



## Addressing the Educational Needs of Children in Foster Care in Michigan

### Resources and Best Practices

State Court Administrative Office-  
Family Services  
Department of Human Services  
Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice

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# Addressing the Educational Needs of Children in Foster Care in Michigan: Resources and Best Practices

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\*State Court Administrative Office-Child Welfare Services Division was merged with the Friend of the Court Bureau in September 2006 to form Family Services.

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## FOREWORD

In March 2005, a two-day conference on addressing the educational needs of children in foster care was offered by the State Court Administrative Office, Child Welfare Services Division; the Governor's Task Force on Children's Justice; the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Institute; the Office of the Children's Ombudsman; and Children's Charter of the Courts of Michigan. The conference aimed to identify and to come up with responses to the barriers standing between foster children and long-term academic success.

The specific goals of the conference were to:

- Increase the overall knowledge about educational challenges faced by foster children.
- Understand the connection between developmental and emotional issues in early childhood and a child's future academic success.
- Educate professionals about the state and federal mandates that govern foster care and education.
- Inform professionals about the educational services supports available to Michigan's foster children.
- Improve educational advocacy practices for children in foster care.
- Establish higher standards in providing for the educational needs of Michigan's foster children.



### Did you know that ...?

- \* Students lose 4-6 months of academic progress every time they change schools.
- \* Foster children attend an average of 6 different schools in their K-12 experience, and 60-70 percent do not graduate from high school.
- \* The majority of youth in juvenile detention have learning disabilities, and up to 70 percent have mental health issues.

*(Critical Questions and Strategies for Meeting the Education Needs of Children and Youth in Juvenile and Family Court: Information for Judges. Team Child and Casey Family Program, 2002).*

The first day of the conference consisted of plenary sessions and workshops designed to share information about current programs and research. Several national and local speakers shared their knowledge and expertise about education and foster children. The second day consisted of several focus group sessions during which specific barriers and responses to meeting the educational needs of children in foster care were identified and discussed.

There was also a follow-up session held in June 2005 to review and expand upon the information gained from the March conference. The conference steering committee then incorporated the material, generated in June, into the prior recommendations and developed this resource guide to help professionals better address the educational needs of children in foster care.

## INTRODUCTION

Providing for the educational needs of children in foster care can be a daunting task. With issues of abuse and neglect dominating the service goals for each child, it is easy to see how more pressing matters can eclipse a child's need for meaningful education. However, education planning is important for every child and being placed in foster care only serves to decrease each child's chance at academic success. A 2002 study of middle school students in the The Bronx, New York reveals just how much damage foster care can wreak on a child's education. The researchers summarize the findings in their study in the following passage:

*We found that foster children face roadblocks that other economically disadvantaged children do not face, roadblocks that can affect their academic performance. The children had concerns about maintaining ties with their biological parents and caring for siblings that distracted them from schoolwork. Mandated court appearances and doctors' appointments caused them to miss school frequently. Behavior problems—both aggression and withdrawing—which may be rooted in preplacement trauma, kept them from focusing on school. And they often avoided social interactions with peers in order to keep their foster care status hidden. Yet, they blamed themselves—not foster care or the schools—for their poor academic achievement. (Finkelstein, M., Wamsely, M., and Miranda, D.; 2002)*

The researchers then go on to identify some of the shortfalls of the adults who were responsible for ensuring these children received an adequate education.

*The adults in these foster children's lives often lacked a full picture of their educational needs. Foster parents were most concerned with the children's behavior; they rarely expressed concern with their foster children's poor grades, and most did not regularly help with homework. Caseworkers often were not aware of their academic progress, focusing instead on the frequent crises that characterize foster care. School staff usually had little knowledge of a child's foster care background or how bureaucratic demands of the system might explain missed tests or assignments. No one acknowledged primary responsibility for the educational progress of these children. (Finkelstein, M., Wamsley, M., and Miranda, D.; 2002)*

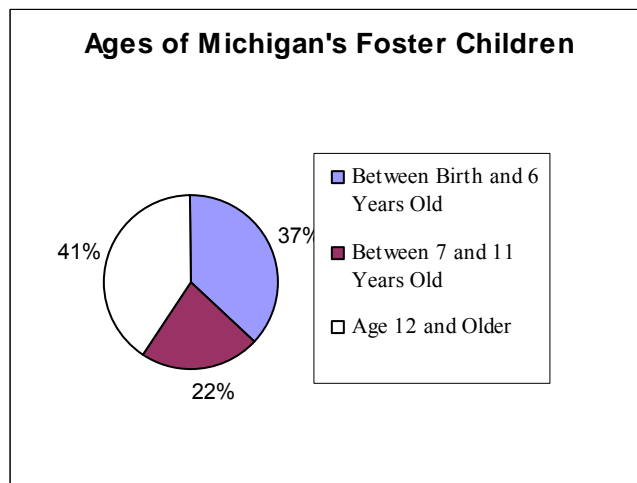
This study is not unique in its findings, and several other national studies have reinforced the issues raised here. In order to increase educational achievement for foster children, it is essential that we make education a priority.

## PURPOSE AND CONTENT

Each person who influences a foster child's education is given an opportunity to mitigate the effects that placement in foster care will have on the child's long-term educational success. This resource guide is the first step toward positively affecting a foster child's education.

The purpose of this resource guide is to:

- Increase the overall knowledge of legal resources and legal requirements regarding foster children and education.
- Outline generally accepted developmental and academic standards for school-aged children.
- Provide information on the educational supports and services available to decrease the negative educational outcomes for children involved with foster care.
- Clarify education advocacy roles for child welfare professionals.



www.michigan.gov/dhs, June 2005 abuse/neglect caseload

For ease of use, this guide has been organized into the following sections:

- **Confidentiality Concerns** highlights commonly encountered confidentiality issues regarding information sharing for foster children.
- **Foster Children in School** outlines some of the unique needs and issues faced by foster children who are attending school. The section also includes a list of common support services that should be provided to foster children.
- **Educational Screening and Assessment** addresses the particular steps to ensuring proper screening and thorough assessment of each foster child's educational needs. Specifically, the section lists the important documents and information that should be collected, outlines the educational background information that should be collected, describes the educational planning team members and timeline, addresses the unique needs of special education students, suggests how to interpret and utilize assessment results, and attends to age-specific concerns and developmental milestones.
- **Creating the Educational Portion of the Service Plan** outlines and lists some common issues and barriers faced by child welfare professionals when they develop an educational plan for a foster child.
- **Implementing the Educational Portion of the Service Plan** addresses *specific issues* (including age-specific concerns) which may arise when an educational service plan is implemented. This section also includes recommended ways to assist a foster child in succeeding at school.

- **Roles and Responsibilities** details the issues and tasks that should be addressed at each stage of the process for the caseworker, the parents, the school, the foster parent or caregiver, the parent’s attorney, the lawyer-guardian ad litem, the prosecuting attorney or assistant attorney general, and the judge or referee.
- **Appendices**
  - Glossary
  - National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Checklist for Judges – questions judges should ask to ensure that educational needs are being properly addressed.
  - Laws, Policies, and Procedures – some applicable state and federal education laws that commonly impact children in foster care.
  - Educational Tests – common educational tests that can be administered to determine the child’s academic level.
  - Preparing Foster Youth for Postsecondary Education – recommended tests, classes and activities for students ninth grade and above in preparation of postsecondary education.
  - Services and Referral Agencies – describes a range of programs, support services, and agencies that can assist with the educational needs of children in foster care. Contact information is also provided, as is a list of websites and hotlines.
  - Initial or Updated Service Plan Suggested Content for Educational Status Section – template
  - Bibliography



## CONFIDENTIALITY

### Confidentiality of Educational Records and Child Protection Proceedings

By Frank E. Vandervort

The Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which provides funding for state educational programming, requires that student records be disclosed to a nonparent only with the written consent of the child's parent, unless the disclosure falls within one of the several exceptions detailed in the statute.<sup>1</sup> 20 USC 1232(b). One of the exemptions provided for in the federal law permits a school to disclose information to "state or local officials or authorities to whom [that] information is allowed to be reported or disclosed pursuant to state statute," if that official certifies in writing "that the information will not be disclosed to any other party except as provided under state law without the prior written consent of the parent of the student." *Id.* If these basic requirements are met, the question of whether children's protective services (CPS) workers, foster care workers and lawyers-guardian ad litem may access a child's educational records is a question largely left to state law.

#### Can an educational professional report suspected child maltreatment to CPS?

As the federal law makes clear, state educational institutions and authorities must generally protect as confidential information gleaned by educational professionals about a child unless a state law specifically provides for the disclosure of that information. Under Michigan's Child Protection Law (CPL), educational professionals are mandated reporters of suspected child maltreatment. MCL 722.623(1)(a). The CPL also contains a broadly written exception to those confidentiality rules, and provides that:

Any legally recognized privileged communication except that between attorney and client or that made to a member of the clergy in his or her professional character in a confession or similarly confidential communication is abrogated and shall not constitute grounds for excusing a report otherwise required to be made or for excluding evidence in a civil child protective proceeding resulting from a report made pursuant to this act. This section does not relieve a member of the clergy from reporting suspected child abuse or child neglect...if that member of the clergy receives information concerning suspected child abuse or neglect while acting in any other capacity listed in MCL 722.623.

The Michigan Supreme Court has interpreted this provision of the law broadly to give courts handling child protective proceedings the maximum access to confidential information. "[T]he purpose of a child protective proceeding," a majority of the court wrote, "is to protect the welfare of the child. It is in the best interest of all parties for the fact finder to be in possession of all relevant information regarding the welfare of the child." *In re Brock*, 442 Mich 101, 119 (1993).

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) contains a confidentiality provision which refers back to FERPA. 20 USC 1417(c). Similarly, Michigan's Freedom of Information Act specifically exempts a student's educational records from its disclosure provisions, and permits disclosure only as permitted by FERPA. MCL 15.243(2).

## **Can CPS gain access to school records beyond the report of suspected abuse or neglect?**

At times, CPS must investigate a case of suspected child maltreatment that would require it to have access to a child's educational records. The CPL specifically directs that school personnel cooperate with CPS during an investigation as provided in MCL 722.628(8). Because these specific statutory provisions require that school authorities report suspected child maltreatment and then cooperate with CPS' investigation of that report, school records should be readily available to CPS workers.

## **Can CPS share educational information with others involved in the case?**

Under the federal FERPA statute, educational institutions that receive federal funding may share a child's educational records with state and local authorities if that state agency or official certifies that those records will not be redisclosed to another party, except as provided for in state law or with parental consent. Under Michigan law, when CPS obtains educational records regarding a child, it may be required to share those records with other professionals as provided for in the CPL.

Michigan law generally makes confidential any information gleaned by CPS in the course of an investigation. MCL 722.627(2). The CPL, however, provides that CPS records are to be made available to certain other individuals or agencies. For instance, a child's lawyer-guardian ad litem has access to CPS' records regarding the case. MCL 722.627(2)(j). Additionally, the court may order that any information in CPS' possession be made available to the court. MCL 722.627(2)(g).

## **Is information in a student's educational record protected by privilege?**

Testimonial privilege, which generally prevents one from testifying regarding the privileged information in his or her possession in court without the permission of the person who is the subject of the information, can be thought of as a special form of confidentiality applicable only in the courtroom. A Michigan statute grants a student a privilege with regard to her or his educational records. MCL 600.2165. That statute states:

No teacher, guidance officer, school executive or other professional person engaged in character building in the public schools or in any other educational institution, including any clerical worker of such schools and institutions, who maintains records of students' behavior or who has records in his custody, or who receives in confidence communications from students or other juveniles, shall be allowed in any proceedings, civil or criminal, in any court of this state, to disclose any information obtained by him from the records or such communications; nor to produce records or transcript thereof, except that testimony may be given, with the consent of the person so confiding or to whom the records relate, if the person is 18 years of age or over, or, if the person is a minor, with the consent of his or her parent or legal guardian.

