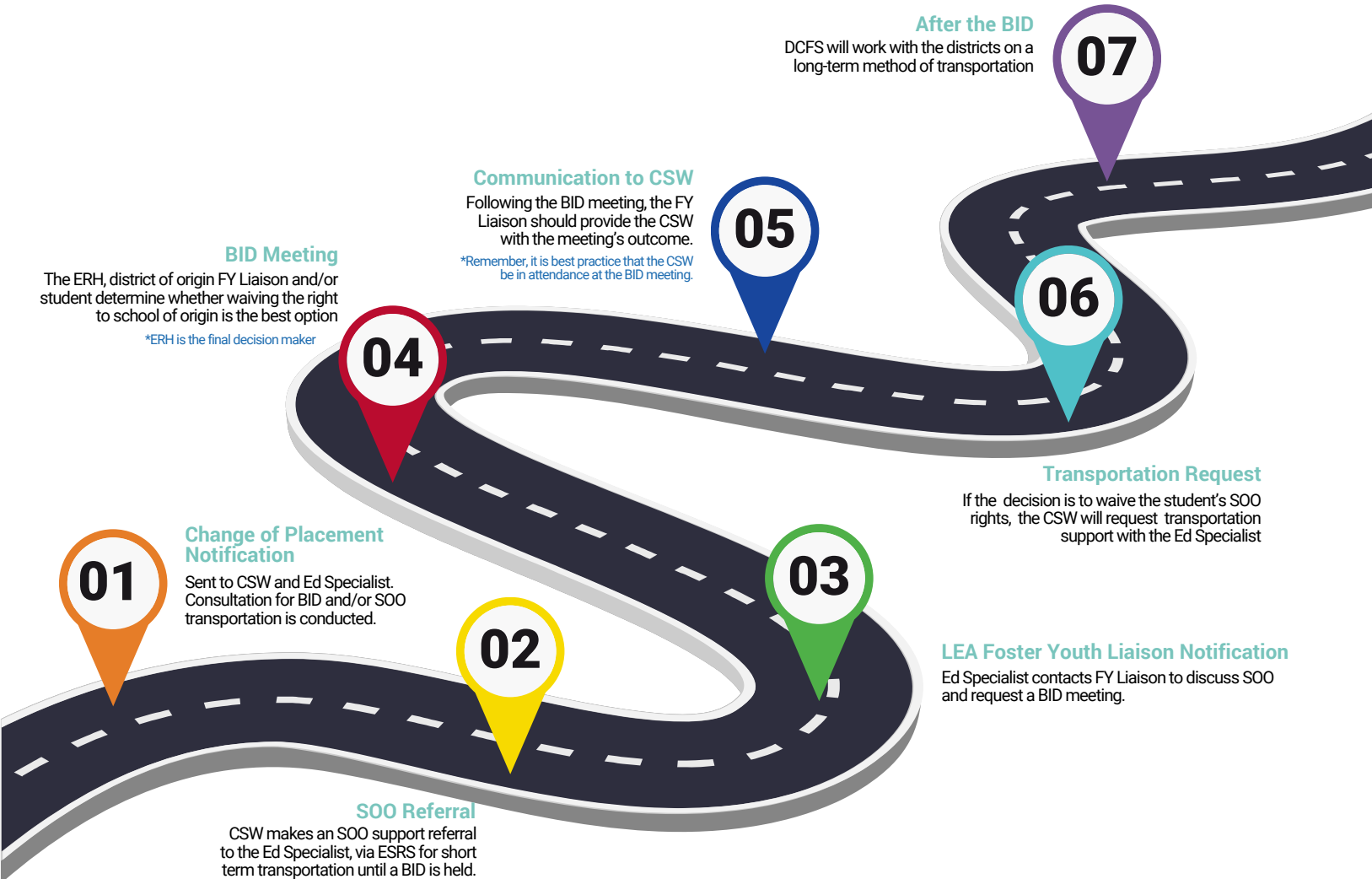
If it is determined that a student's best interest is to remain in their school of origin, DCFS and the LEA shall collaboratively develop a long-term plan to provide transportation.

There are many options to consider when identifying a developmentally appropriate source of transportation for a student. Below are some, but not all, options an LEA and child welfare agency may consider:

- Caregivers (may qualify for travel reimbursement)
- School bus
- Public transportation
- Private car vendor
- Coordinate with a neighboring district to split transportation responsibilities by transporting to the district border.
- Determine if transportation is appropriate as a 'related service' for students receiving special education services.
- Check eligibility for transportation through external sources like Medicaid for medically fragile children or ADA for eligible children with disabilities.

A TRANSPORTATION ROADMAP

FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY LEAS SHARING COSTS WITH CHILD WELFARE



A student's educational rights holder determines the student's best interest regarding school placement.

STUDENT DISENROLLMENT

A student should not be disenrolled without a best interest determination. The District Foster Youth Liaison should be contacted by staff before a student in foster care is disenrolled.

