

Foster Care and Education Improving Practices and Understanding Processes

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County Schools

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Outline of Session



- A brief overview of ESSA and guidelines for districts
- Best Practices and Collaboration for educators and Student Support Services
- Moore County Schools Foster Care numbers and Collaborations
- Assuring stability and eliminating barriers to enrollment
- Foster Care Vs. Kinship Care
- Mandated Reporting/Trail Placements

Why Assure Educational Stability?

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE Children in foster care are often a vulnerable and highly mobile student population

- Children in foster care typically make more unscheduled school changes than their peers in a given school year
- Compared to their peers, students in foster care experience:
 - LOWER high school graduation rates
 - LOWER scores on academic assessments
 - HIGHER rates of grade retention, chronic absenteeism, suspensions, and expulsions

ESSA



EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT OF 2015

- **Reauthorizes and amends the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)**
- **Requires States to report on achievement and graduation rates for children in foster care**
- **Includes new foster care provisions that complement requirements in the Fostering Connections Act**
- **Emphasizes shared agency responsibility/decision making**

Best Interest Determination Meetings

Assessing the needs of the student

ESSA outline districts must provide assurances that:

- **Children in foster care enroll or remain in the school of origin unless there is a determination that it is not in his or her best interest to attend the school of origin**
- **The best interest determination must be based on all child-centered factors, including:**
 - **Appropriateness of the current educational setting**
 - **Proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement**

Best Practices at School Level

Data Managers

When a Foster child is enrolling assure there is an **Immediate enrollment form** from the Moore County School's Foster Care Point of Contact. If form is missing direct the CWA's or Foster Parent to contact the Foster Care POC.

School Social Workers

Ensure students attendance and any expulsions be reported to Foster Care Point of Contact or DSS worker.

Best Practices At School Level

Teachers

Provide a friendly environment, ask about classroom practices they experienced that helped them academically. Assess for gaps in bench marks and report to Foster Parent, School Social Worker, or Foster Care Point of Contact. (especially if you suspect a substantial delay)

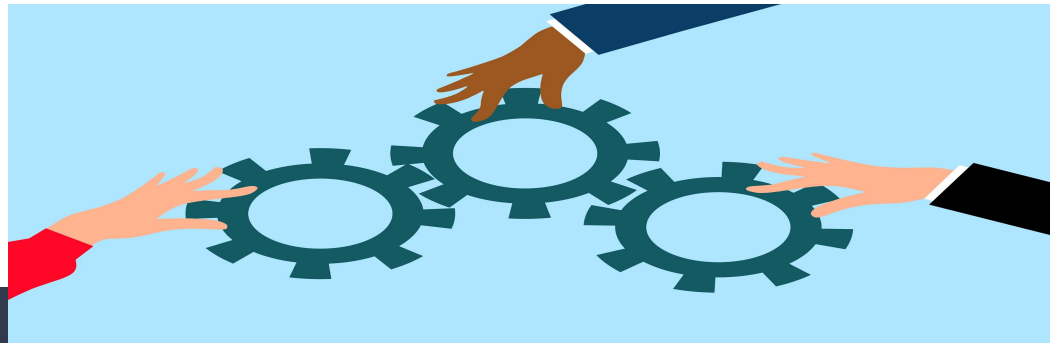
Guidance Counselors 6-12

Discuss grades with students assure any low grades are not discrepancies due to placement changes. Find out interest and former course and align as close as possible. Inform of extra-curricular activities and clubs encourage participation.

- Transportation must be provided in a “cost-effective” manner, so low-cost/no-cost options should be explored
- Even if an LEA doesn’t transport other students, it must ensure that transportation is provided to children in foster care consistent with procedures developed in collaboration with CWAs
- Transportation is an allowable use of federal funds, both under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act and Title I of the ESEA
- All funding sources should be maximized to ensure costs are not unduly burdensome on one agency

Transportation Requirements

- LEAs and CWAs should work together to agree on costs
- Transportation procedures should include a dispute resolution process if parties can't come to agreement
- A child must remain in his or her school of origin while any disputes regarding transportation costs are being resolved
- Foster Care Point of Contacts and CWA's workers work collaboratively to ensure Best Interest of Foster Child.