As was noted earlier in this section, however, the CPL eliminates most testimonial privileges, including those relating to a student's educational records. MCL 722.631.

In Michigan, child protective proceedings are generally open to the public, which means that the contents of a student's educational records may be testified to or discussed in a public forum. MCR 3.925(A).

### **Confidentiality of School Records for Children Receiving Foster Care Services**

Children receiving foster care services in Michigan are placed with the Department of Human Services under a court order. The children are either temporary or permanent court wards. They can be residing with their own parents or guardian, relatives, foster parents, or in residential facilities. Who may consent to the release of information from educational records at public or private schools in Michigan is dependent on the legal status and age of the child. (See chart below.)

FERPA protects each student's educational record with confidentiality rules and procedures; it gives the student's parent or guardian the right to access their child's or ward's educational record in its entirety until the student reaches eighteen years of age, a court terminates the parent's or guardian's rights, or the student enters a postsecondary educational institution before his or her 18th birthday. **Once the student attains age 18 years or enrolls in a postsecondary school, only he or she may access his or her educational records or consent to release of information from those records.**

FERPA also provides that the parent or eligible student must give written permission for the educational program to release information to a third party. Schools may disclose the records, without consent, to comply with a court order or lawfully issued subpoena in cases of health or safety emergencies, or to state and local authorities within a juvenile justice system as provided in specific state law.

The Michigan Department of Human Services Foster Care Manual policy CFF 722-4 authorizes DHS or its contract agencies to release information to service providers, including school personnel, when necessary to provide services for the child.

**Consents Required for Release of Information from Educational Records of Children in Foster Care**

<b>Legal Status</b>	<b>Who Signs the Consents</b>
Temporary court ward	Parent <b>or</b>  Court with jurisdiction over child, if the parent cannot be located or refuses to consent, <b>or</b>  Youth, at 18 years of age
Permanent court ward – non-Michigan Children’s Institute (MCI) ward	Court with jurisdiction over child or whomever it designates by court order, <b>or</b>  Youth, at 18 years of age
Permanent state ward – MCI ward	Superintendent of Michigan Children’s Institute or designee (usually the DHS caseworker or other local DHS official), <b>or</b>  Youth, at 18 years of age

## FOSTER CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

Children in foster care often experience very tumultuous lives outside of school. The information in this section has been adapted from *Acting & Building, Capability: For School Success for Michigan's Foster Children*, created by the Michigan Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.

- Most children in foster care have experienced loss that often results in learning lags and behavioral problems. Loss for the foster child is not only the loss of family, but of community, friends, and natural supports. Foster children experience intense feelings of displacement during the early stages of their new placement.
- All foster children, to some degree, have experienced trauma through physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, or sexual exploitation. This trauma is often cumulative for the child and leads to social and learning problems.
- Most foster children have difficulty trusting adults to help and support them. Some foster children may confuse the foster parent with the perpetrator of the abuse experienced before placement.
- Many foster children are very sensitive to change and transitions that are easily mastered by other children, such as holidays, a new classroom, or a change in their teachers. The sensitivity may be seen in the child through acting out behavior or avoidant/resistant behavior.
- Most foster children have several adults in their lives, all with the goal of helping the foster child. (The birth family or relatives, foster family, the caseworker from the agency responsible for monitoring the placement, the lawyer-guardian ad litem appointed by the court, therapists and other mental health professionals, children's protective service workers, and forensic interviewers.) Interactions with these adults are often stressful to the foster child and may interfere with his or her ability to function in school.
- Most foster children will not achieve their full learning potential until stress is alleviated by the securing of an appropriate permanency plan.



“Because abuse occurs outside the school domain and because it may persist even after a teacher has reported it, many teachers believe there is nothing they can do to help abused children. They perceive both themselves and the children as helpless victims – the children as victims of mistreatment and themselves as victims on these children’s misbehavior and underachievement. It is essential that teachers are made aware of the research evidence that shows that far from being impotent, teachers can have a lifelong impact in steering these children toward resilience and away from dysfunction.”

(Gootman, Marilyn E., *Child Abuse and Its Implications for Early Childhood Educators, Preventing School Failure*, Volume 40, pp. 149-153, Summer 1996).

- Most foster children will have visits with their birth family while they are in foster care. These visits often remind the foster child of the reason for placement and the experiences of separation. Visits may cause temporary setbacks for the child.
- All foster children need to have a close working relationship between their foster parent and their teachers.
- Many foster children resist or are traumatized by school assignments such as completing a family tree, Mother's Day projects, or writing or telling about the scariest thing that ever happened to them.

## **COMMON SUPPORT SERVICES NEEDED BY FOSTER CHILDREN**

While each child's needs must be individually determined, some common support services are:

- One-to-one teacher support.
- Special education services, supports, accommodations, or modifications to address disability-related needs and ensure equal access to school under either special education law or section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (see the "Laws, Policies, and Procedures" section Appendix).
- Children under three years old with disabilities or developmental delays should be referred to the Early On® program mentors (see the "Service and Referral Agencies" section Appendix).
- Tutoring and remedial programs.
- Counselors or school social work services.
- Behavioral and/or transportation aides.
- Extracurricular social/recreational activities.
- Regular team meetings to assess and plan for the needs of the child.
- Modified school assignments.

## EDUCATIONAL SCREENING & ASSESSMENT

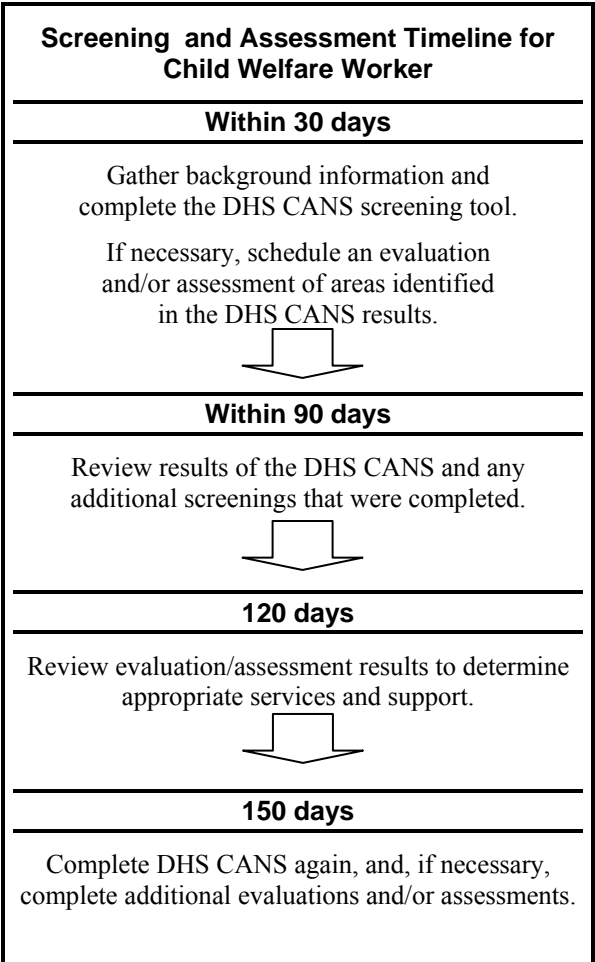
Engaging in the screening and assessment process for each child in foster care can increase his or her chances at future academic achievement. The High/Scope Perry Preschool study demonstrated the long-term effects of early intervention on a child’s future performance. In this study, 65 percent of participants in the High/Scope Perry Preschool program for young children graduated from high school while only 45 percent of the group that did not participate in the program graduated. Although this study is not specific to children in foster care, it has demonstrated that early intervention programs work for other disadvantaged groups. (Schweinhart, L., 2005)

Another study measured the educational experiences of high school-aged foster youth against the experiences of their non-foster peers and found that foster youth were significantly less likely to excel in school. The study matched foster and non-foster youth based on their scores on standardized tests and their grades in order to ensure that the groups had demonstrated similar intellectual abilities. Of the non-foster youth, 32 percent were enrolled in college preparatory classes while only 15 percent of the foster youth were enrolled in college preparatory classes. (Blome, W., 1997)

These research findings, however sobering, represent only a small portion of the overall psychological and emotional damage wrought by the experiences that lead up to foster care and the experience of foster care itself. To determine the best way to support each child in his or her academic endeavors, we must first identify the individual needs of each foster child being served.

Childhood and adolescence are critical periods in a youth’s growth and development. It is not enough to simply meet the minimum standards required by law or policy. Each person who comes into contact with a foster child has the opportunity to positively affect that child’s life. External factors can cause behavior and performance changes in a child. Even siblings with the same history of abuse and neglect respond to these external factors in different ways. However, all of these children will need assistance in reaching their full academic potential.

The first step in providing for a foster child’s education is determining his or her current performance level. The screening and assessment process is vital to each case because it is nearly impossible to effectively address issues that have not been clearly defined. This step will



provide the information needed for all of the future actions to be taken on behalf of the child's education. If conducted in a professional and thorough manner, it will spell future success for the child.

## GATHERING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Before entering foster care, most children have had some involvement with the educational system and it is important to review each child's past performance in determining his or her current educational level. Some areas to consider when gathering information are:

1. Prior educational experience and achievement levels.
  - Contact classroom teachers and determine the child's grade level performance, including involvement in honors or advanced curriculum.
  - Obtain copies of report cards and standardized test results.
  - Review prior Individual Education Program (IEP) documents and psychological evaluation results.
2. Health concerns.
  - Vision, hearing, lead exposure, prenatal exposure to toxic substances, and infections or diseases.
  - Obtain and review the child's medical history and immunization record.
3. The psychological/psychosocial history.
  - Emotional impairment or learning disability.
4. The personal and family history of drug usage, the presence of any learning disabilities, the parent's high school and college completion, and the parent's involvement at the child's school.

### Necessary Medical Tests and Services<sup>2</sup>

- **Comprehensive health assessment**
- **Proper immunizations**
- **Hearing test**
- **Vision test**
- **Dental services**
- **Communicable disease tests**
- **Developmental screening**
- **Mental health screening**

<sup>2</sup> New York State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children. *Addressing the Educational Needs of Children in Foster Care – A Guide for Judges, Advocates and Child Welfare Professionals*. p.16.



## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS/INFORMATION TO OBTAIN

- Court orders placing the child with the Department of Human Services for care and supervision.
- Medical information (medicines to be dispensed at school or medical restrictions, name of the foster child's medical provider, record of immunizations and other important data).
- Name of the lawyer-guardian ad litem.
- Any restrictive orders that specifically limit who may or may not have contact with the child.
- Copy of the Individualized Education Program (IEP), if appropriate, from the last school attended.
- Documentation of who has legal authority to sign school documents (see item A-10 on Educational Supports, Consents, in the "Laws, Policies, and Procedures" Appendix).



### **Older children should have copies of the following items:**

- Birth certificate**
- Social security card**
- School transcripts**
- Standardized test scores**
- Immunization records**
- Driver's license or state ID card**

## ASSEMBLING AN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING TEAM

Each child will benefit from having a team of caring and committed individuals advocating on his or her behalf. To promote stability in the child's education, it is important to involve persons with a long-term interest in the child's educational success. Accurate and thorough planning will result in increased educational opportunities for the child and facilitate prompt identification of the child's educational needs. Individuals who have a personal interest in the child will be able to remain active in the child's education through placement and school changes. Screening and assessment, case plan creation, and educational case plan implementation will all depend upon the skill and dedication of the planning team. Therefore, getting the right people involved is vital to a positive outcome. The current structure of the child welfare system establishes the caseworker as the *de facto* leader in the beginning of the assessment process. After additional team members are identified, someone else may volunteer to act as the child's primary educational coordinator.



### Suggested team members include:

- Child
- Caseworker
- Parent
- Teacher
- Foster Parent/Caregiver
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
- Lawyer–Guardian ad Litem (L-GAL)
- Mentor
- Child's extended family

*See Roles and Responsibilities, p.33*

Children in foster care are often left without familiar surroundings, and school stability may need to be sacrificed in order to ensure the child's physical safety. High worker turnover rates and frequent changes in placement may result in an overall lack of consistency in educational advocacy on the child's behalf. It is in the best interest of everyone involved to designate a person who will remain the child's primary educational coordinator for the duration of his or her time in care.

## DETERMINING THE PROPER EVALUATION AND ESTABLISHING A TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION

Scheduling and completing evaluations in a timely manner can be a difficult task. Depending on the results of the initial screening and follow-up evaluations, a child may need to have additional evaluative tests completed in order to accurately identify his or her educational needs (see "Educational Tests" Appendix). Children who are performing at a level comparable to standards set by the Michigan Department of Education (MDOE) may only need to be reevaluated once each year. Most public school systems will administer at least one standardized test during the school year, and reviewing these results can help the planning team monitor the child's progress. Monitoring each child's academic progress for sudden shifts in performance is imperative to sustaining a positive educational experience. Foster children are dealing with the stress of being

involved in the child welfare system. The effects of this stress may manifest themselves at any time.

The DHS Children's Foster Care Manual directs caseworkers to complete a DHS Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths (CANS) within 30 days of a child entering care and every 90 days thereafter. The caseworker can obtain copies of the child's medical and psychological history to ascertain any health issues that may interfere with his or her education. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)<sup>3</sup> covers confidentiality rules related to the release of medical records and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) covers educational records. If questions arise about how these confidentiality rules apply to a specific child's situation, it is a good idea to consult the prosecuting attorney/assistant attorney general, the lawyer-guardian ad litem (L-GAL) for the child, or both.

The screening process will consist of gathering background information and completion of the DHS-CANS. A complete medical history, including supporting documentation and first hand observation, should be recorded in the case file so that the information collection process does not have to be repeated. Once this information is added to the case file, confidentiality rules will apply. Specific information about these rules can be found in the DHS Children's Foster Care Manual (CFF 722-4; <http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/olmweb/ex/cff/722-4.pdf>).

**MI-ACCESS** is an alternative to the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). It was created to accurately measure the academic performance of students who are not able to take the MEAP, even after accommodations have been made. For more information, visit the Michigan Department of Education website. [www.michigan.gov/mde/0.1607.7-140-22709\\_28463---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-22709_28463---,00.html)

Timelines for monitoring and reevaluation will need to be established for each child. If a foster child is struggling to adjust to a new home or school environment, then frequent evaluations and constant monitoring of the child's academic performance may be necessary. Children who are dealing with disabilities and are receiving special education services will have an Individual Education Program (IEP) or section 504 plan, which specifies the frequency and scope of the child's evaluations. Involvement with the child's IEP planning at the school will ensure that the child is adequately represented and that his or her needs are being met by the IEP.

It is important to coordinate with the parent/foster parent/caregiver to ensure that transportation is available for the foster child on the days and times that appointments are scheduled. If the child needs to travel a long distance, it is a good idea to check with the child's teacher to find out if missing school will cause the child to fall substantially behind the rest of the class. It is also important to make sure that once a series of tests or evaluations begin, they are completed. This will ensure accurate and useable results and decrease the chances of the child having to undergo redundant assessment processes. If you are unsure about how to access funding sources for assessment and testing services, contact the foster care supervisor at your local DHS, or contact your local public education agency to find out which services they provide. There are also some community services agencies listed in the index that assist the parent/foster parent/caregivers with accessing educational testing and support for children, ranging from those who show exceptional academic ability to children who need special education services.

<sup>3</sup> PL 104-191, 42 USC 300 gg *et seq.*

Fees for educational testing services will vary based on the specific test utilized, but some companies offer fee-waivers for low-income students. Funding is available for Advanced Placement (AP) tests through the Michigan Advanced Placement Initiative. In some cases, Youth in Transition (YIT) funds may be used for educational testing purposes. Students with disabilities may also qualify for assessment through Michigan Rehabilitation Services or community mental health service providers (see “Service and Referral Agencies” Appendix). Special education evaluations are given at no cost.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AND SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT**

Children in foster care are especially vulnerable to being placed in special education erroneously, or to having their special education needs overlooked by those charged with their care. In some cases, the child’s primary caregiver or caseworker may believe that the foster child will benefit from the additional support, and therefore may not question the special education classification, even if they suspect that it does not accurately reflect the child’s needs. It is essential that the educational planning team be vigilant in gathering and sharing information regularly to assess the appropriateness of the child’s education plan.

Kathleen McNaught notes in her book, *Learning Curves: Educational Advocacy for Children in Foster Care*, that one of the biggest issues faced by those responsible for determining special education status for foster children, is that “some schools are quick to label a foster child as a special education student, hoping to remove that troubled student from the general population. The IDEA can truly serve children in foster care only when the right students (those with disabilities that impact their educations) are provided the right services in the right placements” (McNaught, 2004).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides for situations in which the child’s parent or guardian<sup>4</sup> does not agree with the special education determination made by the school. If it is suspected that the special education classification does not accurately reflect the child’s educational needs, the parent or guardian has the option to have the child retested by an independent evaluator, at the school’s expense. If the parent or guardian suspects that the child does not need special education services at all, the parent or guardian may choose not to allow the school to classify the child as being in need of special education services. If a school wishes to classify a foster child as needing special education services, the child’s lawyer-guardian ad litem may need to be contacted by the caseworker so that the child will have his or her lawyer-guardian ad litem (L-GAL) present at any special education determination hearings. The child’s

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<sup>4</sup> In the case of foster children, the biological parent retains these rights, unless their rights have been terminated by a court order, or the court has appointed a surrogate to act on the child’s behalf regarding all special education issues. The surrogate cannot be an employee of the state education agency, the lead education agency, or any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the child. 34 CFR 300.515(c)(2)(i). A school may seek an administrative hearing to obtain consent to evaluate a child over the parent’s objections; however, it may not seek an administrative hearing to compel the parent to consent to services suggested in response to the evaluation. A recent United States Supreme Court case [*Schaffer v Weast*, 126 S. Ct. 528 (U.S. 2005)], held that the burden of proof in an administrative hearing challenging an Individual Education Program (IEP) is on the party seeking relief. Typically, this will mean that the parent or child has the burden to persuade the administrative law judge that the IEP decision was not correct, rather than the school having the responsibility of demonstrating that the IEP decision was correct.

L-GAL is in the position to advocate for the best interests of the child and the child has the right to use the L-GAL to convey the child’s opinion about the special education process.

If a foster child is classified as needing special education, the services and supports made available to him or her will be invaluable. Once a foster child’s disability is identified, he or she will be able to get additional help from school programs, and funding for many educational supports will be provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Foster children who are classified as eligible for special education services will also need the ongoing assistance of their L-GAL to advocate for support services specific to their needs. To avoid being given a generic Individual Education Program (IEP) that only provides minimal improvements in the student’s academic performance, the items in the IEP need to be reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness. The caseworker, parent/foster parent/caregiver, or teacher may find it necessary to contact the child’s L-GAL personally if a system of notification is not already in place.

## INTERPRETING AND UTILIZING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Once the screening and assessment process has been completed, it is important to keep a copy of the results in the child’s case file and to distribute the results to the appropriate parties. If the parent is not available or is unwilling to consent to having the child’s educational record released, it may be necessary to obtain a court order to access the records.

Confidentiality restrictions as described in DHS Children’s Foster Care policy (CFF 722-4) may also require that a court order be obtained prior to re-releasing this information to any third parties (i.e., foster parent, educational assessor, or other persons). Once the caseworker becomes aware of a parent’s resistance, he or she should contact the appropriate parties to begin the process of obtaining the necessary court orders. In each child’s case, efforts should be made to encourage parental involvement.

When a child is placed in foster care, the child’s health and education plan, which is part of the child’s service plan, must be reviewed, updated, and given to the foster care provider. The child’s health and education records should contain the following information:

- Names and addresses of the child’s health care and educational providers.
- School record and grade level performance.
- Immunization records, medical problems, and medications.
- Any other health and education information required by the state agency.\*

[42 USC 671(a)(8), 675(D); and 45 CFR 1355.21(1), 1355.30, 205.50]

\*Excerpt from *Sharing Information: A Guide to Federal Laws on Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information for Child Welfare Agencies*, p. 15.

## AGE-SPECIFIC CONCERNS RELATED TO SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

### Birth to Five

As of July 2005, 37 percent or 7,054 of Michigan's foster children were 6 years old or younger. Proper screening and assessment of children in this age group can prevent future academic and developmental delays by allowing for early treatment and care of any identified issues. Often children with a history of trauma, including those who have had prenatal exposure to alcohol, are at a high risk for neurodevelopmental delays which negatively impact their ability to learn and perform at age level. Many foster children also suffer from issues such as poor nutrition, drug exposure, premature birth, and other health problems that can have an adverse effect on their development and education. Therefore, early assessment and monitoring of young children's developmental functioning is a proactive and protective measure when children are identified as "at risk" or placed in foster care.

The developmental milestones listed in this section are for infants and toddlers who are making average progress. Children who have been screened for and identified as having developmental delays will need to be measured against standards appropriate for their individual condition and will need to be closely monitored by a medical professional. As a child advocate, it is important to know what to look for when observing a child and evaluating his or her need for professional evaluation. Taking 30-40 minutes to observe an infant or toddler can give you valuable insight into his or her current development and may raise red flags or areas of concern. The following list is not a checklist; it is intended to give a general overview of what is expected of children at each stage in their development. If red flags are raised, it is important to discuss the child's daily activity with his or her primary caregiver to determine if a child development/medical expert needs to be consulted.

## DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

### 0 TO 12 MONTHS<sup>5</sup>

At this age, children develop familiar patterns of feeding, sleeping, signaling, and interaction. They learn how to focus on things that interest them and block out things that overwhelm them. They are able to identify people who they see regularly and are able to build relationships with these people.

- Language and literacy – gestures, sounds, and facial expressions.
  - Cooing.
  - Smiling.
  - Body movement.
- Thinking skills – cause and effect, size and shape, gravity, and object permanence.
  - Pushing toys around.
  - Placing objects in buckets, or holes.

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<sup>5</sup> Bulleted text from: "Getting Ready for School Begins at Birth: How to Help Your Child Learn in the Early Years," <http://www.zerotothree.org/schoolreadiness/0-12.html>.

- Letting things drop from crib, or high chair.
- Playing peek-a-boo with toys or people.
- Self-control – very little self-control at this age.
- Self-confidence – very little self-confidence at this age.

### **BIRTH TO 3 MONTHS<sup>6</sup>**

- Raises head from surface when lying on tummy.
- Makes eye contact with adults.
- Moves arms and legs in an energetic manner, smiles, and coos.
- Grunts and sighs.
- Likes to be held and rocked.

### **5 TO 7 MONTHS**

- Reaches for, holds, and bangs objects.
- Stretches out arms to be picked up.
- Babbles.
- Holds cookie or cracker – begins chewing.
- Rolls over.

### **9 TO 12 MONTHS**

- Says “Ma-ma” or “Da-da.”
- Copies sounds.
- Waves “hi” or “bye.”
- Able to pull self up at side of crib or playpen.
- Walks holding on to furniture.
- Takes sips from a cup.
- Crawls on hands and knees.
- Hits two objects together; throws and drops objects.

### **3 TO 5 MONTHS**

- Eyes follow slow moving object.
- Able to hold head erect.
- Grasps objects when placed in his or her hand.
- Laughs out loud.
- Anticipates feeding and recognizes familiar faces.
- Sits briefly with support.

