



Practice Points

August 23, 2016

Sharing Information about Students in Foster Care with Schools

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 requires child welfare and educational agencies to coordinate efforts to ensure the educational stability of students in foster care. A key piece of this coordination is information sharing. While both agencies have confidentiality laws with regard to the release of information and records, the intent is to allow the confidential exchange of information to serve the best interests of the child. Ensuring the educational success, stability, safety, and well-being of students in foster care may necessitate sharing with schools the following information:

- Notice that the child is in foster care
- Contact information for the case manager, parent(s), and out-of-home care provider
- Contact restrictions
- Level/type of trauma experienced
- Trauma triggers, behavior manifestations, and appropriate prevention strategies and responses
- Physical, emotional, or behavioral health issues that may impair the student's ability to learn, interact appropriately, or attend school regularly
- School-relevant safety concerns pertaining to the student's safety or the safety of others
- Outside services and contacts
- Upcoming events or appointments that may impact the student's behavioral health or attendance
- Treatment plans/goals requiring the school's support

Additionally, at the beginning of each school year, local offices likely will be contacted by the local school district(s) to obtain information about children in foster care enrolled in the district for back billing purposes, or cost recovery. The school district may also contact local offices following student transfers from one district to another. Missouri State Statute Section 167.126, RSMo, allows a school district providing education services to a student who resides in another

district but was placed in the district by Children's Division, DMH, or a court of competent jurisdiction to bill the district of domicile for education services. The domicile district is the school district in which the student would have been educated if the student had not been placed in a different school district.

School districts need to ascertain where the child resided at the time he/she was placed in foster care, and if parental rights have been terminated. If the child is in Children's Division custody, and parental rights have been terminated, the educating school district cannot bill the district of domicile. Children's Division staff should provide this information to the school district upon request.

Program Development Specialist Contact:
Lori Masek Lori.L.Masek@dss.mo.gov

Issued: 8/22/16