



Practice Points

COLLABORATION WITH SCHOOLS TO SUPPORT FOSTER CARE STUDENTS

As another school year approaches, this Practice Point is a reminder of the important collaboration needed between Children's Division and schools to best support the educational well-being of students in foster care:

- The Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) is federal legislation that requires state and local education agencies (schools) to collaborate with Children's Division to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care. Although ESSA imposes federal requirements on state and local educational agencies, the fulfillment of these mandates benefits children in foster care and requires Children's Division's collaboration and support:
 - If a child's placement in out-of-home care, or any subsequent placement, would result in a transfer outside the child's school of origin (the school in which they're enrolled), the school is required to have a Best Interest Determination (BID) meeting.
 - The BID is a process in which BID participants decide if it's in the child's best interest to remain in their school of origin, or if the child instead should be enrolled in the school where they reside as a result of their placement change.
 - CD must promptly notify the school of origin (school of enrollment) of a foster student's status so the BID can occur timely. Each school district has an identified [foster care liaison](#) to receive this information and to coordinate a BID.
 - BID meetings can be integrated into any required FST meetings when children enter foster care or change placement.
 - If the BID result is for the child to remain in their school of origin, the school and CD must then discuss transportation arrangements.
 - The school is responsible for ensuring transportation arrangements are made.

- If the resource parent is not providing the transportation, and the transportation plan selected imposes additional costs to the school district, the district may request CD's consideration to share these costs.
- If CD agrees to share the transportation costs, MOU - School Transportation Reimbursement ([M00539](#)) must be executed with the school to allow CD to reimburse the district. Only one MOU per district is needed.
- Additionally, MOU – School Transportation Reimbursement [Attachment A](#) – Individual Student Transportation Plan must be completed for the child, reflecting the specific transportation plan and cost-sharing agreement reached.
- More information about the MOU, determining if an MOU with a particular district has been executed, and reimbursement procedures can be found in [Memo CD18-37](#).
- The CD-179 Educational Enrollment Letter is required to be provided to the child's educating school when an enrolled child enters foster care, and to a new school when a foster care student experiences a transfer.
 - This allows the school to more effectively facilitate communication with the case manager and resource providers, and assists the educating school district in pursuing recoupment of monies from the student's domicile district – the district they would be attending if they were home with their parent/guardian.
 - Identifying foster care students in the school's data system supports the schools' compliance with federal tracking and reporting requirements and provides CD with important data around course credits and graduation rates.

Please refer to the Child Welfare Manual, [Section 4, Chapter 4, Subsection 2](#) – Educational Stability - for complete policy requirements and [Memo CD17-26](#) for reference.

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