



Foster Care Transportation

Updated 2026



School of Origin

- Some children in foster care will need transportation to remain in their school of origin when it is in their best interest to do so.
- If a foster care student is enrolled in a new school, they should be immediately enrolled and attending school with transportation to and from school.
- Child welfare (DCYF) administers plans under Title IV-E and IV-B of the Social Security Act to ensure that the educational stability plan of each child in foster care includes an assurance that the child welfare agency has coordinated with the appropriate LEA to ensure the child can remain in the school of origin, or if remaining in that school is not in the child's best interest, an assurance that the child will be enrolled immediately in a new school.



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Title I, Part A

- An LEA receiving Title I, Part A funds must ensure that transportation is provided for children in foster care needing transportation to the school of origin consistent with the procedures developed by the LEA in collaboration with the State or local child welfare agency under section 1112(c)(5)(B) of the ESEA. These requirements apply even if the LEA does not provide transportation for children who are not in foster care.
- Students in foster care are eligible to receive Title I, Part A services on the same basis as any other student. The Title I, Part A services available for students, including students in foster care, depend upon the type of Title I, Part A program operated at their school.



Transportation and Best Interest Determination Meetings

Transportation **costs** should not be considered when determining a child's best interest. Transportation length and times can be considered in the context of what is in the best interest of the student.

Foster Care Student should remain in school of origin until a best interest determination meeting has taken place.

When a Best Interest Determination Meeting indicates that it is in a student in foster care's best interest to remain at their school of origin, the student is entitled to transportation to the school of origin.

A group of diverse children are shown in a circular inset on the left side of the slide. In the foreground, a young Black girl with curly hair and glasses, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt, is pointing her finger towards the camera. Behind her, a young white boy with brown hair is looking towards the camera. In the background, a young girl with dark hair is smiling. They appear to be sitting in a vehicle, possibly a school bus, with a window visible behind them.

Duration of Transportation

- A foster care student is entitled transportation to their school of origin for the duration of their time in foster care under ESEA Section 1112(c)(5)(B)
- When a child exits foster care, districts should continue to prioritize the child's educational stability, consider each child's best interest on a case-by-case basis, and when possible, make every effort to continue to ensure transportation is provided through the end of the school year, if needed, when remaining in the school of origin would be in the child's best interest.

Transportation Differences

McKinney-Vento: Districts share responsibility with each other

Both: Right to receive transportation to school of origin

Foster Care: Districts share responsibility; child welfare reimburse 50% of excess cost*

*See [RCW 28A.225.350](#): Students subject to a dependency proceeding—Best interest determinations section 8(a)(b)



Excess Transportation Cost

- DCYF and school districts are required to work collaboratively on a transportation plan for the student.
- DCYF will cover 50% of all excess cost related to transporting students in Foster Care to and from school.

Watch the short video:

[DCYF School Transportation Billing Form](#)

Complete the:

[DCYF School District Transportation Form](#)



Transportation Disagreements

- If disagreements develop regarding the best interest of the child or the transportation plan, the school district must ensure that the child remains in his or her school of origin while disputes are being resolved.
- Districts must provide or arrange for adequate and appropriate transportation to and from the school of origin while any disputes are being resolved.
- OSPI has developed dispute resolution procedures under the authority of our overall duty to ensure educational stability under Section 1111(g)(1)(E) of ESEA. The [dispute resolution process](#) should be used to address these issues as they arise.
- The [Foster Care Dispute Resolution Flow Chart](#) provides additional detail on resolving disagreements.



DCYF Regional Education Leads

Region 1

- [Bobbi Lloyd](#)
509-989-7633

Region 2

- [Monica Jenkins](#)
509-654-3325

Region 3

- [Marie Preftes Arenz](#)
425-308-3329

Region 4

- [Shawn Sivly](#)
206-247-9131

Region 5

- [Dawn Flammang](#)
253-260-0366

Region 6

- [Heather Lawhead-Hug](#)
360-584-3046





When to Contact Regional Transportation Coordinators

- The school district transportation department is having issues transporting in or out of district.
- The school district transportation department has questions.
- There is a misunderstanding about who should transport.



