

Foster Care Liaison and Building Point of Contact Training

2024-2025

Foster Care

Office of System and School Improvement



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Updated 9/24

Meet the OSPI Foster Care Education Team



Stacey Klim

Foster Care Program Supervisor
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)



Savanna Cavalletto

Foster Care Program Specialist
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)



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Vision

All students prepared for post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

Mission

Transform K–12 education to a system that is centered on closing opportunity gaps and is characterized by high expectations for all students and educators. We achieve this by developing equity-based policies and supports that empower educators, families, and communities.

Values

- Ensuring Equity
- Collaboration and Service
- Achieving Excellence through Continuous Improvement
- Focus on the Whole Child



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Equity Statement

Each student, family, and community possesses strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools.

Ensuring educational equity:

- Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine the ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education and English Learner services, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.
- Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision-making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools.



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Tribal Land Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the Indigenous people who have stewarded this land since time immemorial and who still inhabit the area today, the Steh-Chass Band of Indigenous people of the Squaxin Island Tribe.



Participant Review

- How long have you been a Foster Care Liaison or Foster Care Building Point of Contact?
- How familiar are you with the legal provisions around foster care?
- Do you know your duties as a Foster Care Liaison or Foster Care Building Point of Contact?

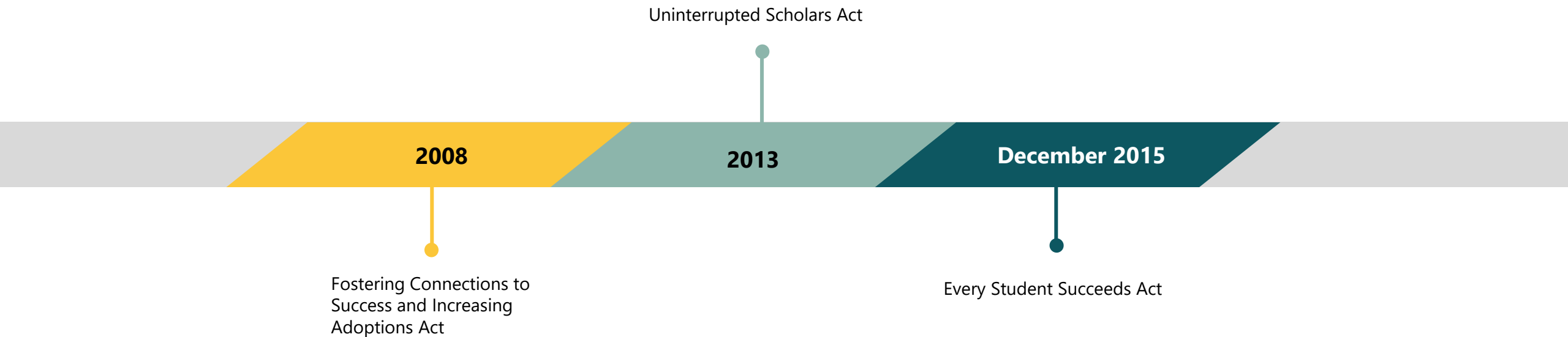


Law and Provisions

Students Who Qualify as Foster Care

- Students who are the “subject of a dependency proceeding”:
 - Foster Home
 - Residential Facility
 - Relative
 - Group Home
 - Emergency Shelter
 - Pre-adoptive Home
 - Trial-return-home
-
- *Including Tribal Child Welfare and Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (aka Federal Foster Care)

Legislative Milestones for Educational Stability of Students in Foster Care



Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act - 2008

The child's case plan must ensure educational stability while the child is in foster care and include:

- Placement takes the education setting into consideration; and
- Child welfare coordinates with the school district to:
- Ensure the child remains in his or her school of origin; or
- Immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school, with records transferred, if remaining in the school of origin is not in the child's best interest.

Uninterrupted Scholars Act - 2013

Educational agencies and institutions are permitted to disclose personally identifiable information (PII) from the education records of students in foster care placement, **without parental consent**, to an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency (CWA) or tribal organization authorized to access a student's case plan "when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student."

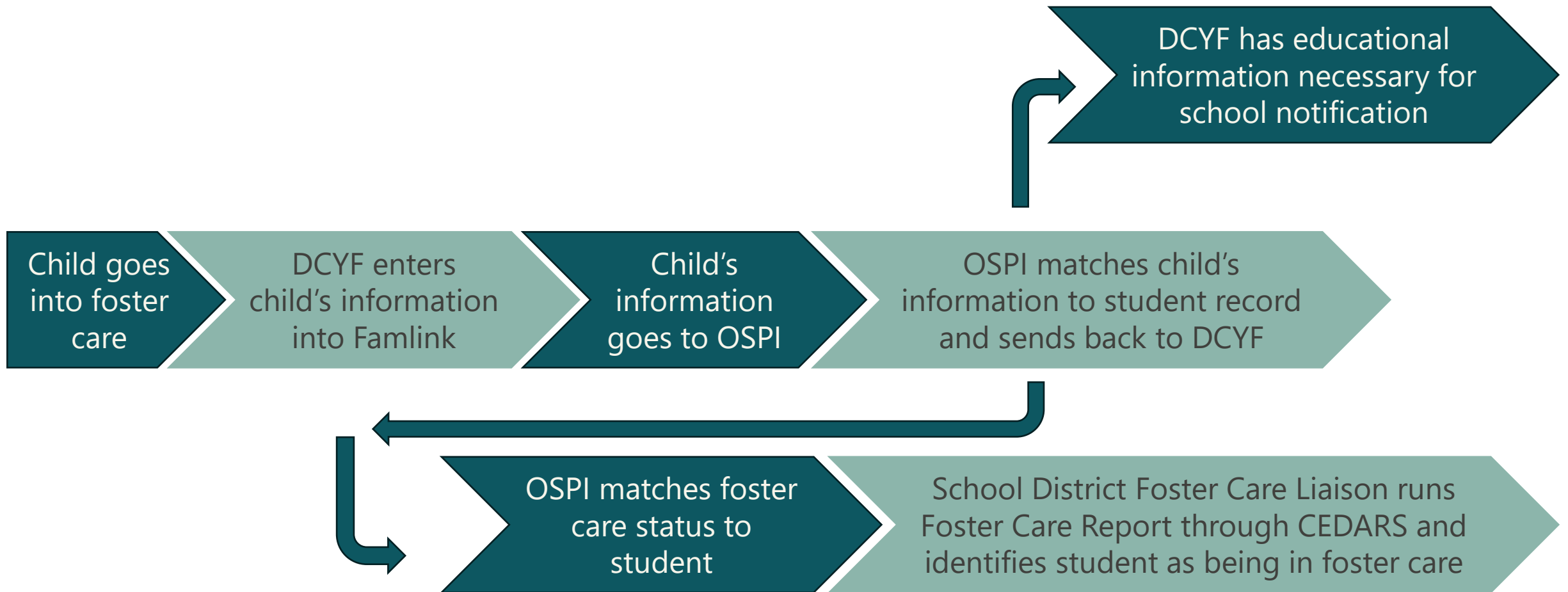
[Guidance for Sharing Records with DCYF and Treehouse](#)



