



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Bureau of Indian Education  
1849 C Street NW, MIB-3610  
Washington, DC 20240

## [School Name] Foster Care Plan

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Under the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Section 1112(c)(5)(B) Title I educational stability provisions, each school district shall have a Foster Care Plan developed and disseminated to all stakeholders.

In Section 1111(c)(5) of ESSA, the school district must collaborate with the Child Welfare Agency and Tribal Child Welfare Agencies (CWA) to implement the Title I educational stability provisions. Therefore, each school district shall develop a clear, written Foster Care Plan. As such, the Foster Care Plan for [SCHOOL NAME] shall be as follows:

### FOSTER CARE POINT OF CONTACT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The [SCHOOL NAME] will designate at least one person as the Foster Care Point of Contact (POC). The POC may also be the homeless student coordinator. This designation will be updated annually. If additional staff members are needed to meet the requirements, the [SCHOOL NAME] will make assignments as deemed necessary. The POC will work in the child's best interests to ensure that all educational requirements are being met.

The POC will work closely with the Child Welfare Agency (CWA) to:

- Coordinate with the corresponding child welfare agency POC to implement Title I provisions;
- Lead the development of a process for making the best interest determination;
- Document the best interest determination;
- Facilitate the transfer of records and immediate enrollment;
- Facilitate data sharing with the child welfare agencies, consistent with FERPA and other privacy protocols;
- Develop and coordinate local transportation procedures;
- Manage best interest determinations and transportation cost disputes;
- Ensure that children in foster care are enrolled in and regularly attending school; and
- Provide professional development and training to school staff on Title I provisions and educational needs of children in foster care, as needed.

### DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

A committee will meet to determine if the school of origin is not in the best interest of each foster care child and the appropriate placement of the child. The committee will be comprised

of the site administrator or representative, the POC, and a member of the CWA. In emergency circumstances the CWA has the authority to make an immediate decision regarding the school placement, and then consult with the LEA and revisit the best interest determination of the child.

In the event of a disagreement regarding school placement for a child in foster care, the CWA will be considered the final decision maker in making the best interest determination. The CWA is uniquely positioned to assess vital non-educational factors such as safety, sibling placements, the child's permanency goal, and other components of the case plan. The CWA also has the authority, capacity, and responsibility to collaborate with and gain information from multiple parties including parents, children, schools and the court in making these decisions.

## **DOCUMENTATION OR RECORDS SHARED BETWEEN PARTIES**

Foster care parents, social workers or other legal guardians will be allowed to immediately enroll children in foster care in the school district without having the necessary paperwork (birth certificates, shot records, academic records, special education records, etc.) This is to help aid the student with a smooth transition into the district. The receiving school district will contact the school district of origin for the records and make adaptations as needed. After enrollment, the following guardianship or legal custody documents shall be provided for verification by the foster family or CWA:

- Power of Attorney
- Affidavit
- Court Order

[SCHOOL NAME] will share education records with the CWA that are allowed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other state privacy laws. This allows educational agencies to disclose educational records, including IDEA, of students in foster care to the CWA without parental consent.

## **COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE**

The POC will meet with the site administrator, school counselor, classroom teacher, and foster parent(s) as needed to discuss the child's progress in foster care and will document the results of meetings. All decisions will be made utilizing a collaborative team approach to determine what is in the child's best interest.

## **BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION DOCUMENT REGARDING SCHOOL PLACEMENT**

[SCHOOL NAME] shall utilize a sample form (located at the end of this policy) to make a "best interest" determination for each child in foster care. The CWA will make the final determination as to what is in the child's best interest (school of origin or receiving school).

## **TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES**

Children in foster care will be entitled to transportation services in the same manner as all other children in the school district. In addition to regular transportation routes, the school district will collaborate with the CWA when transportation is required to maintain children placed in foster care in a school of origin outside their usual attendance area or district when it is in the best interest of the student. Under the supervision of [School's Designee], the POC will invite appropriate district officials, the CWA, and officials from other districts or agencies to promptly arrange cost-effective transportation for the student.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND COSTS RELATED TO STUDENT TRANSPORTATION**

[SCHOOL NAME] will collaborate with the CWA to develop and implement clear, written procedures governing how transportation is provided to maintain children in foster care in their schools of origin. The school district will also work with the CWA to reach an agreement regarding covering the transportation costs. The agreement will cover how the transportation will be provided, arranged, and funded for the duration of the child's time in foster care. Each agreement can/will vary greatly because each child's unique needs should be considered when deciding on transportation.

## **IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT AND RECORD TRANSFERS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE**

[BOARD NAME] Board of Education has modified existing board policy to eliminate any barriers to enrollment and/or transfer of educational records for children in foster care.

## Best Interest Determination Evaluation

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Child's Name:

Birthday:

Age:

Grade:

Date:

Current District:

Current Site:

The student will remain in the current school unless consideration of the following factors indicates a change of school placement is in the child's best interest. (Check all that apply.)

For the following questions, School of Origin will be (A), Receiving School will be (B) and Other Previous School Attended will be (C).

1. Which school will better meet the relational needs of the child? (Select all that apply.)
  - a. Siblings: ☐A ☐B ☐C
  - b. Relationship with Peers: ☐A ☐B ☐C
  - c. Relationships with Staff: ☐A ☐B ☐C
  - d. Describe the relationship connections at current school:
  - e. List strategies for maintaining important connections should other best interest determination be made:
2. Which school will better meet the individual academic needs and challenges of the child? (Select all that apply.)
  - a. IEP: ☐A ☐B ☐C
  - b. 504 Plan: ☐A ☐B ☐C
  - c. Gifted Program: ☐A ☐B ☐C
  - d. Career Tech: ☐A ☐B ☐C
  - e. EL Services: ☐A ☐B ☐C
3. Which school will better meet the social/emotional needs and challenges of the child? (Select all that apply.)
  - a. Social: ☐A ☐B ☐C
  - b. Emotional: ☐A ☐B ☐C
  - c. Safety: ☐A ☐B ☐C
4. Which school will better meet the unique needs and interests of the child? (Select all that apply.)
  - a. Extracurricular Activities: ☐A ☐B ☐C

- b. Sports: ☐A ☐B ☐C
- c. Other: ☐A ☐B ☐C
- d. Student will describe the areas of desired school involvement:
- e. Which school will best meet the permanency goal and likelihood of reunification with parents or siblings?
5. Which school is more appropriate for the child's age and length of travel? ☐A ☐B ☐C
- a. Explain:
- b. Describe the child's transfer history:
6. Which school does the student prefer to attend? ☐A ☐B ☐C
- a. Explain:
7. Which school does the caregiver or current placement provider recommends the student attend? ☐A ☐B ☐C
- a. Explain:
8. Identify strategies for successful transition to new school and/or support in current school:

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Attach any supporting documentation used to determine best interest of child:

- ☐ Report Cards
- ☐ Progress Reports
- ☐ Achievement Data (test scores)
- ☐ Attendance Data
- ☐ IEP or Section 504 Plans
- ☐ Other:

## DETERMINATION

Based on the information provided and considering the best interest of the child, the team has determined the following school is the most appropriate educational placement for the child:

**Team Members**

LEA Representative:

CWA Representative:

Education Decision Maker:

Other: