



GOAL 2 School Transitions

Caseworkers' Roles

Blueprint Tools

Youth Are Guaranteed Seamless Transitions Between Schools and School Districts When School Moves Occur

When youth must move between schools, they often have trouble enrolling. Delays can lead them to miss important classroom time. Transitions in the middle of the year can make it harder for youth to access academic and extracurricular programs.

What you can do:

✓ Understand federal law on school enrollment and records.

Under the federal McKinney-Vento Act, youth “awaiting foster care placement” are entitled to enroll immediately in a new school even if they are missing required records (such as immunization records). They are also entitled to have a school liaison help them with enrollment and other issues. To figure out whether a child is covered by this law, find out how your state defines “awaiting foster care placement.” In some states, this law covers all or most youth in care.

✓ Learn your state law on school enrollment.

In many states, schools must enroll children promptly (for example, within 5 days). State law will also spell out who can enroll the child. Typically, a caseworker can enroll a child in foster care in the custody of the child welfare agency. Sometimes a foster parent will have this authority.

✓ Help with school record transfers.

Many states require the prompt transfer of records between schools. Oversee the process to be sure the sending schools comply with timelines and the receiving school obtains records promptly. Play a more active role, if necessary. For example, offer to deliver a copy of the records to the new school if it will speed enrollment.

Resources:

Defining “awaiting placement:

To identify how “awaiting placement” is defined in your state or locality, review *The McKinney-Vento Act and Children and Youth Awaiting Foster Care Placement: Improving Educational Outcomes through School Stability*. (Available at www.abanet.org/child/education/home.shtml)

State rights:

Find out about your state transportation entitlements and other state rights by looking at the *State School Stability Legislation Chart*. (Available at www.abanet.org/child/education/home.shtml)

This information is adapted from the **Blueprint for Change: Educational Success for Children in Foster Care**, published by the Legal Center for Foster Care & Education. To see the full publication, search a database on foster care education issues, and learn more federal and local law, go to www.abanet.org/child/education.