### **7 TO 9 MONTHS**

- Can sit steadily for about five minutes.
- Can transfer object from one hand to the other.
- Creeps (pulling body with arms and leg kicks).
- Responds to name.
- Can stand for short time holding on to support.
- Likes to play peek-a-boo.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.thearc.org/publications/devchecklist.pdf>

## 13 TO 24 MONTHS<sup>7</sup>

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Children at this age begin to distinguish between familiar individuals and strangers, and are able to form memories of their caregivers. They become active in exploring their world and develop a sense of confidence about their surroundings.

- Language and literacy - a combination of gestures and sounds to communicate.
  - May take your hand and lead you to the sink to represent wanting a drink of water.
- Thinking skills - begin to figure out the way things work.
  - May throw a ball and see that it bounces, and try throwing other things to see what they will do.
- Self-control—express feeling strongly through words and actions.
  - May use “no” frequently and seem to become easily frustrated.
- Self-Confidence—want to do things on their own, but still need someone there to watch and coach them.
  - May be outgrowing old toys that are less complex to operate.

### 12 TO 15 MONTHS<sup>8</sup>

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- Says several words besides “ma-ma/da-da.”
- Walks even with support by 15 months.
- Finger feeds self.
- Explores toys.

### 15 TO 18 MONTHS

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- Uses 10 to 15 words spontaneously.
- Scribbles on paper after shown how.
- Begins using a spoon.
- Drinks from cup held in both hands.
- Cooperates with dressing.
- Walks across a large room.

### 18 TO 24 MONTHS

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- Can build a tower with three blocks.
- Likes to climb and take things apart.
- Uses single words frequently.
- Begins two-word phrases.
- Able to run.
- Looks at pictures in a book.

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<sup>7</sup> Bulleted text from: “Getting Ready for School Begins at Birth: How to Help Your Child Learn in the Early Years,” <http://www.zerotothree.org/schoolreadiness/12-24.html>.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.thearc.org/publications/devchecklist.pdf>



## 24 TO 36 MONTHS<sup>9</sup>

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These children are becoming more independent, and may become toilet trained (although not necessarily) at this age. They begin to use language to communicate, plan, and remember things.

- Language and literacy – begins to form three- to five-word sentences.
  - May want to create stories or draw illustrations.
- Thinking skills – develop ability to pretend and use imagination.
  - May want to play with simple things like cardboard boxes.
- Self-control – still very impulsive.
  - Responds well to being given choices, “Would you like to brush your teeth or put on your pajamas first?”
- Self-confidence – they feel capable and want to do things for themselves.
  - May want to get dressed alone or brush their hair.

## 24 TO 36 MONTHS<sup>10</sup>

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- Walks up/down stairs using alternate feet, while holding on.
- Says at least 100 words.
- Uses three-word phrases.
- Points to objects in a book.
- Knows his or her sex, body parts.
- Jumps lifting both feet off ground.

## 3 TO 5 YEARS

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Children 3 to 5 years old are typically preparing to attend school. They enjoy being with others and are learning to cooperate when engaging their peers. They have become more secure and self-confident and have a greater sense of personal identity than younger children. They are very adventuresome and are learning about responsibility.

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<sup>9</sup> Bulleted text from: “Getting Ready for School Begins at Birth: How to Help Your Child Learn in the Early Years,” <http://www.zerotothree.org/schoolreadiness/24-36.html>.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.thearc.org/publications/devchecklist.pdf>

### **3 TO 4 YEARS<sup>11</sup>**

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- Opens door by turning the door knob.
- Builds a tower with nine blocks.
- Follows command of on, under, or behind (e.g., “stand on the rug”).
- Names pictures in a book or magazine.
- Understands complex sentences.
- Uses action words.

### **4 TO 5 YEARS**

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- Uses four- to five-word sentences.
- Stands on one foot.
- Throws a ball overhand.
- Enjoys active play: racing, hopping, climbing.
- Points while counting three different objects.
- Names three colors, counts aloud 1-10, can copy a cross.

### **5 TO 6 YEARS**

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#### **5 TO 6 YEARS<sup>12</sup>**

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- Can copy a square.
- Asks questions to seek information.
- Tells age correctly.
- Skips with both feet.
- Catches a small ball on a bounce.
- Dresses him/herself completely.<sup>13</sup>

### **KINDERGARTEN TO 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

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Elementary and middle school grades are a time of significant social, emotional, and cognitive development for all children. The experiences a child had that brought that child into foster care as well as the foster care experiences themselves will impact and influence development in all of these domains. Each child experiences abuse and neglect differently. Further, the timing of the abuse and neglect in relation to the child’s developmental stage impacts the child’s short-term and long-term reactions to a variety of life experiences.

During this period of development, there is slow but steady physical growth with mastery of gross, fine, and perceptual motor skills. Children in this period are constantly moving as they engage in activities that support mastery of motor skills. Cognitively, thinking becomes more logical and rational (real versus pretend), and the child learns to understand and begin to accept the differences in how people think and act.

By **ages 8 to 10**, children begin to recognize the difference between behavior and intent. That is, they can distinguish between the act itself and the reason for the act. For example, a foster child

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.thearc.org/publications/devchecklist.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.thearc.org/publications/devchecklist.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> McNaught, Kathleen, “Learning Curves: Educational Advocacy for Children in Foster Care,” ABA Center on Children and the Law, Washington, D.C., 2004, pp. 85-87. Originally from The Arc of the United States, 1010 Wayne Avenue, Suite 650, Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301) 565-3842, [info@thearc.org](mailto:info@thearc.org).

can begin to understand an explanation of why the parent neglected or abused them and perhaps understand that it may not have been intentional.

By **10 or 11**, they can listen to others' points of view and, if those views conflict with their own, can engage in problem resolution behaviors. The child has an accurate perception of observable or touchable objects, events, and relationships, and is able to adapt his or her behavior to avoid negative consequences. The child can sequence events in time demonstrating understanding of space, time, and dimension. Memory improves so that the child remembers past events as well as increases skills in following instructions and repeating activities independently once mastered. With increased cognitive abilities, the child is able to control behavior and behave intentionally.

Emotionally, the child develops a sense of self based on his or her ability to perform and produce. The child becomes more purposeful and goal directed in activities undertaken. The child develops greater self control and frustration tolerance as he or she ages. Socially, the child begins to develop more relationships outside the family. These relationships are formed and maintained based on a broader understanding of rules that provide structure and security.

*So how might child abuse and neglect affect these developmental expectations?*

Children from these environments often lacked structure to help them understand the “rules of engagement” with adults and peers. They may not have experienced relationships with adults and siblings/peers in which they learned coping strategies or reliance on others outside themselves. They may have experienced inconsistent or denigrating discipline leading them to feel they were inferior, incapable, or unworthy. These experiences could lead the child to mistrust adults and not turn to them for help or comfort, or conversely, the child may excessively seek adult attention and approval. The child may be hypersensitive to how peers perceive him or her. The child may act out feelings of helplessness, inferiority, or lack of control by behaving in an impulsive, controlling, manipulative, or aggressive manner.

Note that “may” and “could” are used extensively. Each child is different and each child’s reaction to abuse and neglect will be different. Those working with these children must determine how the individual child internalized the abuse or neglect and how that child is externalizing the effects of it. One of the best ways to determine this is to ask the child. Fortunately, most children in this age category have the ability to remember the acts of abuse and neglect and their feelings about them.

## **HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND**

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Eventually, all foster children leave the child welfare system. They may return home, be adopted, or age out. Regardless of the reason for leaving the system, planning for life after foster care begins prior to or when the child enters high school. It is imperative that we promote economic success among foster youth and young adults leaving foster care. Advocating and supporting education attainment is an important element of preparation.

Education is essential to obtaining and maintaining employment. Through employment, foster youth can meet other needs, such as housing and health care. At least quarterly monitoring of educational needs must occur to ensure success. Services such as tutoring, counseling, advocacy, or employment readiness provided in the early high school years may prevent a foster

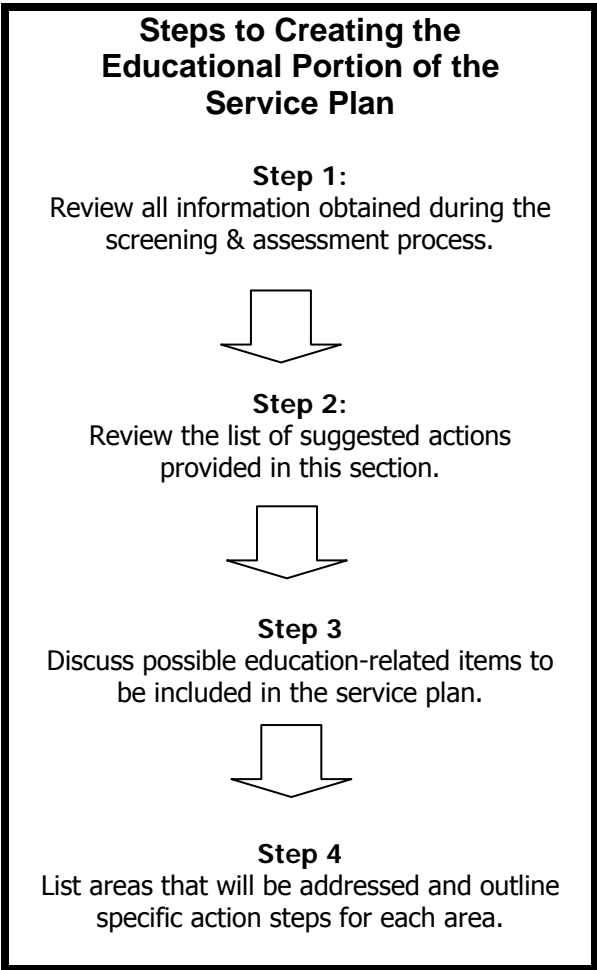
youth from dropping out. With the goal of postsecondary education in mind, establishing plans to achieve high school completion will help to realize the goal (see “Preparing Foster Youth for Postsecondary Education” and “High School Class Record” Appendix). For some youths, career and technical education may be an appropriate alternative to postsecondary education. Many schools offer programs that can prepare a foster youth for a specific, specialized occupation. Foster youth with disabilities who are receiving special education services are also eligible for a transition plan through the school beginning at age 16 as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Even if planning for success is done systematically and appears successful, things can change when a foster youth leaves care. Unless a foster youth has a permanent connection with a caring adult, the incentive and desire to continue on a successful path may wane. Identifying people who are important to the youth and getting their agreement to stay involved with the youth is critical to continuing success. Few youth are able to be completely independent at 18, 19, or even 20. Foster youth and young adults need to have “family” they can rely on for support and advocacy.

## CREATING THE EDUCATIONAL PORTION OF THE SERVICE PLAN

Foster care policy requires development of the Initial Service Plan (ISP) within 30 days of the child’s placement and the Updated Service Plan (USP) every 90 days thereafter. At this point, the preliminary screening results, and some of the evaluation results, should have been secured. The child’s teacher should be able to relay information about how well the child is adjusting and how well he or she has been able to maintain his or her academic performance. It is very important to use firsthand observations of the child and professional assessment results when creating the educational portion of the service plan. Extreme trauma may sometimes affect the child’s behavior for as little as a few days after the incident to as long as several months or years after the trauma. Therefore, reviewing both professional assessment results and individual observations will yield the most accurate picture of what the child needs academically.

*See “Initial or Updated Service Plan – Suggested Content for Educational Status Section” Appendix for a template.*



### ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN PREPARING THE EDUCATIONAL PORTION OF THE SERVICE PLAN

- Have you discussed the child’s education with him or her?
- Have you discussed the child’s education with his or her parent?
- What is the current developmental level or academic grade of the child?
  - Is this the appropriate level for a child of his or her age?
  - Is there a health concern that is impacting his or her development or academic performance?
    - If so, what needs to be done to address this health concern?
      - Who is responsible for ensuring that this action is implemented?
      - What is the timeline for implementation?