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Regional Transportation Coordinators

Serving districts in ESD 112 and Capital Region ESD 113

- Rodney McKnight
360-952-3595

Serving districts in Olympic ESD 114 and Puget Sound ESD 121

- Chris Jose
253-686-1126

Serving districts in Northwest ESD 189

- Mike McCain
360-299-4008

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

- Dan Payne
509-454-3105

Serving districts in Northeast Washington ESD 101

- Eric Engle
509-789-3558

For the full list of transportation contacts please see [Student Transportation Contact Information](#)



FAQ 1

Question: What is the role of an LEA in providing school of origin transportation for students in foster care?

Answer: Students in foster care will promptly, without undue delay – e.g., within three business days of completion of the Best Interest Determination meeting - receive school of origin transportation that is age and developmentally appropriate.



FAQ 2

Question: If a student resides in one school district, but it is determined to be in their best interest to attend school in another district, who is responsible for transporting the student?

Answer: Under [RCW 28A.225.350](#) the two school districts will work together to determine the transportation arrangement. For example, one district may bus in the morning, the other district in the afternoon OR one district will transport and the other will pay for 50% of the costs. If there are issues with transportation, school districts can work with DCYF to determine alternate option. Additionally, DCYF is responsible for 50% of the excess costs to transport students in foster care.





FAQ 3

Question: What are some examples of no-cost or low-cost options for transportation that LEA's and child welfare could explore for students in foster care?

Answer:

- If public transportation options exist, and if the student is of an appropriate age and has the skills to utilize such options;
- The student may be dropped off at a school bus stop near the existing transportation system for the school of origin;
- The foster parents, biological parents, or other family member(s) are willing and able to transport the student to school;
- There are pre-existing bus routes or stops close to the new foster care placement that cross LEA boundaries, such as bus routes for magnet schools and transportation for students experiencing homelessness as required by the McKinney-Vento Act; and
- The student is already eligible for transportation covered by other programs.



FAQ 4

Question: If an LEA receiving Title I, Part A funds does not otherwise provide student transportation, is it required to transport children in foster care to their schools of origin?

Answer: Yes. An LEA receiving Title I, Part A funds must ensure that transportation is provided for children in foster care needing transportation to the school of origin consistent with the procedures developed by the LEA in collaboration with the child welfare agency. These requirements apply even if the LEA does not provide transportation for children who are not in foster care.



FAQ 5

Question: Do districts have to transport Foster Care students to daycare?

Answer: Districts are not required to transport Foster Care students to and from daycare. Districts are responsible for transportation from home to school and school to home.

Question: Are districts required to transport Foster Care students to the running start program?

Answer: School districts are not required to transport the student to colleges for the running start program. However, if the school district is providing transportation for non-foster care students, then yes, the school district would have to transport the foster care student also. If the school district isn't transporting any students but decided to offer transportation to the foster care student, DCYF would pick up half the costs.



FAQ 6

Question: Is an LEA required to provide transportation for students in foster care to participate in school sponsored extracurricular activities or out-of-school or summer academic and enrichment programs?

Answer: LEAs must ensure that students in foster care promptly receive transportation to and from their school of origin. This includes transportation for needed academic supports for the student to succeed in school, such as afterschool tutoring and summer learning and enrichment programs. LEAs also are encouraged to provide transportation for the student to meaningfully participate in other school activities that occur outside the regular school day, including extracurricular activities that support their overall well-being. LEAs should take these activities into account when developing their written transportation procedures.



FAQ 7

Question: Do preschool students in foster care qualify for school of origin rights, including transportation?

Answer: Students in foster care have a right to remain in the preschool of origin (the preschool they attended prior to entering foster care or before changing foster homes) if that is in their best interest AND the preschool is operated and administered by the district. The right to remain in the same preschool includes the right to receive transportation (even if preschool transportation is not typically provided).