Data Sharing for Student Support

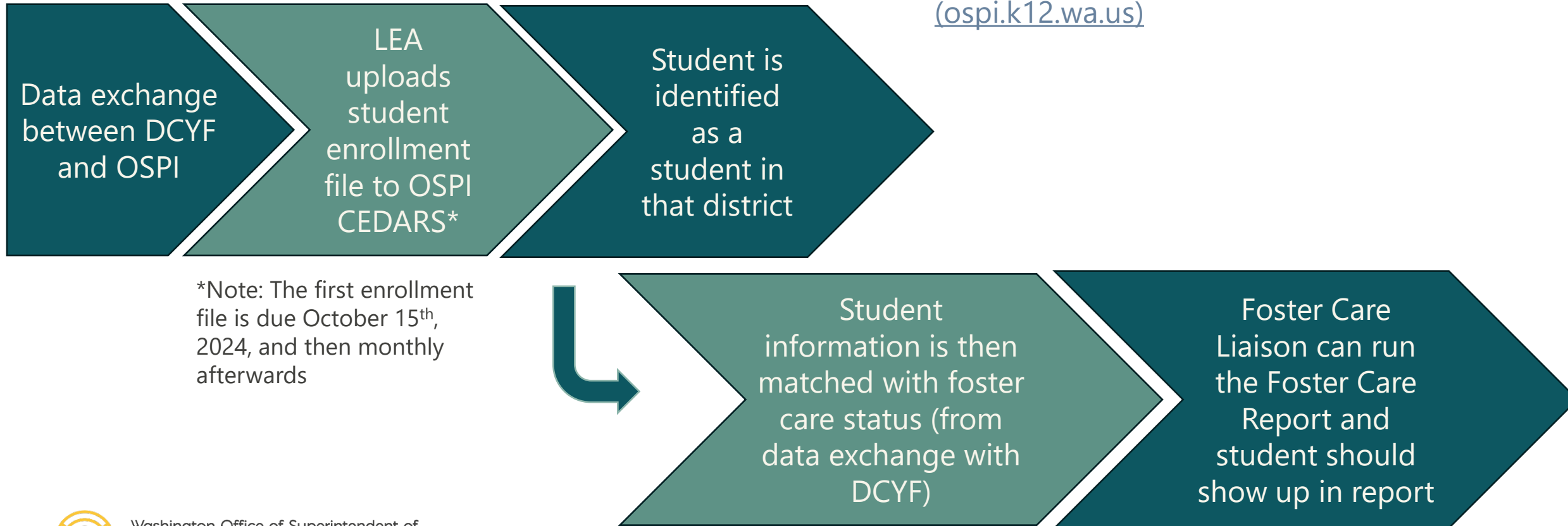
- Child welfare agencies need access to school records.
- Caretakers/parents need access to school records.
- Schools need to know which students are in foster care and when they have placement changes.
- Schools must exchange education records when a student in foster care changes schools.

Data Sharing Agreement OSPI/DCYF



CEDARS Foster Care Report

Get access to the Foster Care Report from your school district CEDARS administrator - [Foster Care Liaison CEDARS Instructions \(ospi.k12.wa.us\)](https://ospi.k12.wa.us/FosterCareLiaisonCEDARSInstructions)



*Note: The first enrollment file is due October 15th, 2024, and then monthly afterwards



Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) - 2015

- This is federal education law.
- Washington State has codified these into state law as well.
- All schools must follow these provisions:
 - Every school district is required to designate a Foster Care Liaison
 - Students remain in school of origin unless there is a determination that it is not in their best interest.
 - Students in foster care are entitled to immediate enrollment, even without documents normally required.
 - Schools/OSPI must collaborate with Child Welfare Agencies.

ESSA Requirement 1

Every school district is required to designate a Foster Care Liaison.

Foster Care Liaison and Building Points of Contact [RCW 28A.320.148](#)

Each school district must designate a Foster Care Liaison responsible for:

- Facilitating district compliance with state and federal laws related to students in out-of-home care.
- Leading and documenting the Best Interest Determination process.
- Facilitating immediate enrollment
- Collaborating with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to address educational barriers and serving as their primary contact person.

Every school must have a Building Point of Contact appointed by the school Principal and district Foster Care Liaison

- Responsible for coordinating services and resources for students in foster care.

OSPI is responsible for:

- Providing best practices for choosing and training building Points of contact to each school district.
- [OSPI Foster Care Resources and Training](#)



Foster Care Building Points of Contact – Washington State Law

Each school is required to designate a foster care building point of contact who knows which students are in foster care and what rights those students have under the law.

School District Foster Care Contacts

How to find a Foster Care Liaisons, Regional Ed Leads and State Contacts

Foster Care Liaisons/DCYF Contacts

Families, caregivers, and advocates may find contact information for Foster Care Liaison/Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) staff who can help resolve issues and provide support.

Use one of the functions below to search for your contact.

- [By District](#)-Use the searchable table below to find basic contact information for your district.
- [Regional Contacts](#)-Find contact information for your accompanying DCYF regional staff member.
- [State Contact](#)-Find contact information for statewide contacts.

Foster Care Liaisons Contacts

Do you need to update your liaison contact information? Please fill out the update form below.

Update Your Liaison Contact Information

← If your information needs to be updated, click this to complete a form

Note: Allow two weeks for submitted updates to be reflected on the list below.

Download full list of contacts

Keyword search

Apply

How to find a Foster Care Building Point of Contact

Foster Care Building Point of Contact

School Level Contact Information

Families, caregivers, and advocates may use the Foster Care Building Point of Contact list to find contact information for a specific school that a student attends.

Use one of the functions below to search for Foster Care Building Point of Contacts by school or district.

To update your building point of contact information, please fill out the update form below.

Update Your Building Point of Contact Information

Download full list of contacts

Note: Allow two weeks for submitted updates to be reflected on the list below.

School

- Please select -

School District

- Please select -

Apply

Reset

If your information needs to be updated, click this to complete a form



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ESSA Requirement 2

Students remain in school of origin unless there is a determination that it is NOT in their best interest.

School of Origin

- School in which the student is enrolled at the time of a placement change
- Child must remain in the School of Origin until a Best Interest Determination is made
- This includes LEA preschool and designated feeder schools

Best Interest Determination Process

- ✓ Student goes into foster care or has a change in placement
- ✓ School zone or district changes
- ✓ DCYF notifies Foster Care Liaison with School Notification Form and/or Foster Care Liaison runs CEDARS Foster Care Report and identifies student
- ✓ DCYF and Foster Care Liaison work together to schedule Best Interest Determination
- ✓ Student remains in their school of origin until the Best Interest Determination is made

Student Placements/Moves and Best Interest Determinations

- Best interest determination meetings **should be made as quickly as possible** in order to prevent educational discontinuity for the student
- **The student must remain in his or her school of origin** while a best interest determination is made
- Every effort should be made to **gather meaningful input** from relevant and appropriate persons
- Student-centered factors must be used to determine what is in a student's best interest



School Notification

[Click here to find the Foster Care Liaison in each school district.](#)

The student's social worker is to notify the school district foster care liaison that the below-named child:

☐ Entered Placement ☐ Changed placement ☐ Returned home

Date:

To:

From:

DCYF WORKER'S NAME EMAIL PHONE FAX

DCYF OFFICE DCYF SUPERVISOR EMAIL PHONE

RE:

STUDENT'S NAME DATE OF BIRTH GRADE LEVEL SCHOOL OF ORIGIN/SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL/SCHOOL DISTRICT

☐ IEP OR 504 PLAN

IF CHECKED: EDUCATIONAL DECISION MAKER NAME: PHONE: EMAIL:

Statement of Confidentiality

The information disclosed in this form is confidential and disclosed under the limitations of RCW 13.50.100. This disclosure does not constitute a waiver of any confidentiality or privilege attached to the information by operation of any state or federal law or regulation. The recipient of this information must comply with the laws governing confidentiality and must protect the records from unauthorized disclosure. RCW 13.50.100(5).

The above-named student is in the legal custody of DCYF and:

☐ is temporarily placed at the following location

☐ has moved (or will be moving) to a new placement at the following location

☐ resides in the parental home

☐ is placed in a trial return home

TYPE OF PLACEMENT ☐ Foster care ☐ Relative ☐ Parent ☐ Other:

ANTICIPATED DATE OF MOVE

CAREGIVER NAME(S)

PHONE

ADDRESS

EMAIL

EDUCATION LIAISON (COURT APPOINTED—PLEASE ATTACH COURT ORDER) ☐ YES ☐ NO

☐ Per court order, the people named below cannot have contact with the student:

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	RELATIONSHIP (PARENT/UNCLE/AUNT/SIBLING, NO RELATIONSHIP, ETC.)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please notify the DCYF worker named above immediately if contact attempts are made.

☐ School transportation is required to maintain school of origin.

☐ Child/youth to be un-enrolled from school of origin on (date). A best interest meeting finds that the student should change school placement.

☐ Copy of the court order is attached.

School Notification Form

Date of Best Interest Meeting: Decision:

Best Interest Determination Participants: ☐ School District Foster Care Liaisons

☐ Representative from Neighborhood School (required)

☐ Parent

☐ Caseworker

☐ Representative from School of Origin (required)

☐ Caregiver

☐ Youth

School Selection: A Checklist for Decision Making

School of Origin Considerations		Local Attendance Area School Considerations	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Continuity of instruction <i>Student is best served due to circumstances that look to their past</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Continuity of instruction <i>Student is best served due to circumstances that look to their future</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Age and grade placement of the student <i>Maintaining friends and contacts with peers is critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age and grade placement of the student <i>Maintaining friends and contacts with peers in the school of origin is not particularly critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic strength <i>The student's academic performance is weak, and the student would fall further behind if transferred to another school.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic strength <i>The student's academic performance is strong and at grade level, and the student would likely recover academically from a school transfer.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Distance of the commute and its impact on the student's education and/or special needs <i>The advantages of remaining in the school of origin outweigh any potential disadvantages presented by the length of the commute.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Distance of the commute and its impact on the student's education and/or special needs <i>A shorter commute may help the student's concentration, attitude, or readiness for school.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal safety of the student <i>The school of origin has advantages for the safety of the student.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal safety of the student <i>The local attendance area school has advantages for the safety of the student.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student's need for special instruction <i>The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met better at the school of origin.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student's need for special instruction <i>The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met better at the local attendance area school.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location <i>The student's current living situation is outside of the school-of-origin attendance zone, but their living situation or location continues to be uncertain. The student will benefit from the continuity offered by remaining in the school of origin.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location <i>The student's current living situation appears stable and unlikely to change suddenly; the student will benefit from developing relationships with school peers who live in their local community.</i>