- What follow-up will need to be done to ensure effectiveness of the chosen action?
- Does the child suffer from developmental delay or low academic performance?
  - If so, what support services will the child need to address this issue?
    - Who is responsible for ensuring that this action is implemented?
    - What is the timeline for implementation?
    - What follow-up will need to be done to ensure the effectiveness of the chosen action?
- Have you received copies of all of the child's assessment results?
  - If not, which results do you have?
  - Which results are you still awaiting?
  - Does anyone need to be contacted about forwarding the assessment results to you?
  - What is the estimated amount of time before the assessment results will arrive?
- Do you have copies of the child's past and current report cards?
  - If not, how will you obtain these documents?
  - How will you determine if the child is on track to meet all district and state mandates regarding public education?
- Does the child need special education services?
  - If so, did the child have a Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) meeting?
  - Has an Individual Education Program (IEP) been implemented?
    - Is it effectively meeting the child's needs?
    - Are the goals appropriate for the child's age, strengths, and limitations?
    - Are the services being provided in the "least restrictive environment"?
    - Do any changes need to be made to the IEP?
      - If so, who is responsible for meeting with the school and effecting these changes?
- Have all of the necessary evaluations been completed?
  - Who is responsible for providing transportation to the evaluation site?
  - How often will follow-up evaluations need to be done?
  - Who is responsible for scheduling these follow-up evaluations?
- What are the child's strengths in school?
  - What actions are needed to encourage the child's area of strength?
  - Who is responsible for implementing these actions?
- What are the child's weaknesses in school?
- Is the child involved in extracurricular activities?

- Does the child have an education advocate?
- How will the child's quality of education be monitored?
  - Who is responsible for gathering information from the child's school?
  - Who is responsible for meeting with the child to discuss his or her feelings about school?
- What additional information will you be seeking during the next quarter?
  - List the specific assessments, documents, and reports that you will need to gather.
- Is the school making adequate yearly progress under federal and state law?
  - If not, are there support services available to help students reach proficiency?
- Are there any barriers which may impede implementation of the educational portion of the service plan?
  - If so, how will these barriers be overcome?

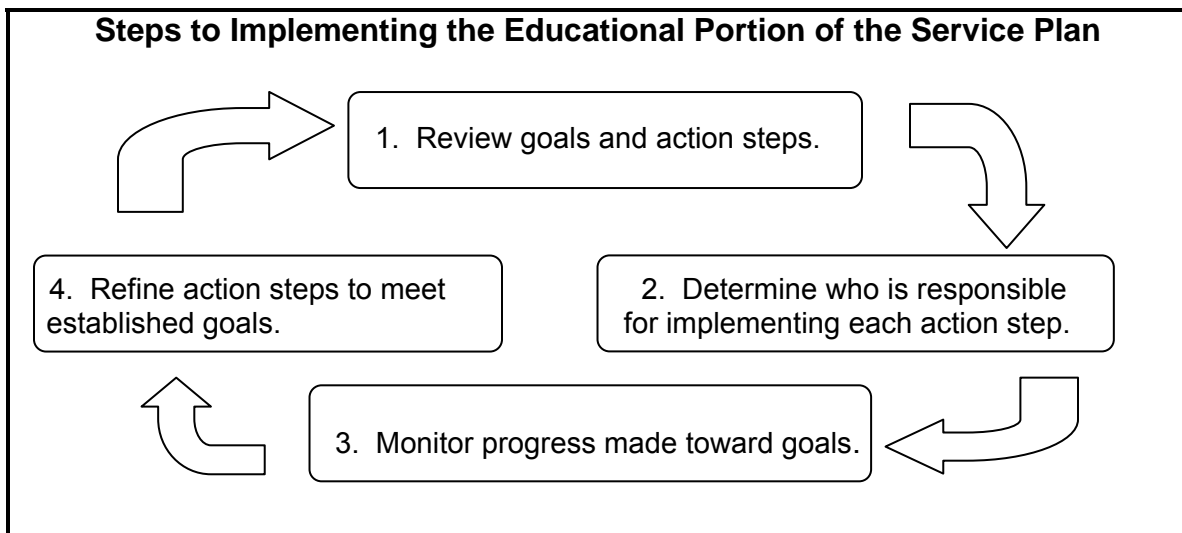
## IMPLEMENTING THE EDUCATIONAL PORTION OF THE SERVICE PLAN

After taking the time to create a comprehensive and individualized service plan, many child welfare practitioners and child advocates become frustrated with the constant barriers to fully implementing that service plan. This step is, however, the most important one in providing a foster child with an appropriate education. In 2000, the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) added Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSRs) to the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) regulations. The CFSR listed meeting each foster child's educational needs as one of the well-being outcomes against which states are evaluated.<sup>14</sup>

Some things that can be done to help a foster child succeed at school are:

**Discuss academic goals with the child on a regular basis** – Engaging the child in conversation may help the child to begin thinking about his or her academic goals and future career. Assist the child in creating his or her personal education plan to follow to ensure that the child has several academic options open to the child (see “Preparing Foster Youth for Postsecondary Education” Appendix, which discusses at length preparing older foster youth for career, technical, and traditional postsecondary education programs).

**Advocate for the child at school** – Address the child's concerns about class assignments by scheduling meetings at the school whenever necessary. Suggest alternative options for meeting prerequisites and enrollment standards if the child has missed substantial amounts of class because of issues relating to his or her foster care status. Some schools may allow the child to take a placement test if he or she has not met established course prerequisites. Other schools may allow the child to enroll in classes where the prerequisites have not been met if he or she is receiving supplemental instruction outside of class time.



<sup>14</sup> ASFA Regulations, 45 CFR 1355.31 *et seq.*



**Address any school disciplinary concerns** – In addition to the added stress of being in foster care, many foster children must deal with school disciplinary policies that did not affect them before. School policies that call for automatic detention or suspension of students who are absent or tardy a certain number of times each semester are especially difficult for foster children. Children in foster care are also dealing with a level of emotional stress that most of their peers are not. A 2002 study conducted by the Vera Institute of Justice found that study participants dealt with several issues that had a negative effect on their ability to do well in school. Among these issues were “sadness about familial separation, concern for siblings and biological parents, difficulty adjusting to a new foster family and school, and worries about the unknown.” (Finkelstein, Wamsley, and Miranda, 2002)

If there are behavioral issues that arise from the child’s placement in foster care, it is important to determine if the school discipline provisions of the IDEA and section 504 apply to that particular situation. Ensure that the child is not being punished for missing school because of foster care-related requirements, such as parent and family visitation sessions, educational and psychological assessments, or medical appointments. Address all disciplinary issues with the school administration to find out what is causing the problem. Suggest alternative responses to disciplinary problems that are affecting the child’s academic development. The school should also take advantage of state resources on the use of positive behavior supports and the functional assessment of behavior in addressing student challenges.

**Respond to all requests for parent conferences** – Often schools use suspension as a way to get the parent to pay attention to the child and ensure that the child’s point of view is heard at disciplinary meetings.

**Advocate from the child’s perspective** – Listen to the child’s point of view before attending meetings and discuss his or her particular concerns. Foster children may be having problems with one particular teacher or class assignment. It is important to remember that teachers are human and sometimes the child is being treated unfairly because of the teacher’s personal biases. In this situation, it may be appropriate to request that the child be transferred to another classroom.

**Identify when disciplinary problems occur** – Close observation may reveal connections between behavioral problems and external triggers. For instance, a child may exhibit behavioral changes after a parent visitation session or refuse to participate in a creative writing assignment that involves disclosing autobiographical information.

## SPECIFIC ISSUES RELATED TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PORTION OF THE SERVICE PLAN

**Participation in extracurricular activities** – Integrate extracurricular activities into the service plan. Adding these activities will establish their importance and may make it easier to convince others involved in the child’s educational planning that it is necessary to schedule other service plan-related activities outside of the time allocated for extracurricular activities. This is also an opportunity to get the child involved in his or her case planning by asking the child which activities he or she is interested in joining.

**Financial concerns** – Remain knowledgeable about all available funding sources to ensure that the child has all of the necessary supplies and equipment for full participation in his or her chosen activity. Secure funding for appropriate support services. Many community organizations offer educational support to low income students at little or no cost. There are also commercial services such as Kaplan and Princeton Review which are highly regarded and may be paid for with Youth in Transition (Chafee) or other foster care funding sources. The Michigan Department of Education also has a program which will pay the Advanced Placement (AP) exam fee for foster children (see “Services and Referral Agencies” Appendix).

**Transportation issues** – Arrange for transportation to and from extracurricular events well in advance and create a contingency plan to ensure that the child does not unnecessarily miss scheduled activities.

**Special requirements imposed by the school** – Ensure that the child is not being given unfair or additional requirements for participating in a class or activity by becoming familiar with the requirements that other students must meet to participate. Do not allow the school to impose additional requirements upon a foster child as a condition of his or her participation.

**Academic placement** – Maintain accurate academic records for the child. Each time that a school transfer becomes necessary, request that a progress report be created by the child’s teachers to ensure that the next school is able to place the child in the appropriate classes. Keep a list of all classes that the child has been enrolled in and ask that schools determine class equivalencies in order to facilitate appropriate placement. Utilize additional academic supports whenever possible.



**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE),\*** means that special education students must have their needs met in the least restrictive way possible. If, for instance, a child is in need of a special tutor in reading because he or she has a learning disability, the parent or guardian may request that an aide be assigned to the student during the reading portion of his or her class instead of the child being placed in a special education classroom. This option allows each student to have his or her special needs met without being removed from the general milieu.

\*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC 1400 *et seq.*

Enrolling an older child in correspondence or online courses to make up for credits lost as a result of the child’s foster care status can enable the child to complete high school on schedule. Accessing tutoring services, study guides, and community services is another way to enable foster children to succeed academically.

## **AGE-SPECIFIC CONCERNS RELATED TO SERVICE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

### **Birth to Five**

Children in this age group are especially vulnerable to having their educational needs overlooked. Ninety days seems like a short period of time for most adults, but for a three year old, it is a substantial portion of his or her entire lifetime. The parent/foster parent/caregiver needs to be engaged in educational planning for children this age because most of the child’s time will be spent in the home. Enrolling the child in early education programs can increase his or her chances of future academic success and help the child form positive peer and adult relationships. Early On® is an important program available to help children three years old and younger and their families address disabilities and developmental delays which may be present (see “Service and Referral Agencies” Appendix).

### **Kindergarten to Eighth Grade**

Children in elementary and middle school are learning how to establish positive peer relationships, and being placed in foster care can cause a significant disruption in this process. If a child is not doing well in school, it may stem from social issues. Discussing parameters for appropriate interpersonal relationships can help the child cope better with adjusting to a new school or new friends (see “Service and Referral Agencies” Appendix).



#### **RESOURCES THAT HELP FOSTER YOUTH OVERCOME BARRIERS TO COLLEGE:**

##### **External:**

- Going to a good high school.
- Having a special teacher or someone else with high expectations.
- Being involved in a special program targeted at low-income or at-risk youth.
- Family support.
- Being provided with financial information about college.

##### **Internal:**

- Motivation and goal setting.
- Effective coping.
- Past successes.

(The Institute for Public Policy and Social Research Policy Brief, Volume 7, p 2, January 2004. [www.ippsr.msu.edu/ppie/policybrief.htm](http://www.ippsr.msu.edu/ppie/policybrief.htm)).

## High School and Beyond

Foster children in this age group are especially vulnerable because once they age out of the system, the number of supports available diminishes drastically, and they are more likely than their peers to suffer from one or more of the following setbacks:<sup>15</sup>

- Unemployment
- Incarceration
- Homelessness
- Substance abuse
- Unwanted/unplanned pregnancy
- Limited education
- Inadequate health care

Some of the areas identified as contributing to the negative outcomes listed above include the following:

- Lack of opportunity to develop good work ethic
- Limited transportation to school and related activities
- Lack of parental control and consistency
- Irregular school attendance because of additional requirements imposed by foster care regulations
- Lack of comprehensive and appropriate intake evaluations and assessments
- Loss of class credits when transferring schools
- Inadequate oversight by professional in ensuring basic academic skills for youth
- Inability to set long term goals due to short term crisis situations
- Lack of encouragement by adults to set high standards and goals
- Difficulty obtaining educational and medical records necessary to school/program enrollment

(See “Service and Referral Agencies” Appendix).

