

Foster Care Education Program

Improving Educational Outcomes for Children and Youth

National research shows that children in foster care are more likely to drop out of school and unlikely to attend and graduate from college. These students also have a greater risk of suicide, homelessness, unemployment and teen pregnancy. Schools, child welfare agencies, communities and families need to work together to provide greater opportunities, specialized services and supports that students in foster care need to be successful in school and in life.

Purpose

The Colorado Department of Education's Foster Care Education Program is dedicated to helping students in foster care excel academically, complete courses and advance to the next grade and continue on a path to postsecondary success.

Action

It takes commitment, leadership and a coordinated effort for students in foster care to have school stability and excel in school. Colorado's Foster Care Education Program is designed to work with K-12 public schools and districts to focus on these elements:

- Increase learning supports
- Implement effective strategies
- Strengthen partnerships with child welfare and community agencies
- Coordinate educational transition services
- Collaborate with the courts, state agencies and child advocacy groups

Framework for Success

- **Laws and Legislation**
 - Implement state laws requiring child welfare liaisons
 - Provide guidance on federal and state legislation that defines the rights of students in foster care
- **Dedicated Resources**
 - Train and provide ongoing professional development for child welfare education liaisons, county caseworkers, guardians appointed by the court to represent the best interests of a child, court personnel and judges.

National Facts

- Children and youth in out-of-home care experience one to two placement changes per year on average
- Less than 50 percent of youth in foster care finish high school before leaving care
- Students that were in foster care are unlikely to attend and graduate from college
- Approximately 3 percent of youth in foster care obtain a bachelor's degree within a few years of emancipation
- Children and youth in foster care have higher rates of suicide, homelessness, unemployment and teen pregnancy compared to the average population



- **Coordinated Response**
 - Create targeted outreach and public awareness of foster care education issues
 - Implement school district pilots to increase supports and coordination of services with county child welfare agencies
 - Share and track data on student achievement and educational outcomes of students in foster care
- **Partner with Schools and Communities to Tackle Education Barriers**
 - Increase transportation to school and academic enrichment activities
 - Improve transitions due to foster care placements and school changes
 - Ensure transfer of transcripts and student records with each move

Where can I learn more?

- Sheree Wheeler, state coordinator of foster care resources, wheeler_s@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6007

Child Welfare Education Liaisons

- Visit the CDE Website (www.cde.state.co.us) for a map of the child welfare education liaisons for each Colorado school district.
- To view all CDE fact sheets, visit: www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/factsheetsandfaqs