For more information about selecting the appropriate school placement for students in foster care, please see:

https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/fostercare/pubdocs/Best_Practices_School_Selection_for_Children_and_Youth_in_Foster_Care.pdf

Adapted from the *Best Practices: School Selection for Students in Out-of-Home Care* issue brief developed by the Legal Center for Foster Care and The National Center for Homeless Education: Fall 20



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Who is Responsible for Educational Decisions?

Parent

- Unless limited by the court, parents retain rights to make educational decisions and to access records directly from the school.

Caregivers

- Caregiver or foster care parent makes day-to-day educational decisions
- Can serve as the “parent” regarding special education decisions

DCYF

- DCYF is authorized to make day-to-day educational decisions without parent approval
- May not be special education decision maker



ESSA Requirement 3

Students in foster care are entitled to immediate enrollment, even without documents normally required.

Immediate Enrollment

Immediate enrollment means that a child should be enrolled in, and attending, a new school as soon as possible.

- Appropriate classroom placement
- Transportation, if required

Enrollment must not be denied or delayed because documents normally required for enrollment have not provided

- Including medical records such as immunization or health plans

ESSA Requirement 4

Schools/OSPI must
collaborate with Child Welfare
Agencies.

Department of Children, Youth, and Families Regional Structure



WASHINGTON STATE
Department of
Children, Youth, and Families



Washi
PULP

Updated 9/24

DCYF Regional Education Leads

Region 1

- [Bobbi Lloyd](#)

Region 2

- [Monica Jenkins](#)

Region 3

- [Wryan Young](#)

Region 4

- [Donna LaFrance](#)

Region 5

- [Dawn Flammang](#)

Region 6

- [Heather Lawhead-Hug](#)



Let's Talk About Transportation

- When the Best Interest Determination determines that it is in a student in foster care's best interest to remain at his/her school of origin (SOO), the student is entitled to transportation to the SOO.
- A student in foster care is entitled to transportation to his/her SOO for the duration of his/her time in foster care.
- If it is determined at the Best Interest Determination that a student should be transported, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families ([DCYF](#)) will cover 50% of all excess costs related to transporting students in foster care to and from home and school.
- Refer to the [Foster Care Transportation](#) for additional information and Q & A about transportation
- Questions about reimbursement? Email DCYF Foster Care Program Manager, Terri Awoko, terri.awoko@dcyf.wa.gov or 360-522-3117



Regional Transportation Coordinators

Serving districts in ESD 112 and Capital Region ESD 113

[Rodney McKnight](#)

Educational Service District #112
2500 NE 65th Avenue
Vancouver, WA 98661-6812
360-952-3595

Serving districts in Olympic ESD 114 and Puget Sound ESD 121

[Chris Jose](#)

Puget Sound Educational Service District #121
1282 Valentine Ave SE
Pacific, WA 98047
253-686-1126

Serving districts in Northwest ESD 189

[Mark Dennis](#)

Northwest Educational Service District #189
1601 R Avenue
Anacortes, WA 98221
360-299-4008

Serving districts in ESD 105, ESD 123, and N. Central ESD 171

[Dan Payne](#)

Educational Service District #105
33 S. Second Ave.
Yakima, WA 98902
509-454-3105

Serving districts in Northeast Washington ESD 101

[Eric Engle](#)

Educational Service District #101
4202 South Regal
Spokane, WA 99223
509-789-3558



Foster Care Liaison Duties

- Ensure that children in foster care are enrolled in, and regularly attending school
- Serve as the primary contact person for child welfare and case workers
- Manage best-interest determinations and transportation cost disputes
- Facilitate the transfer of records and immediate enrollment
- Facilitate data sharing with child welfare agencies, consistent with FERPA
- Develop and coordinate local transportation procedures
- Attend training and professional development opportunities to improve district implementation efforts
- Make sure every school has a Building Point of Contact and coordinate with them

Building Point of Contact Duties

- Work closely each week with the school district Foster Care Liaison to identify the students in foster care in the building.
- Check with nutrition services to make sure the student is receiving free meals (no application needed).
- Fees and Fines – check students' account regularly to see if there are any outstanding fees and fines. Let the district Foster Care Liaison know about any fees and fines so they can work with the DCYF caseworker to have the fees and fines paid.
- Connect with student and build a relationship with them
- Monitor attendance, academics, and discipline incidents
- Support student needs such as extra curricular activities, counseling, post-secondary prep, and school events.