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<sup>15</sup> “Serving Youth Aging Out of Foster Care,” Rachel H. Sherman, “The Finance Project” – Welfare Information Network, Volume 8, Number 5, October 2004.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the roles listed below will be discussed in this section.

- Caseworker
- Parent
- School
- Foster Parent/Caregiver
- Parent's Attorney
- Lawyer-Guardian ad Litem
- Prosecuting Attorney/Assistant Attorney General
- Judge/Referee

### CASEWORKER

#### Screening and Assessment

- Discuss the child's education with him or her.
  - Birth to five, interact with the child regularly. Note and follow-up on any developmental concerns.
  - Kindergarten to eighth grade, discuss school activities and assignments with the child at each visit, and follow up on any concerns that arise from these conversations.
  - High school and beyond, discuss long-term career goals and the educational pathway necessary to achieve these goals. Inform the youth about higher education options and programs.
- Gather information about the child's educational development.
  - Contact the child's parent/foster parent/caregiver for information about the child's home development and activities.
  - Birth to five, contact the child's daycare provider or preschool teacher for information about the child's daily activities.
  - Kindergarten to high school and beyond, contact the child's teachers, coaches, counselors, and club advisors for information on the child's performance and activities at school.
- Obtain a copy of the child's educational record.
  - Request that the child's parent voluntarily allow DHS to access the child's educational record.
  - If the parent does not consent, request that the judge or referee in the child's case issue a court order allowing DHS access to the child's educational record.
  - For high school and beyond, facilitate the child obtaining copies of his or her own educational record.
- Review screening and assessment results and make referrals for evaluations or services as necessary.
  - All children should have a DHS-Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths (CANS) completed, and children from birth to age three should also be referred to Early On®.
  - Arrange for funding and transportation for each evaluation that is undertaken.
  - Review evaluation results and follow up on recommendations given.

- Avoid moving the child from the current school or placement, whenever possible, until the necessary evaluations have been completed.
- Document or maintain copies, in the case file, of all information gathered pertaining to the child's educational experience.
  - Be familiar with report cards, standardized test scores, special education testing results, notes from conversations with the child's teacher, counselor, or coach.

### **Creating the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Contact the child's school for grade completion and curriculum standards.
  - For children birth to age five, complete a developmental assessment.
  - For elementary students, check with the school about stimulating activities, i.e., reading with the child, that should be undertaken outside of school hours.
  - For high school students, check with the local school to determine the school's graduation requirements.
  - Consider all information obtained during screening and assessment and utilize to create the educational portion of the case service plan.
  - Review the questions the court may ask from the checklist "Asking the Right Questions: A Judicial Checklist to Ensure That the Educational Needs of Children and Youth in Foster Care Are Being Addressed."

## Implementing the Educational Portion of the Service Plan

- Compile an educational record<sup>16</sup> for the child and include it in the case file.
- Ensure that the child's school has complete copies of all prior reports cards and the results of all tests and evaluations relevant to the child's education.
- Supply the child's parent/foster parent/caregiver with a copy of the educational record contained in the case file within three business days of the child being placed with them.
- Obtain contact information for the person at the child's school who will be responsible for coordinating the child's transfer into/out of the school.
- Promptly respond to any request made by the school for information or meetings pertaining to the child.

**DESCRIPTION OF EDUCATIONAL  
SUPPORT SERVICE  
Math Tutoring**

*Student Name:* Joshua Jones

*Organization:* Michigan Public Schools

*Contact:* (teacher) Janie Doe, 555-555-5555, Janie@mps.edu

*Date Began:* January 2005

*Purpose:* To prevent Joshua from failing seventh grade math.

*Service provided:* Joshua has a math tutor that assigns homework that must be completed each day. The tutor also reviews completed assignments with Joshua at each scheduled session.

*Progress:* Mrs. Doe has noticed an increase in the quality of work that Joshua is producing.

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<sup>16</sup> See the pull out section of the appendix for a sample educational record form.

## **PARENT**

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*Although creating the service plan is the responsibility of the caseworker, below are some things you can do to help.*

### **Screening and Assessment**

- Birth to five, discuss with the caseworker the child's performance and any concerns. Discuss referrals to Early On® or other services.
- Meet with the child's teacher to discuss the child's performance and any concerns that the teacher may have.
- Maintain an open line of communication with the child's school, caseworker, and foster parent, as appropriate.
- Assist the child with homework or arrange for a tutor.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and extracurricular events for the child.

### **Creating the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Meet with the child's caseworker to discuss the child's performance and any concerns that you may have.
- Maintain an open line of communication with the child's caseworker.

### **Implementing the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Enroll the child in school within three business days of his or her placement in the home.
- Contact the caseworker to request copies of documents necessary to enroll the child in school/extracurricular activities.
- If necessary, provide transportation to and from school and extracurricular activities.
- Compile a list of school supplies and equipment that the child needs and supply a copy of that list to the child's caseworker.
- Contact the caseworker and request that the appropriate release form be signed as soon as you are aware of field trips or other activities that require parental consent.
- Discuss the child's education with the caseworker at each home visit.
- Obtain contact information for the child's lawyer-guardian ad litem.
- Utilize community supports available to assist the child in educational success.
- Provide a place at home for the child to complete his or her homework.
- Set realistic and consistent behavior guidelines for the child to comply with, both in the home and at school.
- Read to the child.
- Maintain an open line of communication with the child.



## **SCHOOL**

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*Although creating the service plan is the responsibility of the caseworker, below are some things you can do to help.*

### **Screening and Assessment**

- Utilize school resources to aid in the screening and assessment process.
- Maintain an open line of communication with the child's parent/foster parent/caregiver.
- Obtain contact information for the child's caseworker, lawyer-guardian ad litem, and parent/foster parent/caregiver.
- From the caseworker, obtain copies of court orders pertaining to the child's placement, restrictions regarding parental contact, screening and assessment issues, and any orders outlining the school's responsibilities.

### **Creating the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Provide the caseworker with requested information.
- Inform the caseworker of special issues that impact the child's functioning or educational progress.

### **Implementing the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Develop a standard system for enrolling foster children to encourage a smooth transition from one school to the next.
- Establish a foster care support group for both foster children and foster parents in your district.
- Request a complete educational record from the prior school when enrolling a foster child.
- Allow the child to begin attending classes, even if the educational record has not yet been received.
- Provide the parent/foster parent/caregiver, caseworker and child's lawyer-guardian ad litem with a school calendar and list of school contact persons.
- Assign the child to an older student who will show them around the school.
- Connect the child with information about useful community supports available.
- Meet with the child and the child's parent/foster parent/caregiver during registration.
- Maintain an open line of communication with the parent/foster parent/caregiver, caseworker, and child's lawyer-guardian ad litem.
- Closely monitor the child's performance for at least the first 30 days of enrollment. Promptly report to the parent/foster parent/caregiver and caseworker any concerns that may arise.

## **FOSTER PARENT/CAREGIVER**

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*Although creating the service plan is the responsibility of the caseworker, below are some things you can do to help.*

### **Screening and Assessment**

- Meet with the child's teacher to discuss the child's performance and any concerns that the teacher may have.
- Maintain an open line of communication with the child's school, caseworker and parent, as appropriate.
- Assist the child with homework or arrange for a tutor.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and extracurricular events for the child.

### **Creating the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Meet with the child's caseworker to discuss the child's performance and any concerns that you may have.
- Maintain an open line of communication with the child's caseworker.

### **Implementing the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Enroll the child in school within three business days of his or her placement in your home.
- Contact the caseworker to request copies of documents necessary to enroll the child in school/extracurricular activities.
- If necessary, provide transportation to and from school and extracurricular activities.
- Compile a list of school supplies and equipment that the child needs and supply a copy of that list to the child's caseworker.
- Contact the caseworker and request that the appropriate release form be signed as soon as you are aware of field trips or other activities that require parental consent.
- Discuss the child's education with the caseworker at each home visit.
- Obtain contact information for the child's lawyer-guardian ad litem.
- Utilize community supports available to assist the child in educational success. Provide a place at home for the child to complete his or her homework.
- Set realistic and consistent behavior guidelines for the child to comply with, both in the home and at school.

## **PARENT'S ATTORNEY**

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*Although creating the service plan is the responsibility of the caseworker, below are some things you can do to help.*

### **Screening and Assessment**

- Encourage your client to cooperate with information requests made regarding the child's education.
- Encourage your client to participate in the educational screening and assessment process for the child.
- Encourage your client to work with the caseworker and foster parent and advise your client to contact you with issues or concerns.

### **Creating the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Discuss with the caseworker the child's performance or any concerns that you or your client may have.

### **Implementing the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Encourage your client to remain involved in the child's education.
- Advocate for your client's interests if your client has been denied copies of documents or not permitted by the school or caseworker to participate in the child's education.

## **LAWYER-GUARDIAN AD LITEM**

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*Although creating the service plan is the responsibility of the caseworker, below are some things you can do to help.*

### **Screening and Assessment**

- Request information about screening results and ensure follow up on areas of concern.
- Discuss the screening and assessment process with the foster child and address any questions or concerns that the child may have.
- Advocate for the child's wishes in regards to when and where evaluations take place.
- Request any necessary court orders or referrals for evaluations.

<p><b>When reviewing a child's case file, the L-GAL should look for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Copies of report cards and/or progress reports.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Notes on conversations held with persons at the child's school.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Specific education-related actions in the case service plan.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of implementation of case service plan items related to education actions (i.e., if a child has tutoring services included in the plan, look for copies of vouchers requesting funding for this service.)</li></ul>
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### **Creating the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Meet with the foster child to discuss any concerns he or she may have
- Meet with the caseworker and discuss the child's performance or any concerns that you or the child may have

### **Implementing the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Contact the school on the child's behalf, whenever necessary.
- Advocate to have the child remain in the same educational program whenever possible, and whenever in the child's best interests.
- Request any necessary court orders or referrals for evaluations.
- Monitor the child's academic progress and the services/supports being provided to the child.

### **PROSECUTING ATTORNEY/ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL**

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*Although creating the service plan is the responsibility of the caseworker, below are some things you can do to help.*

#### **Screening and Assessment**

- Request any necessary court orders or referrals for evaluations.

### **Creating the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Encourage all parties to maintain open lines of communication.

### **Implementing the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Be aware of potential funding sources for educational services and supports. Inform DHS caseworkers of these funding sources if they are unaware of them.
- Advise DHS and private agency caseworkers on Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provisions.
- Research the authority of a state court to take certain actions in a child's case (i.e., appointing a surrogate parent, issuing court orders to release educational information, etc.).
- Request that the court order the involvement of the parent in activities at the child's school, such as parent-teacher conferences and extracurricular activities.
- Consider requesting that the court order L-GAL compliance with the L-GAL statutory duties and request court intervention if the L-GAL is not assisting in the implementation of the child's educational plan.
- When an educational issue arises that requires immediate attention, present prepared stipulated orders that could be agreed upon by all attorneys and quickly presented to the judge for signature, without the need for a hearing. These issues are not typically in dispute, and would often be easily stipulated to by all.

- When stipulation by all parties cannot be easily obtained, the Prosecuting Attorney/Assistant Attorney General should request the court schedule an accelerated hearing date rather than waiting for the regularly scheduled hearing for time-sensitive matters related to the child's education.
- Follow up to make certain educational issues are actually part of the court's order to ensure timely compliance.

## **JUDGE/REFEREE**

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*Although creating the service plan is the responsibility of the caseworker, below are some things you can do to help.*

### **Screening and Assessment**

- Provide court orders to facilitate prompt information release to the appropriate parties.
- Order the parents' involvement in the screening and assessment process.

