

Foster Care Back to School Checklist

Identification, Best Interest Determination Meetings, and Enrollment

Action	Resources
Identify students who are in need of a Best Interest Determination Meeting (BIDM). Including: - Students who have entered foster care over the summer. - Students who changed foster care placement over the summer. - Students in foster care who were inadvertently enrolled in a school in your district without a Best Interest Determination meeting. - Students in foster care who have tried enrolling in your school district.	Foster Care Liaison Tasks and Responsibilities Foster Care Liaison CEDARS Instructions* For access to the CEDARS Foster Care Report, reach out to your school district CEDARS administrator. DCYF Regional Education Leads <i>* Note that the CEDARS Foster Care Report will not be accurate until the first enrollment file update in mid-October. The report at the beginning of the year will reflect students in your district at the end of the previous school year.</i>
When a BIDM is needed, the school of origin Foster Care Liaison (FCL) will coordinate with DCYF (the students' caseworker and/or the DCYF Regional Education Lead) and the Foster Care Liaison of the neighborhood school district to schedule a BIDM. If a participant is unable to attend, they can submit the Attendee Input Form.	Foster Care Best Interest Determination Process Best Interest Determination Format and Participants Best Interest Determination: Student Centered Factors Foster Care Best Interest Determination Considerations Best Interest Determination Meeting Infographic Example: Email for Scheduling of Best Interest Determination RCW 28A.225.350 ED and HHS Non-Regulatory Guidance Ensuring Educational Stability and Success for Students in Foster Care
Document the Best Interest Determination Meeting and follow up. After the BIDM send an email to all participants outlining the determination, any next steps, who is	Best Practices: School District Placement Decision Best Interest Determination Tracking Database Example



Action	Resources
responsible for those steps, and the OSPI Dispute Resolution guidance.	• Foster Care Education: Dispute Resolution Process
Obtain student records for any incoming students and respond to requests for records within 2 school days of receiving the request.	• RCW 28A.225.330 • RCW 28A.150.510
Confirm with school level staff that each student in your school district who is in foster care is enrolled in a school at the start of the school year.	• RCW 28A.225.330
Make sure each K-12 elementary, middle, and high school building has an identified Building Point of Contact. • Update Building Point of Contact information on the Foster Care Building Point of Contact webpage.	• RCW 28A.320.148
Reach out to each school Building Point of Contact to inform them of the students in their building who are in foster care and clarify that classroom assignments, schedules, and supports/services are in place for the student to start school on time.	• RCW 28A.320.148

Transportation

Action	Resources
Contact the school district transportation coordinator to clarify that transportation plans are in place for each student in foster care. Provide necessary contact information for caregiver and child welfare caseworker to the transportation department.	• Foster Care Transportation • DCYF Shared Cost Procedure
Ensure your transportation department is aware of which student transportation plan requires coordination with another school district.	• Per RCW 28A.225.350 (8)(a) if a student is remaining in their school of origin but is living in a different school district, both districts share costs and responsibility for transportation.
Notify caregiver and child welfare caseworker of transportation plan.	

Education Decision Maker, Collaboration, and Information and Record Sharing

Action	Resources
Identify the DCYF Regional Education Lead for your region. Reach out to the DCYF Regional Education Lead for questions, processes, and student identification support.	• Foster Care Liaison, DCYF, and State-wide Contacts • DCYF Regional Structure Map
Identify the Educational Decision Maker for each student in foster care. The assumption is that the Educational Decision Maker is the biological/ adoptive parent unless the court has removed their educational decision making rights.	• DCYF School Notification Form
Ensure you, the building point of contact, and the school of attendance has the correct contact information for the child welfare caseworker assigned to each student in foster care.	• Reach out to your DCYF Regional Education Leads
For students in special education, work with the school district special education director and school level special education staff on clarifying the status of the IEP along with supports, services, and equipment	• Special Education Resource Library

needs.

Other Tasks

Action	Resources
For new students, arrange school tours prior to the start of school	• Tips for School Visits
Create a monitoring dashboard to track attendance, academics/credits, and discipline for each student in foster care.	
Make sure any outstanding or new fees and fines are paid for through DCYF.	• Paying School Fees and Fines for Students
Find out if the student has participated in any extracurricular activities in the past or is interested in participating this school year. Work with the school, DCYF, and caregiver to assure the student can participate in extracurriculars.	

Action	Resources
Train district and school staff on the educational stability and success provisions for students in foster care as needed.	