Building Points of Contact

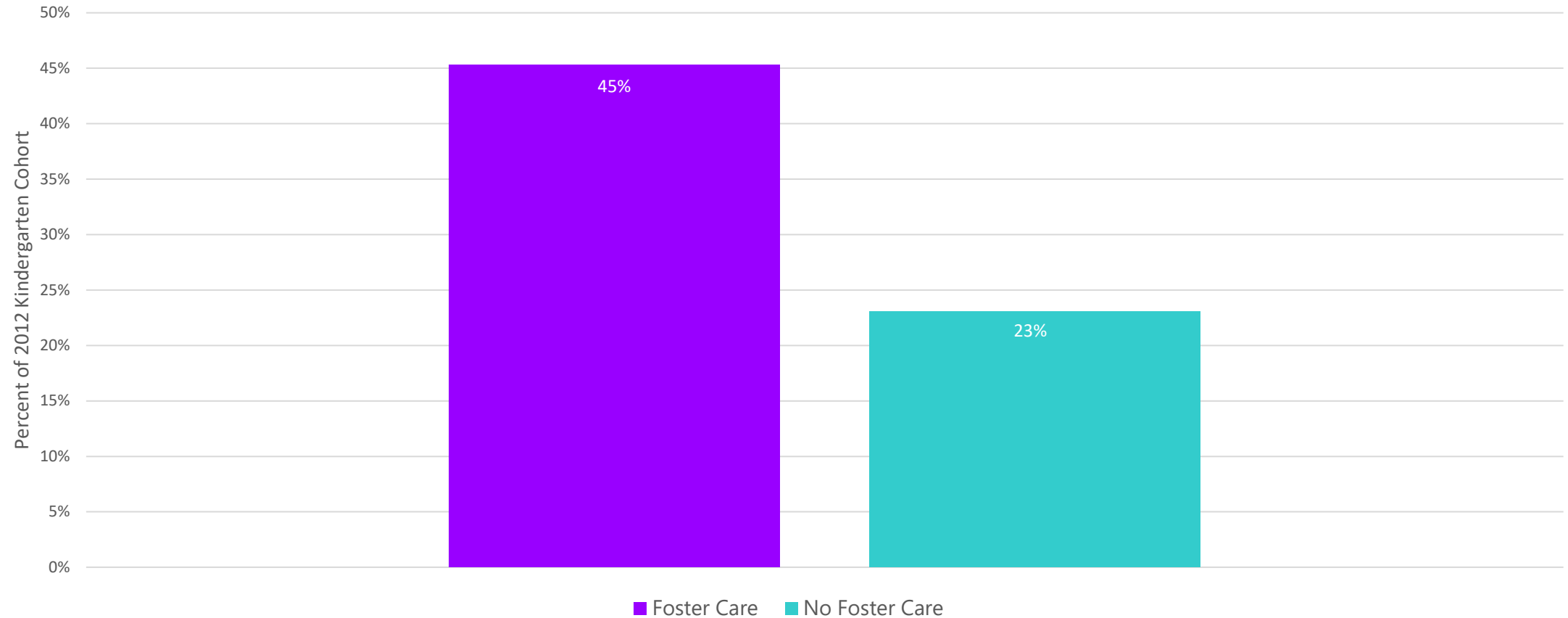
- ✓ After school activities
- ✓ School pictures
- ✓ Counseling
- ✓ College prep – scholarships
- ✓ Attendance
- ✓ Discipline
 - Monitor
 - Implement supports
 - Inform foster care liaison

Special Education

- Special Education students can also be foster care students
- Foster care students can also be special education students
- They are both protected by federal laws
- They go hand in hand to better support the student



Disability Status of Students in Foster Care Compared to Peers



Who Can Serve as “Parent” in Special Education Decisions?

- Biological or adoptive parent
- Caregiver or foster parent
- Person acting in place of parent and with whom student lives
- Surrogate parent appointed by the court (school districts can also appoint surrogate)
- Adult students whose rights have transferred to themselves

Federal law prohibits a DCYF caseworker, group home staff, and Treehouse representatives from being the special education decision maker for a student in foster care.

If the court has not restricted their access, birth parents are considered "parent" before a foster parent. School should consult with caseworker for more information.



Who Can Serve as “Parent” in Special Education Decisions?

Who may not be the IDEA Parent?

Individuals who may have a personal or professional conflict of interest must not be the IDEA Parent, including:

- DCYF social worker/personnel
- Group home staff
- OSPI or school district employees

Is the young person 18-21 years of age?
(Rights held by parents transfer to the student at age 18.)

If no

Birth/Adoptive Parents retain their rights to make educational decisions unless the court has restricted/terminated those rights.

Are the birth/adoptive parents able and willing to be the IDEA Parent?

If no

Is there a foster parent/caregiver?

If no

Is there a court appointed Educational Decision Maker?

If no

Leave blank. The school district should identify a surrogate parent.

If yes

The foster parent is the educational decision maker.

If yes

The court appointed Educational Decision Maker is the educational decision maker.

If yes

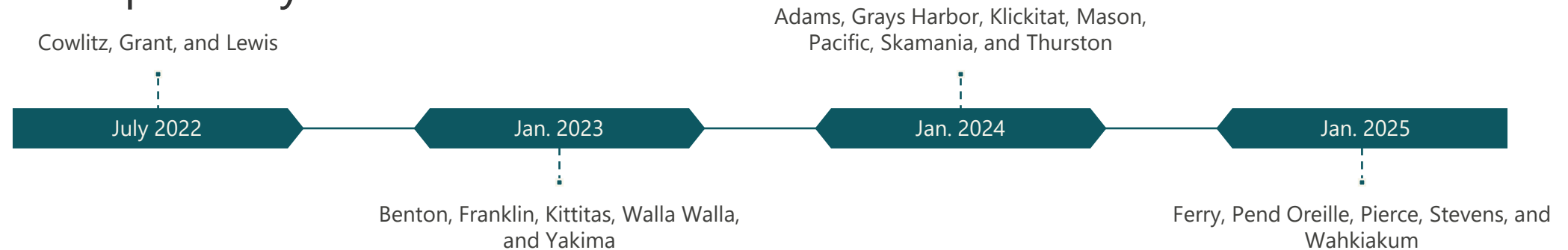
The birth/adoptive parent is the educational decision maker.