### **Creating the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Review screening results.
- Require that each identified area of concern be addressed in the service plan or that additional evaluation take place to decide which services are appropriate.

### **Implementing the Educational Portion of the Service Plan**

- Require that the caseworker submit an academic progress update at each hearing.
- Promptly appoint a surrogate parent, if necessary.
- Provide court orders regarding information release to the appropriate parties as necessary.
- Anticipate potential disruption to a child's education and plan to reduce educational instability during placement changes, reunification, or transitioning out of the child welfare system.
- Obtain information about the child's personal educational goals, including talking with the child at court hearings.
- Refer to the next section of the Appendix for the checklist "Asking the Right Questions: A Judicial Checklist to Ensure That the Educational Needs of Children and Youth in Foster Care Are Being Addressed."

## APPENDICES

- Glossary
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Checklist for Judges
- Laws, Policies, and Procedures
- Educational Tests
- Preparing Foster Youth for Postsecondary Education
- Services and Referral Agencies
- Initial or Updated Service Plan/Suggested Content for Educational Status Section
- Bibliography

## GLOSSARY

### A

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**<sup>17</sup> – A state measurement of student achievement, governed and approved by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), and required by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

**Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)**<sup>18</sup> – Collects case level information on all children in foster care for whom state child welfare agencies have responsibility for placement care or supervision, and on children who are adopted under the auspices of the state's public child welfare agency.

**Advanced Placement (AP)** – Tests whose results many colleges accept from high school students as evidence of proficiency in particular subjects. Some schools will use test scores to grant college credit while others will waive class prerequisites for students who have met their core requirements. See also “Advanced Placement (AP) Initiative – Michigan Department of Education” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** – This law prohibits discrimination by private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies, and labor unions against qualified individuals with disabilities. Schools must comply with ADA as a part of state and local government. See also item B-3 on the ADA in the “Laws, Policies, and Procedures” section.

**American College Test (ACT)** – This is the most common college entrance exam in America. Most colleges will accept either this test or the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) as fulfilling their admissions testing requirement. The content of this exam is based on real acquired knowledge and test scores reflect the amount of information that the student has retained from high school.

**Assessment** – A process which determines a child's current educational and developmental level.

**Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD/ADHD)** – This is a psychological disorder in which the sufferer can't stay focused on a task, can't sit still, acts without thinking, and rarely finishes anything. This disorder often appears during a child's preschool years or during elementary school.

### C

**Chafee** – See “Youth in Transition”.

**Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths (CANS)** – The Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths (CANS) is a set of DHS assessment tools used to identify the child's needs and strengths, identify situational concerns, and prioritize needs that must be addressed.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.michigan.gov/som/0,1607,7%20-192-29939-124481--,00.html>

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats\\_research/](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/olmweb/ex/cff/722-8b.pdf>

**Child Care Fund (CCF)** – The Child Care Fund (CCF) is a collaborative effort between state and county governments, including Native American tribes, which fund programs to serve neglected, abused, and delinquent youth in Michigan.

**Child Protective Proceeding** – Proceedings in the family division of the circuit court regarding children under age 18 who are alleged to have been or adjudicated as having been abused or neglected.<sup>20</sup>

**College Level Examination Program (CLEP)** – The College-Level Examination Program®, or CLEP, provides students of any age with the opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement through a program of exams in undergraduate college courses. There are 2,900 colleges that grant credit or advanced standing for CLEP exams.

## D

**Developmental Disabilities** – Developmental disabilities are a diverse group of severe, chronic conditions that are due to mental and/or physical impairments. People with developmental disabilities have problems with major life activities such as language, mobility, learning, self-help, and independent living. Developmental disabilities begin anytime during development up to 22 years of age, and usually last throughout a person’s lifetime.

## E

**Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT)** – EPSDT is Medicaid’s comprehensive and preventive child health program for individuals under the age of 21.

**Early Head Start®** - Age zero to three education program. See also “Michigan Head Start/Early Head Start Program” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

**Early On®** - Early On® Michigan is a system designed to coordinate early intervention and other services for families who have children (ages 0-36 months) experiencing developmental delays or who have disabilities or special needs. See also “Early On® Michigan” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

**Education and Training Voucher (ETV)<sup>21</sup>** – With the enactment of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001, HR 2873, § 201, the federal government has recently provided allocations to states. These vouchers may be provided to eligible youth to help fund their postsecondary educational and training endeavors. Funds from this source are called Education and Training Vouchers (ETV). Youth eligible for this funding opportunity must meet Michigan’s Youth in Transition (YIT) fund eligibility requirements. Youth who were adopted on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday are also eligible. Funds from this source are available to youth until their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday as long as all eligibility requirements continue to be met. See also “Education and Training Voucher” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

**Educational Development Plan (EDP)** – An Education Development Plan (EDP) documents an ongoing process in which a learner identifies both career goals and a plan of action to

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.ingham.org/CC/newpages/juvdefinitions.htm>

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5452\\_7121-83822--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5452_7121-83822--,00.html)



achieve them. The purpose of the EDP is to provide every student with a periodically updated and ongoing record of career planning that will guide the student in taking effective steps to enter a career of choice.

## F

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** – Federal legislation that restricts access to a student’s educational record to specific parties. See also item B-1 on FERPA in the “Laws, Policies, and Procedures” section.

**Federal Direct Loan Program** – The Direct Loan Program offers several different types of loans, which may be included in an aid package designed by a student’s prospective college. The repayment plans may be standard, extended, graduated, or income-contingent.

**Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant** – The Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) provides grants to undergraduate students based on financial need, with the same eligibility requirements as the Pell Grant. The program gives preference to students with the most significant financial need and to those also receiving federal Pell Grants. An FSEOG can be between \$100 and \$4000, and does not need to be repaid. See also “Federal Financial Aid” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

**Federal Work Study** - This program provides funds to colleges to subsidize work done by students. The total award amount is included in the student’s financial aid package and the time it takes to earn the award varies depending on hourly wage. See also “Federal Financial Aid” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)** – Medical condition in a child that may occur due to the mother’s alcohol ingestion during pregnancy and that may lead to developmental and educational delays.

**Foster Care** – For the purposes of this publication, foster care refers to children placed by a court in out-of-home foster care placements as a result of a child protective proceeding.

**Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** – Federal guidelines under IDEA Part B that state schools must provide special education services to qualifying students at no cost to the student or his or her parents.

## G

**General Education Degree (GED)** – The General Education Degree (GED) is a high school equivalency test. In Michigan, the GED tests Language Arts, Reading, Social Studies, Science, Writing, and Mathematics.<sup>22</sup> See also “General Education Development” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

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<sup>22</sup> [http://education-portal.com/articles/All\\_About\\_the\\_GED:\\_\\_Michigan.html](http://education-portal.com/articles/All_About_the_GED:__Michigan.html)

## H

**Head Start®** - Educational program for three to five year olds. See also “Michigan Head Start/Early Head Start Program” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

## I

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** – This federal legislation regulates special education services and programs, and outlines general funding requirements for states and school districts. See also item B-4 on IDEA in the “Laws, Policies, and Procedures” section.

**Individual Education Program (IEP)** – An Individual Education Program (IEP) is required for every child enrolled in special education or similar programs or services. IEPs are individualized programs designed for each specific student, allowing parents, teachers, and others to collaborate for the improvement of a child’s educational development.

**Individual Education Program Team (IEPT)** – A group, composed of the parents of the disabled child, a regular education teacher, a special education teacher, and others, that meets to establish and monitor the IEP.

**Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)** – This plan documents disabilities of young children and guides each child and his or her family through the early intervention process. IFSP is authorized under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Initial Service Plan (ISP)** – Michigan foster care plan that is created for all children who enter foster care within 30 days of their initial placement that identifies issues and needed services for children and their families.

## L

**Lawyer-Guardian ad Litem (L-GAL)** – A lawyer-guardian ad litem (L-GAL) is appointed for each child in a child protective proceeding to advocate for the child’s best interests.

## M

**Michigan Department of Education (MDE/MDOE)** – The Michigan education agency that oversees all educational accrediting, standards, and practices.

**Michigan Education Savings Plan (MESP)** – The Michigan Education Savings Plan (MESP) is a TIAA-managed 529 savings program with seven investment options, including an age-based option and an equity option.

**Michigan Education Trust (MET)** – Michigan Education Trust (MET) allows families to invest funds on behalf of a child, which increases in value until the child is accepted to college.

**Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)** – The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) is a standardized test administered to students in elementary,

middle, and high school. Students with high scores on the MEAP may be awarded a \$2,500 college scholarship.

**Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP)** – The Michigan School Readiness Program (MSRP) is a set of preschool programs for four-year-old children who may be “at risk” of school failure. Each child must have two of the 25 identified risk factors; more than 50 percent of the children must be low income. Both center-based and home-based models are available. All programs must provide strong family involvement/parent education components as well as preschool education.<sup>23</sup> See also “Michigan School Readiness Program” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

## N

**No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)** – The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), first enacted in 2001, is federal law aimed at ensuring the neediest children in the country receive quality education. The Act provides for increased accountability for schools and more flexibility for parents and students, targeting schools that do not meet state standards. See also item B-5 on the NCLB Act in the “Laws, Policies, and Procedures” section.

## P

**Pell Grant** - A Pell Grant is awarded to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor’s or professional degree, based on financial need. The federal financial aid grants are one year in duration and there is a maximum award of \$4000. See also “Federal Financial Aid” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

**Perkins Loan Program** – The Perkins Loan Program provides low-interest loans for undergraduate and graduate students based on financial need. The program is not dependent on credit history and does not require a cosigner. Students can borrow up to \$4000 each year for undergraduate studies and up to \$6000 each year for graduate studies. See also “Federal Financial Aid” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

**Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)** – This national test is taken in eighth, ninth, or tenth grade or all three. Test results may qualify students for certain financial aid programs and provide information on areas of academic achievement and/or need.

**Positive Behavioral Support (PBS)** – A behaviorally-based planning and service approach which enhances the capability of educators and parents to design effective environments that support student learning and behavior.

**Postsecondary Education** – Any academic or career training program which is undertaken after completing high school, completing a GED, or after a student is no longer attending high school.

**Public School Academy (PSA)/Charter School** – A public school academy (PSA), or charter school, is an independent public school started by interested parties and licensed by a school district, community college, or state university. Each school has a unique curriculum.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5234\\_6809-20509--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-5234_6809-20509--,00.html)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.charterschools.org/pages/about.cfm>

## R

**Read, Educate, and Develop Youth (R.E.A.D.Y)** – The Read, Educate, and Develop Youth (R.E.A.D.Y.) program is part of Project Great Start, and aims to expand young children’s capacities for learning. The R.E.A.D.Y. kit contains more than a dozen educational and early childhood development materials, including a child development video, a children’s book, a Sesame Street music cassette, and parent/child learning activities. The kits are available for parents of children birth through age 4.<sup>25</sup>

**Regional Education Service Agency (RESA)** – A Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) conducts various administrative services for its local school districts, potentially including trainings and assistance with early childhood and special education programs.

## S

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)** – Satisfactory academic progress (SAP) is a college’s system of monitoring student progress, as required by federal regulation. Progress is generally measured by several factors, such as grade point average and number of completed credits. Without SAP, students likely risk losing federal, state, and university funds.

**Section 504** – Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal law which prohibits disability-based discrimination in federally funded programs.

**Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)** – This is the second most widely accepted college entrance exam in America. The test results reflect the student’s ability to think critically and comprehend information, regardless of the academic preparation that the student has received from his or her classes.

