

# School Stability and Education Continuity for CFSA Students

## CFSA Blueprint Strategy

August 2015

## Factsheet #2

School stability is critical for the permanency and educational success for children in CFSA custody.

Social workers need to prioritize school stability and quality best interest decision making in school decisions. These **5 tips can help**.

**Office of Well Being staff** are here to help. Contact us with questions:

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For more information, visit <http://cfsa.dc.gov/page/educationresources>

- 1. Maintain child in the school of origin, unless not in the child's best interest.** When an initial removal or foster care placement change occurs, the social worker must **work to ensure the child or youth remains in the school of origin, unless it is not in the child's best interest.** This is done in partnership with the social worker's supervisor, CFSA's Placement Services Administration (PSA), the education decision-maker, and the education specialist. The child will remain in the school of origin until a best interest decision is finalized, unless there is a safety risk.
- 2. Make thoughtful and informed best interest decisions.** Social workers or their supervisor are ultimately responsible for teaming with other key individuals to determine if a child or youth will remain in his/her school of origin. Team meetings, including any R.E.D. Team or Family Team Meetings (FTM) serve as opportunities for team members to discuss school placement needs.
  - **Use Decision-Making Guide when making school placement decisions.** The School Placement Decision-Making Guide was created to support social workers in the best interest decision-making process for determining the most appropriate school placement. Be sure to consider the following factors (at a minimum):
    - 1) Personal safety of the child
    - 2) Individual instructional needs
    - 3) Time remaining in the school year
    - 4) Other strengths and/or needs of the child
  - **Document all best interest decisions in FACES.NET.** Every time a school placement best interest decision is made, the following information must be entered by the social worker in the FACES.NET case plan and relevant education screens: 1) the child's school placement decision and the best interest factors that were considered; 2) date of enrollment, and 3) date

- **Provide notice of right to appeal.** If a parent, legal guardian, foster parent, age-appropriate child, and/or youth communicates concern or is aggrieved by the CFSA's school placement decision, the social worker shall provide information to the individual of the right to appeal the decision.
  - **Reassess best interest decisions periodically.** If the child was enrolled in a new school before the start of the next school year and/or every 6 months (whichever comes sooner), the social worker will need to re-assess the appropriateness of the student's school placement and take action as needed. The social worker must document any subsequent best interest determinations about the child's school placement in FACES.NET.
3. **Immediately enroll student in a new school.** When attending the school of origin is not in the best interest of the child, the social worker must work with the school to ensure the child's immediate enrollment in, and transfer of records to, the new school no later than two (2) business days after enrollment. The social worker or the supervisor must ensure that immediate enrollment occurs in the new school.
- The social worker shall work with the team to ensure the child is transported to the school of origin until proper supports are in place for the new school placement.
  - The transition to the new school must include the submitting of all necessary school enrollment forms, providing proper notice of the transition to the sending and receiving schools, and ensuring that school records are transferred to the new school.
  - When the child needs to enroll in any school outside of DC, the Office of Well Being needs to be involved to ensure a tuition contract is finalized.
4. **Ensure all school supports are in place, whether a child remained in the same school or enrolled in a one.** Once the child's team determines the most appropriate school placement, the social worker must follow all procedures to maintain the child in the school of origin or re-enroll the child in school. Necessary supports, such as transportation and special education services, must be considered, planned for, and implemented.
5. **Address transportation promptly and efficiently.** The team shall discuss the transportation needs and explore all available options for getting the child to/from school each day (e.g., family members, resource parent, and public transportation). If the child cannot take public transportation (e.g., due to age, physical limitations, etc.), legitimate barriers prevent the resource parent from providing daily transportation (e.g., conflict with work schedule, distance), and no alternative family resources are available, private transportation may be required. In this case, the social worker must make a referral to the Office of Well Being by submitting an e-

## School Stability Resources

Use these CFSA resources to support your work:

- [Best Interest Decision Making Guide](#)
- [Education Information Form](#)  
(use for each new school year and upon entry into care)
- [Education Change Form](#) (use for school changes throughout the year)
- [Fair Hearing forms](#)
- [Universal E referral form for transportation requests](#)

## New Post Permanency Stability Protection: Education Continuity Act of 2014

(Effective October 1, 2014) referral form to [cfsa.wellbeing@dc.gov](mailto:cfsa.wellbeing@dc.gov).

- Transportation can take up to 3 business days to arrange.

- Applies to former CFSA foster youth enrolled in DC public schools.
- These youth may be considered DC residents and allowed to remain enrolled in DC schools after being adopted or attaining permanent legal guardianship by a family in Maryland or Virginia
- These youth are exempt from paying out-of-state tuition for up to 3 years.