- Improper tracking or a lack of procedures can result in multiple unexcused absences, which may impact a student's grade.
- Incomplete records complicate enrollment. Requiring students to repeat completed courses may result in a violation of their educational rights ([EC 51225.2](#)).
- Improper credit(s) and grade distribution may result in a credit deficiency or a repeat of classes.
- Inaccurate data collection from district, county, state and federal agencies occurs when staff improperly disenroll students, which affects funding to LEAs.

If a student is dropped/exited in error, notify the FY Liaison to merge attendance, schedules and grades into one enrollment after re-enrollment.

Proper disenrollment procedures are crucial to the student's educational outcomes. The best practice would be to implement the following practices in each school.

- Notify the District Foster Youth Liaison immediately if school staff is informed that the student will not return under any circumstances.
- The District Foster Youth Liaison ensures staff notifies them before disenrolling a student and facilitates the BID meeting.
- To ensure no gaps in school attendance, a student should not be prevented from enrolling in the school of residence if the BID was not completed.
- If a records request is received, verify that the educational rights holder and student (if appropriate) have been consulted regarding the student's best interest. However, during that time, LEAs must still fulfill the records request within two business days.

STUDENT DISENROLLMENT

CONTINUED

Here are recommended practices for addressing common scenarios that may cause a student to be disenrolled.

Student is Newly Enrolled, However, They are not in Attendance by the 5th day of the new School Year

- Do not disenroll the student.
- The school site should make several attempts to contact the (resource) parent of record and the CSW.

Student has Three or More Consecutive Days of Unverified Absences

- Call the (resource) parent of record.
- If the absence can not be verified, call the student's CSW.
- If you can not reach a parent or CSW by phone, mail a letter to the (resource) parent and CSW.
- Conduct a home visit to the last address of record.
- If it is discovered that the student:
 - Was absent, change the unverified attendance to the appropriate attendance code.
 - Had a change of home placement that resulted in a school change, school site staff should contact the District Foster Youth Liaison to initiate a BID.

Records Request is Received

- Contact the (resource) parent to verify that the student has been moved from their home.
- If the student has experienced a placement change, initiate a BID immediately.
 - Records do not need to be forwarded if the student is to return to the school of origin.
 - If the student stays at the new school of residence, send the complete cumulative file, including special education records, within 2 business days of the request.
- If a student is enrolled in a new district but remains in the care and home of the same resource parent, it is important to verify that the student's educational rights holder made the decision student.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

If the educational rights holder determines it is in the student's best interest to waive their right to attend their school of origin (SOO) and enroll in their school of residence (SOR):

Student in foster care must be immediately enrolled in school regardless of their lack of:

- academic or other relevant records;
- immunizations;
- an IEP or Section 504 paperwork; or
- status pursuant to WIC 602, or any contact with the juvenile justice system.

Students in foster care may lack awareness of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) upon enrollment. Contacting the previous school is important to obtain missing records and verify the existence of an IEP.

If records are lacking, school personnel will help locate and request records, but this should not delay or preclude a student from attending school.

The enrollment paperwork must be started on the day of arrival, along with course placement and class participation.

School staff play a critical role in helping maintain a student's stability in foster care.

Questions to ask the person enrolling the student:

- Is the student you are enrolling in foster care or on probation?
- Do you know who holds the educational rights for your student?
- What school did your student last attend?
- Has anyone had a conversation with you about your student's right to remain at their school of origin?
- Do you happen to have a DCFS 1399 Form?
- Is there any circumstance of which we should be aware?

IEP CONSIDERATIONS

The educational journey for foster youth in special education demands careful attention to the challenges associated with school stability.

- A crucial 30-day placement IEP meeting is best practice after a school placement change, emphasizing the least restrictive environment and necessary services.
- If a student has an IEP, the new school must expedite obtaining and implementing it before the 30-day review to ensure seamless integration of support systems.
- Best practice is to invite students to attend their IEP meetings; even students in elementary school can participate and help make IEP team decisions.
- Students must be enrolled even if the school/LEA does not have a copy of the IEP at the time of enrollment. The new school should make every effort to obtain the student's IEP and enroll the student in a parallel placement.
- If there is a delay in enrolling a student with an IEP, the new school must continue to provide educational access. This could be temporary enrollment in independent study with IEP services sent to the student's home.
- Coordination between educational institutions is vital when a student undergoing an assessment transitions to a new school.
- Assessments in progress cannot be transferred; the new school will need a new request for assessments and the timeframe re-sets.
- Educational services appropriate for the student are delineated in their IEP, including potential placement in a non-public school (NPS).



A BID considers maintaining school stability even if the student is enrolled in an NPS. It cannot be used to place them in one.