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Attorneys in Schools – Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA)

- In 2021, the Legislature expanded a child’s right to counsel in dependency proceedings. Codified at RCW 13.34.212(3), this new legislation ensures:
 - Appointment of counsel for **all children 8-17 years old** at or before the commencement of the shelter care hearing and for any pending or open dependency case where counsel has not already been appointed or privately secured

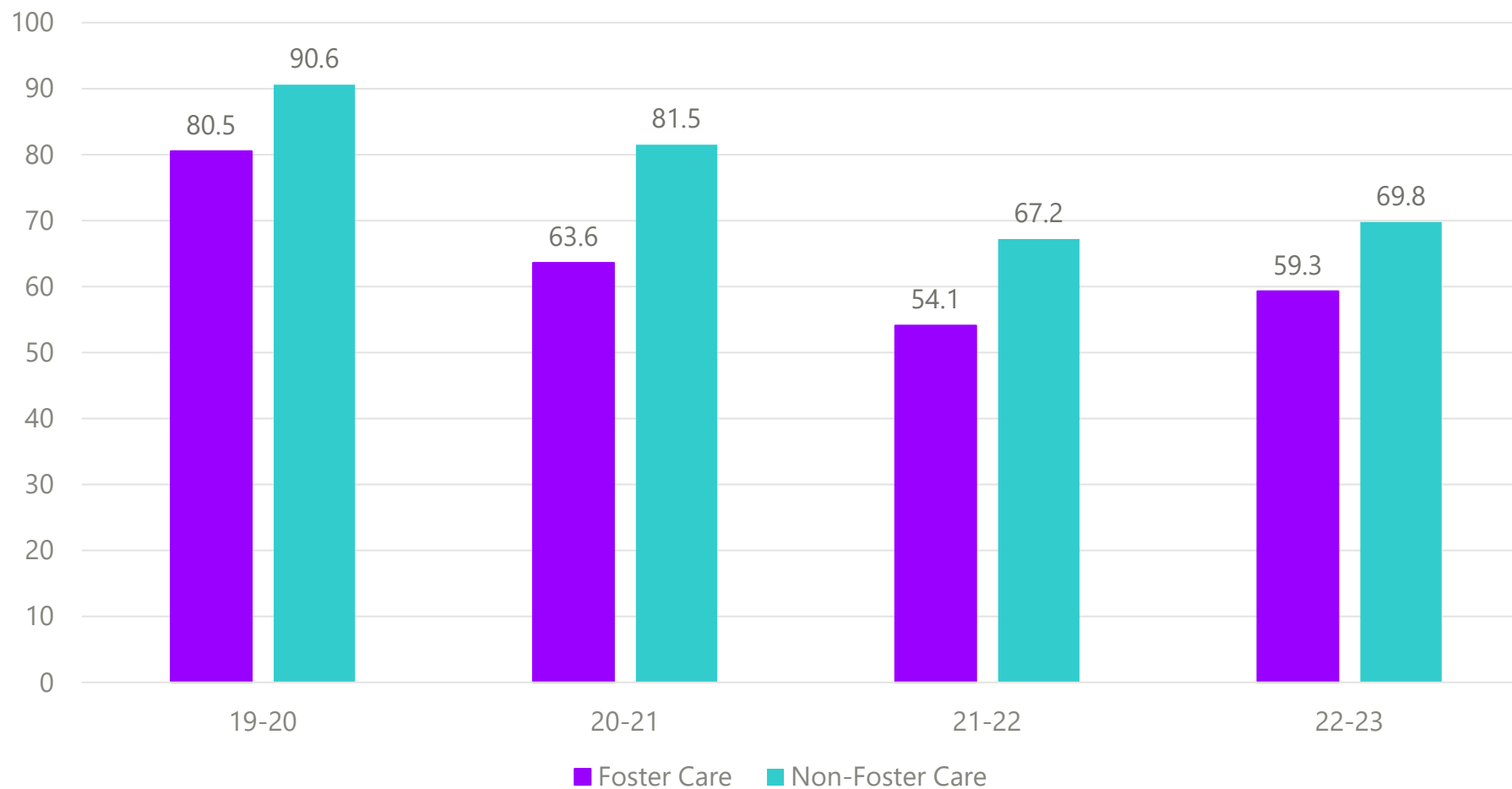


Children in foster care experience much higher levels of residential and school instability than their peers and are more likely to face a variety of academic difficulties.