Transportation

Moore County Schools Youth in Foster Care



- 31 Foster care Enrollment District wide
- 9 cases were out of County Placements
- Estimate 13 Foster Care youth had 1 or more placement changes during the school year.
- Foster Students may need immediate school supplies if disruption was sudden

#1 Cross Agency
Collaboration is critical to
create innovative change and
stability for students in the
Foster Care System!

child care kid family
daughter parenthood happiness
adopting fostered parenting together
baby secure joy foster care
caregiver positive outcome foster
foster stability mother together
support friendship father mother
commitment childhood life

Foster care provision

- Immediate enrollment

Who is in Foster Care

- Kinship Placement vs.
Foster care Placement



Immediate Enrollment

School Districts must provide assurances that:

- If it's not in the child's best interest to stay in his or her school of origin, the student must be immediately enrolled in the new school, even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment
- The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended to obtain relevant academic and other records (sometime educational records are received through BID Meeting and forwarded from FC Point of Contact)

Enrollment

- Child can't be denied enrollment because they don't have proper documentation
- Enrollment means more than technically registered. ESEA defines enrollment as, "attending classes and participating fully in school activities" (ESEA, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(1))
- Child should also be attending classes and receiving appropriate academic services [Foster Care Immediate Enrollment Form](#)

Training

Youth in Foster Care:

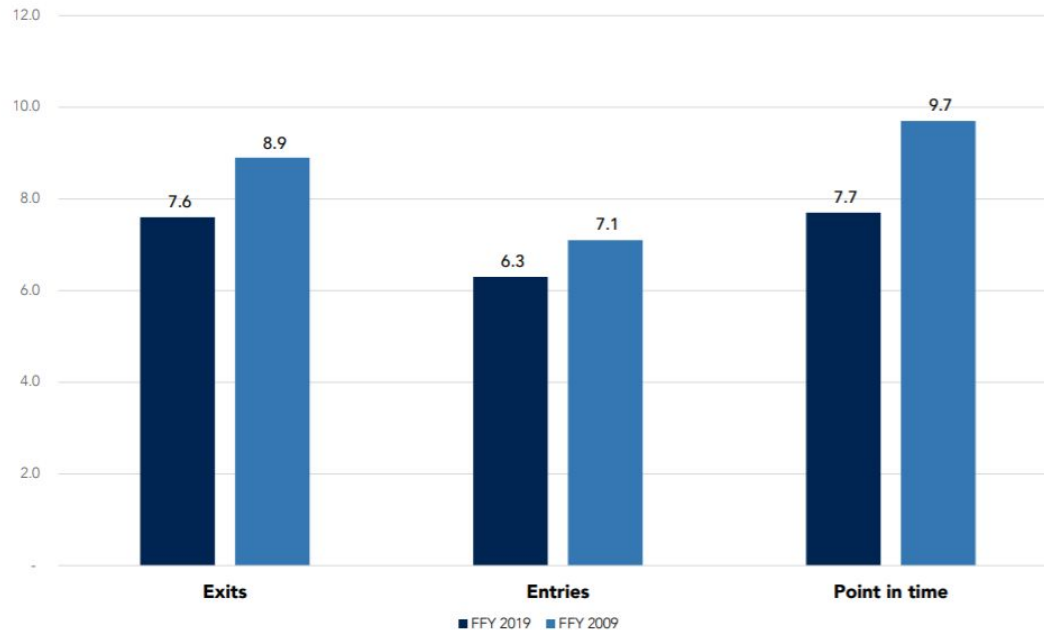
- A non secure order will accompany students enrollment
- Foster Parents or CWA's worker may enroll students. (Each county is different if CWA or Foster families indicate problems enrolling contact FC point of contact to alleviate barriers.
- DSS has custody of child, special circumstances and orders will be listed in the Non-Secure Custody order or on Immediate Enrollment form.
- Every case is different but removal from home environment indicates an unsafe living environment for child. (School Social Workers and FC POC work collaboratively with CWA's to assure student SEL needs are addressed.)

Assessment of Needs

- **Thousands** of children in North Carolina enter the foster care system each year, and range in age from infants to 18 years old.
- All foster children have unique backgrounds, experiences, personalities, strengths and needs.
- Some children in foster care require extensive care for physical or emotional handicaps and disabilities.
- Some also require help with undisciplined and delinquent behaviors.
- Most foster children do not have a strong sense of belonging or self-worth.
- Many have been victims of physical or sexual abuse. All children who are in foster care require special care, support and nurturing.