IEP CONSIDERATIONS

CONTINUED

- Local control in school districts varies, necessitating adherence to best practices for a seamless educational transition for students with IEPs who are changing schools.
- The special education team is not a mandatory participant in the BID meeting. However, it is best practice to include an IEP team member(s) who may provide information related to the services the student receives.
- Consult your legal counsel for guidance related to specific facts of your case.

By navigating the intricacies of school stability with diligence and compassion, educators and administrators contribute significantly to the well-being and educational attainment of youth in foster care receiving special education services.

BEST PRACTICES FOR AN LEA

Enrollment / Disenrollment Processes

- Train front office staff, registrars, teachers, counselors, administrators and other relevant personnel.
- Introduce new students to support staff at the school site.
- Remember, ESSA mandates school of origin and best interest determinations.
- Communicate enrollment issues and create a student-centered approach to problem-solving.
- Ensure local foster youth identification is consistent, frequent and formalized.
- Ensure that appropriate CALPADS Exit Codes are utilized.
- Request education rights holder information at enrollment
 - Enrollment documents
 - DCFS 1399 Form
 - LACOE Education Specialist, or DCFS Youth Education Support (YES) inbox
- Track enrollment and disenrollment of students identified as “foster.”
- Establish a connection. Support student engagement with their new school via participation in school activities, both during and after school.
- Increase collaboration and communication with child welfare agencies to ensure the proper transfer of records and updates regarding placement changes.

Collaborate with your local child welfare agency

- Inform parents and the community about the steps to become a resource (foster) parent to promote school stability within your community.
- Advocate for students to remain stable until an educationally appropriate time (end of semester/school year).

Collaborate with other districts and the County Office of Education

- In Los Angeles County, this may be achieved by participating in your local Regional Learning Network (RLN) meetings hosted by the LACOE, Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP).
- Participate in data-sharing agreements with your County Office of Education.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



What is a group home or Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP) role in providing transportation to a youth's school of origin?

A: Youth in STRTPs have the right to SOO transportation. Per state regulations, STRTPs are solely responsible for providing and funding transportation to an SOO for youth within their care. If you have any questions or concerns about youth in an STRTP receiving transportation, please reach out to the Ombudsperson for Youth in STRTPs: afriend@auditor.lacounty.gov or the DCFS YES inbox: youth.education.support@dcs.lacounty.gov

What if I cannot reach the CSW?

A: If you cannot reach the CSW, contact the Supervising Children's Social Worker (SCSW). If you still have not received a response, contact the DCFS YES inbox at youth.education.support@dcs.lacounty.gov for assistance.

How does one proceed without an ERH being identified or available when a placement change occurs?

A: Contact the CSW and child's attorney to request a JV 535 form from the court. If you have trouble verifying the assigned attorney, please contact our Court Liaison at courtsupport@lacoed.edu.

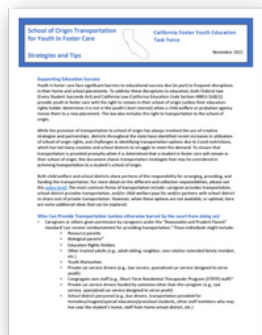
How should a District Foster Youth Liaison proceed if the CSW has stated that the school move has been approved?

A: CSWs do not have the authority to make a school placement decision, although this has been practiced for years. A liaison could contact the assigned DCFS office's Education Specialist for case assistance when this happens. The Education Specialist can contact the CSW to help educate on SOO.

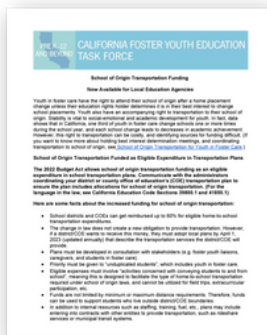
Are non-public schools considered School of Origin?

A: Non-public, nonsectarian schools meet the definition of SOO as amended in EC Sections 48853.5, 48853.5, 56366.1 and 56366.10.

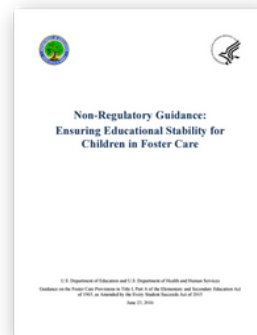
RESOURCES



[School of Origin Transportation for Youth in Foster Care](#)



[California Foster Youth Education Task Force SOO Transportation Funding](#)



[Non-Regulatory Guidance](#)



[FYSCP Technical Assistance Website](#)



[Education Travel Reimbursement](#)

CONTACTS

Los Angeles County Office of Education: Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program [website](#)

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services: School of Origin Inbox: schooloforigin@dcfs.lacounty.gov

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services: Youth Education Support (YES) Inbox: youth.education.support@dcfs.lacounty.gov

California Department of Education: FosterYouth@cde.ca.gov

Los Angeles County Department of Probation: Call 866-931-2222 or email pic@probation.lacounty.gov

Children's Law Center (CLC) Email: clceducation@clcla.org

LACOE Court Support Email: courtsupport@lacoedu.edu

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**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program.

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