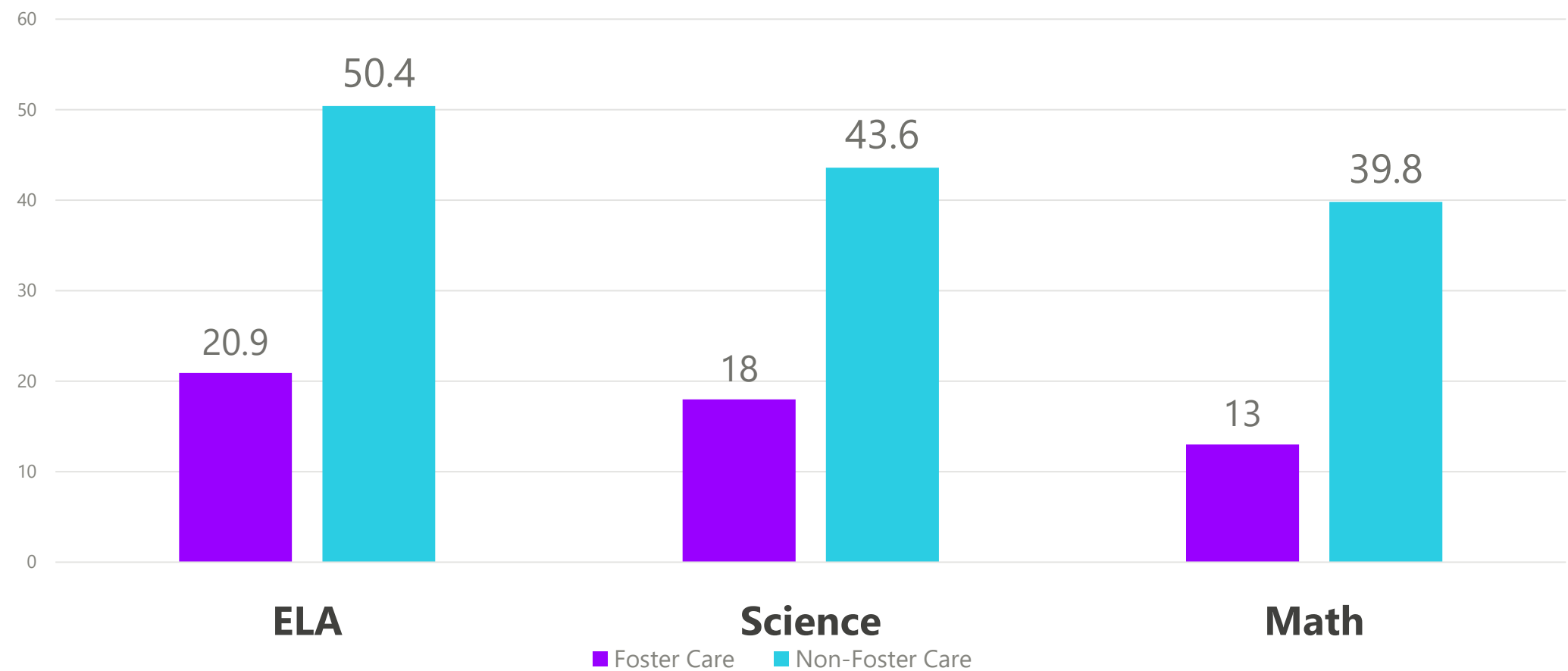
CDC, 2023; U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016)



