



## Educational Champion Training

### MODULE 5:

### Enrollment in Appropriate Schools and Classes

# Why Focus on Enrollment in Appropriate Schools and Classes ?

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Many Foster youth:

- Frequently experience **multiple changes in school placement**.
- Encounter **barriers to school enrollment** and problems with **transfer of school records**.
- Are enrolled in **inappropriate** schools or classes.

# Understanding the importance of school stability.

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- There are many challenges that come along with a change in school placement.
- When a child moves from one school to another, s/he can face many transitions, including:
  - A new classroom
  - A new teacher
  - A new routine
  - New classmates



## What can I do as an Ed Champion?

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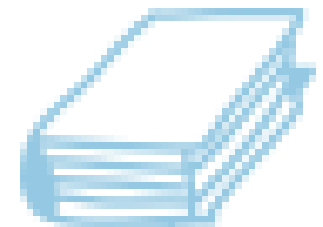
- Educational champions have an **important role** in positioning the child for success; they must ensure the child is enrolled in the right school and classes.
- Promoting **educational stability** for the child is a **KEY FACTOR** in their academic success.
- You can promote school stability by minimizing the # of school placements.

## Do your best to help promote school stability.

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- If the child is facing a possible **school change** and you **don't** think it's in the child's best interest to move schools, **speak up.**
  - Contact the Adult & Child foster youth education liaison, the County Office of Education foster youth services coordinator, the child's attorney, and the DCS caseworker.
  - Advocate for school stability at court hearings.

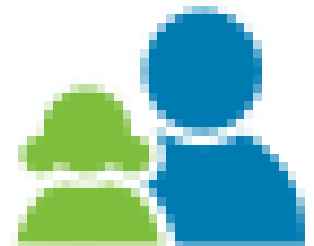


## Are there any school stability laws that can help?

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- Indiana law gives foster youth the right to stay in their “school of origin” (or “home school”), even if they transfer out of the district to an adjoining district, if it is in the child’s best interests.
- For many foster youth, this ensures school stability even when the child’s home placement changes.



# What is a school of origin?

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“School of origin” means:

- The school that the foster child attended when **permanently housed**; OR
- The school in which the foster child was **last enrolled**; OR
- The school the child has a **connection to** AND **attended within the immediately preceding 15 months** AND the foster youth liaison, education rights holder, and child agree is in the **child’s best interests** to deem it the “school of origin.”

# When can the child remain in their school of origin?

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Foster youth must be permitted to:

- Stay at their “school of origin” as long as they remain under the court’s jurisdiction.
- Stay at their “school of origin” for the remainder of the school year, if the court’s jurisdiction is terminated. Matriculate with their peers for as long as the child is in foster care.
- **Example:** A foster youth can stay in the same district/attendance area when transitioning from middle school to high school.



If the child does change schools, support the child through the transition.

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- The new school must enroll the child **immediately**.
- **Missed school days = Missed opportunities for learning!**
- Check with the school to make sure all of the child's **records are transferred**.
- Check with the school to make sure the child received credit for all full and partial coursework completed at other schools.

## Help the child keep the same routines.

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- If the child has **recently changed home placements**, try to help the child keep the same or similar school-related routines.
- If you are the child's **new caregiver**, ask the social worker about any school-related routines or study habits.
- If a child is **leaving your care**, let the social worker know about any school-related routines or study habits, so they can share this with the new caregiver.

## Help make sure the child is in a school placement that is right for him/her.

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- If you believe that the child is enrolled in a school or in classes that are **not right** for him/her, talk to school staff about options and solutions.
- Ensure that the child is in the **least restrictive educational program**.
- Ensure the child has access to the same academic resources, services, and extracurricular activities that are available to all students.

## What if a mainstream class not appropriate?

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The child should attend a mainstream school unless:

- The child has an **Individualized Educational Program (IEP)** requiring a different educational placement; OR
- The ed rights holder determines that it is in the **child's best interests** to attend an educational program that is not a mainstream school.

If age-appropriate, also talk to the child about school placement options.

## Other School Options.

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- There are different types of school placements that might be appropriate options for the child.
- These options may include:
  - Charter schools
  - Continuation high schools
  - Community day schools
  - Nonpublic schools
  - Adult schools
  - Independent study programs, and
  - A variety of alternative education programs, such as Job Corps or Youth Build.

If the youth is in **middle or high school**, make sure his/her classes are the right fit.

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- Talk to the youth regularly about what classes s/he is taking, and how the classes are going.
- If the youth thinks the classes are too easy, talk to the youth and school staff about honors or AP classes.
- If the youth is struggling in a class, talk to the youth and school staff about options and solutions.
  - Is this the **right class** for the youth?
  - Is **tutoring available** in this subject?
  - Can the teacher provide **support or suggestions for improvement**?



Consider getting input from other adults involved in the child's life.

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Especially if the child does not live with you, you may want to ask other adults in the child's life for support and feedback in making education-related decisions.

# My Goals:

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What I will do:

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How often I will do this:

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# Resources.

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This PowerPoint, Tip Sheets, Mentoring Modules, and supporting materials can be found at: [www.foster-ed.org](http://www.foster-ed.org).

If you have questions about the materials, please contact: [info@fostered.org](mailto:info@fostered.org).

Other Resources:

- *AB 490 Factsheet and Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About AB 490*, written by the California Foster Youth Education Task Force, available at [www.cfyetf.org/](http://www.cfyetf.org/)
- *Charter Schools FAQ Section 1 and Alternative Schools of Choice Program Summary*, available at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)