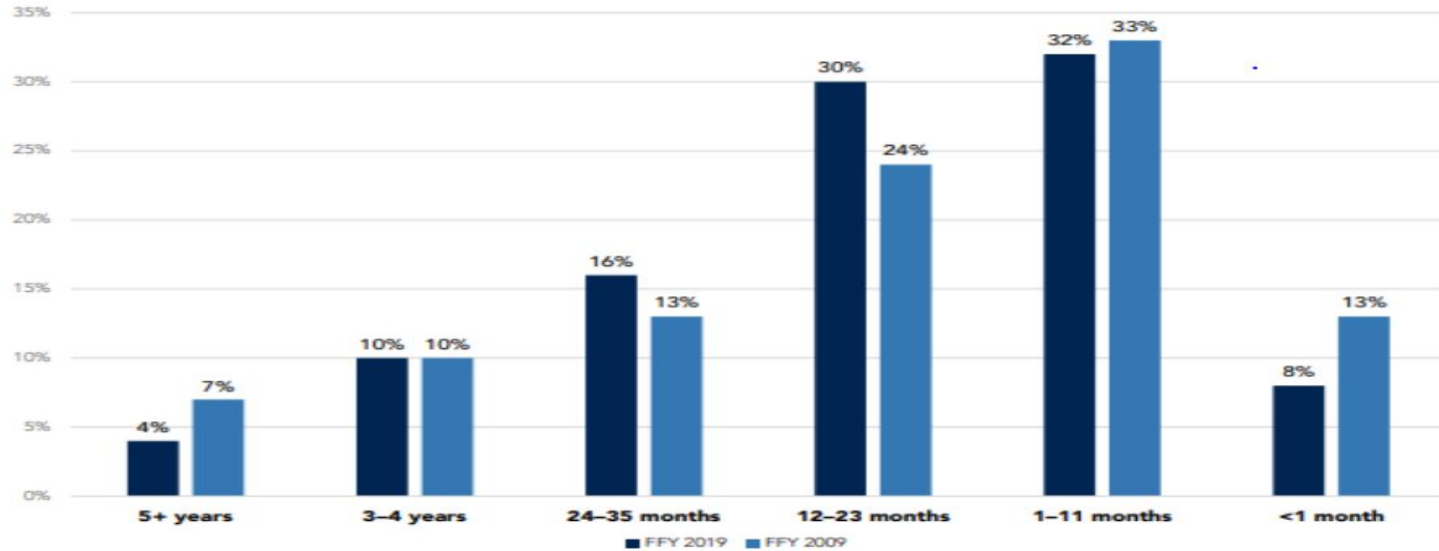
Tracking Numbers of Youth In Foster

EXHIBIT 6: MEDIAN AGE IN YEARS OF CHILDREN IN, ENTERING, AND EXITING FOSTER CARE IN FFY 2009 AND FFY 2019



Median Stay

EXHIBIT 5: LENGTH OF STAY FOR CHILDREN EXITING FOSTER CARE IN FFY 2009 AND FFY 2019



<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/foster/>

Training on Kinship Placement

Youth in Kinship Placements:

- Youth were left in the care of a relative by legal guardian due to legal guardian inability to take care of child
- DSS met with a relative of a youth and relative is willing to take them into their home. (They are NOT in Foster Care and relatives are NOT foster parents)

Kinship Placement vs. Mckinney

- Foster homes are approved and regulated by CWA's. Kinship Placements are not regulated like foster homes
- Kinship placement are not necessarily Mckinney-Vento. (If it a fixed stable and adequate arrangement and DSS made a plan with family then they most likely are NOT Mckinney-Vento)
- Some Kinship may qualify for other services on a case by case basis, gray areas should be discussed with School Social Worker and Mckinney-Vento/FC point of contact.

Mandated Reporting



- Any safety concerns while in foster care should be relayed immediately.
 - Teachers call local DSS if you suspect abuse while youth is in Foster Care.
 - Let your school social worker or the Foster Care Point of Contact know that a report was made.
- School Social Workers or Guidance Counselors make a report
 - Let the CWA's and Foster Care Point of Contact know of the concerns



Trail placements:

- Youth is reunified with parent but DSS still has custody and are monitoring the family. This can be an emotional time for youth and the family. Provide a welcoming environment as the family is transitioning back together.
- Assure Data Manager, School Social worker are aware of the reunification and rights of parents. Communication is critical

MOU

:Please find the MOU attached, Please copy and download.

Please see links under works cited for NC Website dedicated to providing resources to Foster Care POC and Homeless Liaisons.

[MOU Moore County Schools Link](#)

Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care: An Overview of the ED/HHS Joint Guidance
July 27, 2016 Power Point Department of Education and Department of Health and Humans Services.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/foster/>

<https://serve.uncg.edu/> Foster Care NC Website

<https://hepnc.uncg.edu/> Mckinney NC Website

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Research and Works Cited