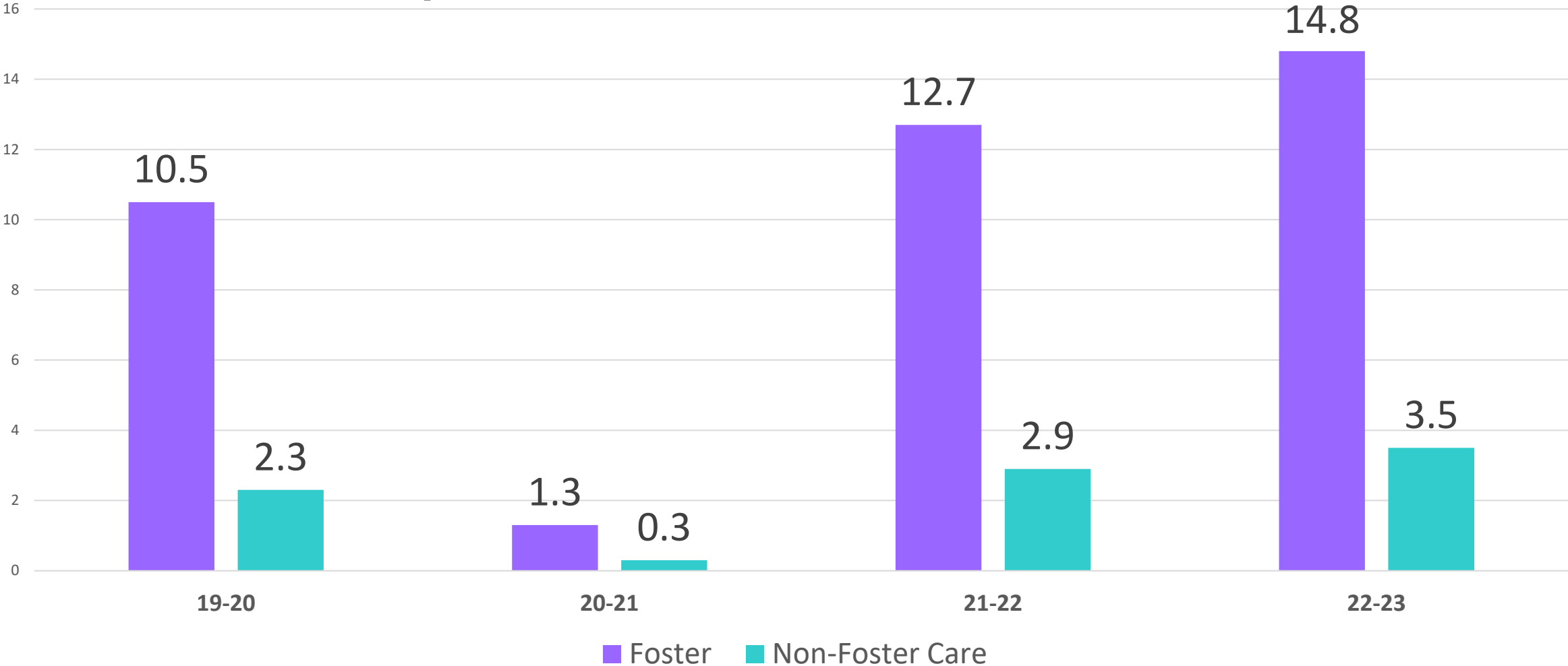
Regular Attendance 2022-2023



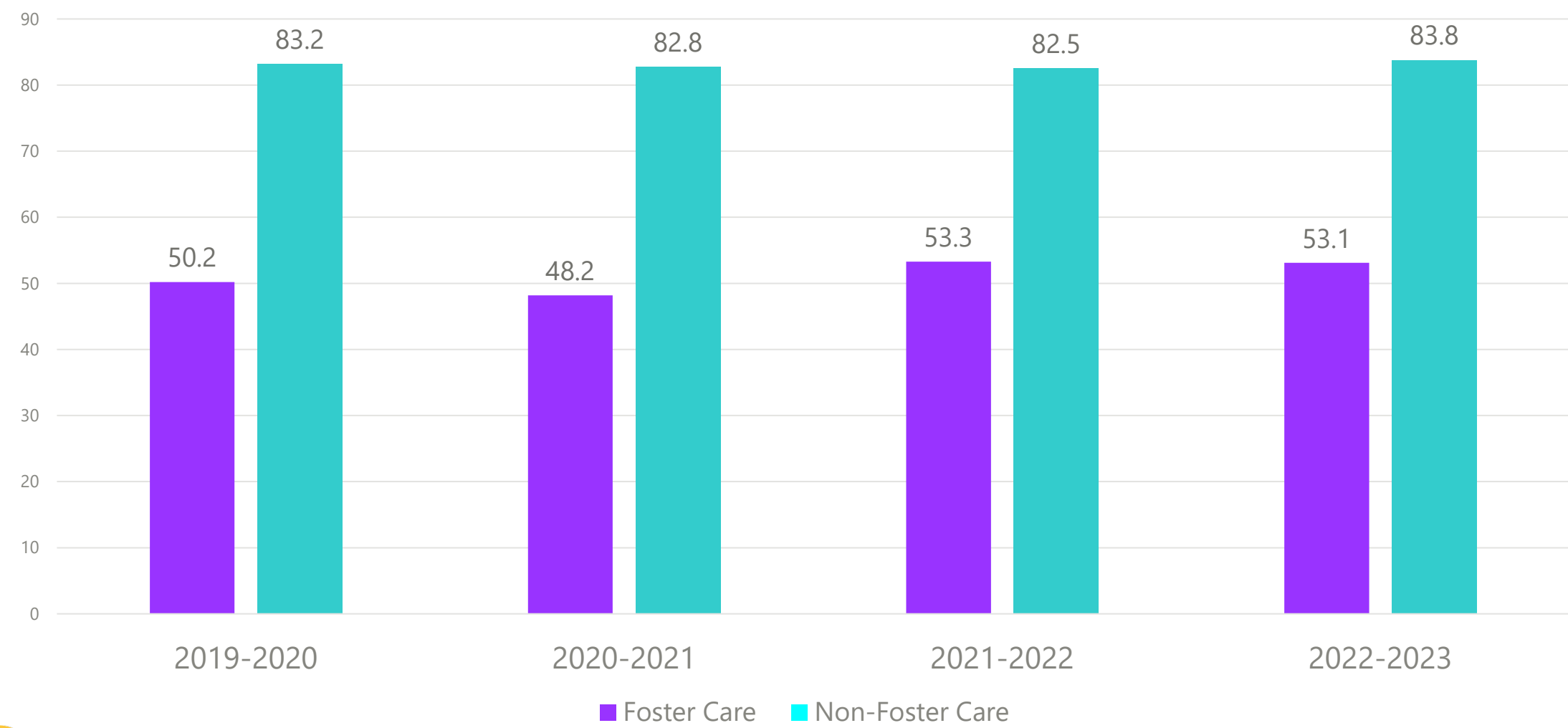
Assessments 2023-2024



4 Year Discipline Rates



4 Year Graduation Rates



Framework of Support

DCYF Headquarters Education Team

- K-12 Education
- Education & Training Voucher Program (ETV)

DCYF Regional Education Leads

School Districts

- OSPI Foster Care Education Program
- District Foster Care Liaison
- Foster Care Building Point of Contact

Treehouse

- Educational Advocacy
- Graduation Success
- Tribal Engagement Program
- Dual Involved Youth





treehouse™

Grad Success – Work directly with youth to help them graduate from high school with a plan for the future.

Ed Advocacy – Work with social workers, caregivers, and schools to resolve difficult issues at school and to remove barriers to kids' school success.

Note: Treehouse advocates can not serve as educational liaisons

[Treehouse - Make a Referral for Treehouse Services \(treehouseforkids.org\)](https://treehouseforkids.org)



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Foster Care Resources and Training

Toolkits

- Foster Care Liaison Toolkit
- Building Point of Contact Toolkit
- Best Interest Determination Toolkit

New/Updated Documents that have been added

- [Attendee Input Form](#)
- [Best Practices: Best Interest Determination: Meeting Process](#)
- [Best Practices: School District Placement Decision](#)
- [Best Interest Determination Follow Up Checklist](#)



Foster Care Meetings

Foster Care Regional Meetings

- **Region 1 Meeting**: 2nd Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (September, November, January, March, May)
- **Region 2 Meeting**: 2nd Tuesday from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. (September, November, January, March, May)
- **Region 3 Meeting**: 2nd Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (September, November, January, March, May)
- **Region 4 Meeting**: 2nd Tuesday from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. (October, December, February, April, June)
- **Region 5 Meeting**: 2nd Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (October, December, February, April, June)
- **Region 6 Meeting**: 2nd Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (October, December, February, April, June)

Foster Care Office Hours

- Second Thursday of Every Month from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. via [Zoom](#)



Post-Secondary Education

- [Post-Secondary Resources Document](#) (Financial Aid, Programs and Organizations, Scholarships)
- [Post-Secondary Education for Foster Care Webpage](#) (Transition Toolkit, FAFSA Application Instructions, Education Training Vouchers, Supplemental Education Transition Planning Program)
- [College Contacts from Passport](#)

Contact us anytime!

- [Stacey Klim](#)
 - *OSPI Foster Care Program Supervisor*
 - 564-999-1939 (Cell)
- [Savanna Cavalletto](#)
 - *OSPI Foster Care Program Specialist*
 - 564-669-1467 (Cell)



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