**Stafford Loan Program** – Stafford Loans are fixed-rate, low interest loans for undergraduate students awarded based on financial need. The loans are not dependent on credit history and do not require a cosigner. See also “Federal Financial Aid” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

**Surrogate Parent** – An individual appointed by the court to make educational decisions on behalf of a child in certain situations when the child’s parent is not available. An appointment of a surrogate parent for educational purposes is made under provisions of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

## T

**Tuition Incentive Program (TIP)**<sup>26</sup> – The Tuition Incentive Program, currently being administered by the Department of Treasury, encourages high school completion by helping to pay college tuition and mandatory fees for eligible students. They must apply before high school graduation or GED completion. For eligibility guidelines, contact the Bureau of Student Financial Services within the Michigan Department of Treasury.

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<sup>25</sup> [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Detailed\\_Overview\\_5-02\\_22112\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Detailed_Overview_5-02_22112_7.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5452\\_7121-18162--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5452_7121-18162--,00.html)

## U

**Upward Bound** – The Upward Bound program is available to high school students from low-income families, families in which neither parent holds a bachelor’s degree, and low-income, first-generation military veterans preparing to enter postsecondary education. The programs provide instruction in math, science, composition, literature, and foreign language, and may include various other services.<sup>27</sup>

## Y

**Youth** – Older foster children are often referred to as “youth.”

**Youth in Transition (YIT)**<sup>28</sup> – The Youth in Transition Program prepares eligible foster care teens for independent living. It provides educational support, job training, independent living skills training, self esteem counseling, and other programs and support to equip teens with educational, vocational, and psychological skills to function as independent adults. The program also provides subsidized job placement, pre-employment training, and job training for delinquent youth. See also “Youth in Transition” in the “Service and Referral Agencies” section.

## Z

**Zero-to-Three** – Zero-to-Three is a national organization that provides information, education, and support to both parents and professionals who influence the lives of infants and toddlers. The organization is concerned principally with the healthy development of very young children.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.ed.gov/programs/trioupbound/index.html>

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5452\\_7121-15610--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5452_7121-15610--,00.html)

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.zerotothree.org/>

**ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS: A JUDICIAL CHECKLIST TO ENSURE  
THAT THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN  
FOSTER CARE ARE BEING ADDRESSED**

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**QUESTIONS TO ENSURE THAT THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
IN FOSTER CARE ARE BEING ADDRESSED**

**GENERAL EDUCATION INFORMATION**

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**Enrollment**

- Is the child or youth enrolled in school?
  - At which school is the child or youth enrolled?
  - In what type of school setting is the child or youth enrolled (e.g., specialized school)?
- How long has the child or youth been attending his/her current school?
  - Where is the school located in relation to the child's or youth's foster care placement?
  - Were efforts made to continue school placement, where feasible?
  
- If currently not in a school setting, what educational services is the child or youth receiving and from whom?
  - Is the child or youth receiving homebound or home-schooled educational services?
  - If Yes: Who is responsible for providing educational materials and what information is available about their quality?
  - If Yes: How frequently are educational sessions taking place?
    - What is the duration of each session? (e.g., how many hours?)

**Provision of Supplies**

- Does the child or youth have appropriate clothing to attend school?
- Does the child or youth have the necessary supplies and equipment (e.g., pens, notebooks, musical instrument) to be successful in school?

**Transportation**

- How is the child or youth getting to and from school?
- What entity (e.g., school, child welfare agency) is responsible for providing transportation?

**Attendance**

- Is the child or youth regularly attending school?
- Has the child or youth been expelled, suspended or excluded from school this year/ever?
  - If Yes: How many times?
  - Have proper due process procedures been followed for the expulsions, suspensions or exclusions from school?
  - What was the nature/reason for the child's or youth's most recent expulsion, suspension or exclusion from school?
  - How many days of school will the child or youth miss as a result of being expelled, suspended or excluded from school?
  - If currently not attending school, what educational services is the child or youth receiving and from whom?
- How many days of school has the child or youth missed this year?
  - What is the reason for these absences?
  - What steps have been taken to address these absences?
  - Has the child or youth received any truanancies, and if so, for how many days?
  - Has the child or youth been tardy, and if so, how many times?

**Performance Level**

- When did the child or youth last receive an educational evaluation or assessment?
  - How current is this educational evaluation or assessment?
  - How comprehensive is this assessment?
- At which grade level is this child or youth currently performing? [Is the child or youth academically on target?]
  - Is this the appropriate grade level at which the child or youth should be functioning?
    - If No: What is the appropriate grade level for this child or youth?

- Is there a specified plan in place to help this child or youth reach that level?
- What is this child's or youth's current grade point average?
  - If below average, what efforts are being made to address this issue?
- Is the child or youth receiving any tutoring or other academic supportive services?
  - If Yes: In which subjects?

## **TRACKING EDUCATION INFORMATION**

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- Does this child or youth have a responsible adult serving as an educational advocate?
  - If Yes: Who is this adult?
    - How long has this adult been advocating for the child's or youth's educational needs?
    - How often does this adult meet with the child or youth?
    - Does this adult attend scheduled meetings on behalf of the child or youth?
    - Is this adult effective as an advocate?
- If there is no designated educational advocate, who ensures that the child's or youth's educational needs are being met?
  - Who is making sure that the child or youth is attending school?
  - Who gathers and communicates information about the child's or youth's educational history and needs?
  - Who is responsible for educational decision-making for the child or youth?
  - Who monitors the child's or youth's educational progress on an ongoing basis?
  - Who is notified by the school if the child or youth is absent (i.e., foster parent, social worker)?
  - Who could be appointed to advocate on behalf of the child or youth if his or her educational needs are not being met?

## **CHANGE IN PLACEMENT/ CHANGE OF SCHOOL**

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- Has the child or youth experienced a change in schools as a result of a change in his or her foster care placement?
  - If Yes: How many times has this occurred?
  - What information, if any, has been provided to the child's or youth's new school about his or her needs?
  - Did this change in foster care placement result in the child or youth missing any school?
    - If Yes: How many days of school did the child or youth miss?
      - Have any of these absences resulted in a truancy petition?
  - Were efforts made to maintain the child or youth in his or her original school despite foster care placement change?

## **HEALTH FACTORS IMPACTING EDUCATION**

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### ***Physical Health***

- Does the child or youth have any *physical* issues that impair his or her ability to learn, interact appropriately, or attend school regularly (e.g., hearing impairment, visual impairment)?
  - If Yes: What is the physical issue?
    - How is this physical issue impacting the child's or youth's education?
    - How is this need being addressed?

### ***Mental Health***

- Does the child or youth have any *mental* health issues that impair his or her ability to learn, interact appropriately, or attend school regularly?
  - If Yes: What is the mental health issue?
    - How is this mental health issue impacting the child's or youth's education?
    - How is this need being addressed?



Addressing the Educational Needs of Children in Foster Care in Michigan: Resources and Best Practices  
- National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Checklist for Judges -

- Is the child or youth currently being prescribed any psychotropic medications?
  - If Yes: Which medications have been prescribed?
    - Has the need for the child or youth to be taking this medication been directly explained to him or her?
    - How will this medication effect the child's or youth's educational experience?

**Emotional Issues**

- Does the child or youth have any *emotional* issues that impair his or her ability to learn, interact appropriately, or attend school regularly?
  - If Yes: What is this emotional issue?
    - How is this emotional issue impacting the child's or youth's education?
    - How is this need being addressed?
- Is the child or youth experiencing any difficulty interacting with other children or youth at school (e.g., Does the child or youth have a network of friends? Has he or she experienced any difficulty with bullying?)
  - If Yes: What is being done to address this issue?

**Special Education and Related Services under IDEA and Section 504**

- If the child or youth has a physical, mental health or emotional disability that impacts learning, has this child or youth (birth to age 21) been evaluated for Special Education/Section 504 eligibility and services?
  - If No: Who will make a referral for evaluation or assessment?
  - If Yes: What are the results of such an assessment?
    - Have the assessment results been shared with the appropriate individuals at the school?
- Does the child or youth have an appointed surrogate pursuant to IDEA (e.g., child's or youth's birth parent, someone else meeting the IDEA definition of parent, or an appointed surrogate parent)?
  - If No: Who is the person that can best speak on behalf of the educational needs of the child or youth?
  - Has the court used its authority to appoint a surrogate for the child or youth?
  - Has the child's or youth's education decision-maker been informed of all information in the assessment and does that individual understand the results?
- Does this child or youth have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?
  - If Yes: Is the child's or youth's parent or caretaker cooperating in giving IEP information to the appropriate stakeholders or signing releases?
  - Is this plan meeting the child's or youth's needs?
  - Is the child's or youth's educational decision-maker fully participating in developing the IEP and do they agree with the plan?
- Does this child or youth have a Section 504 Plan?
  - If Yes: Is this plan meeting his or her needs?
  - Is there an advocate for the child or youth participating in meetings and development of this plan?

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND TALENTS**

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- What are some of identifiable areas in which the child or youth is excelling at school?
- Is this child or youth involved in any extracurricular activities?
  - If Yes: Which activities is the child or youth involved in?
    - Are efforts being made to allow this child or youth to continue in his or her extracurricular activities (e.g., provision of transportation, additional equipment, etc.)?
- Have any of the child's or youth's talents been identified?
  - If Yes: What are these talents?

- What efforts are being made to encourage the child or youth to pursue these talents?

## TRANSITIONING

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- Does the youth have an independent living plan?
  - If Yes: Did the youth participate in developing this plan?
  - Does this plan reflect the youth's goals?
  - Does the plan include participation in Chafee independent living services?
  - Does this plan include vocational or post-secondary educational goals and preparation for the youth?
- Is the youth receiving assistance in applying for post-secondary schooling or vocational training?
- Is the youth being provided with information and assistance in applying for financial aid, including federally-funded Education and Training Vouchers (see Chafee Foster Care Independence Program)?
- If the youth has an IEP, does it address transition issues?
  - If Yes: What does this transition plan entail?
  - Did the youth participate in developing the transition plan?
  - Is this transition plan coordinated with the youth's independent living plan?

**Practice Tip:** When appropriate, consider addressing these questions directly to the children and youth.

For more information about this Checklist, its accompanying *Technical Assistance Brief*, the evaluation project, or to obtain additional copies, please contact:

Permanency Planning for Children Department  
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges  
P.O. Box 8970  
Reno, NV 89507  
Phone: (775) 327-5300  
E-mail: [ppcd@ncjfcj.org](mailto:ppcd@ncjfcj.org)  
Website: [www.ncjfcj.org](http://www.ncjfcj.org)

Additional copies of this Checklist and its accompanying Technical Assistance Brief are also available for download at [www.ncjfcj.org](http://www.ncjfcj.org).



## LAWS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

Federal and state laws, policies, and procedures impact the education of children in foster care. In this section, we will briefly describe pertinent laws, policies, and procedures to provide a general awareness of the scope of each.

**Laws, policies, and procedures change.** You should verify that the provisions are current before relying on them.

Michigan laws are known as Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL), and are accessible online at: [www.michiganlegislature.org](http://www.michiganlegislature.org).

Michigan policies and procedures for all executive agencies of Michigan government are accessible at: [www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov).

Specific agencies that have policies of interest are the Michigan Department of Human Services, Michigan Department of Community Health, and Michigan Department of Education.

DHS policy and procedure manuals, including the foster care manual, are accessible at: [www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5458\\_7700---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5458_7700---,00.html)

Court rules are accessible at the Michigan Supreme Court site: [www.courts.michigan.gov](http://www.courts.michigan.gov).

In addition, the “Education and Children’s Services” link on the [www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov) home page is an integrated website for Michigan policies, procedures, and initiatives.

Federal laws, including the United States Code (USC) and Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), can be accessed online at: <http://thomas.loc.gov> or [www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov).

Policies and regulations for all federal executive agencies are accessible at: [www.firstgov.gov/](http://www.firstgov.gov/).

Agencies with policies or regulations of interest are the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education.

### **A. Michigan Laws, policies, and procedures**

#### **1. Residency (MCL 380.951-380.955, 380.1148, 380.1148a, 380.1401-380.1416, 380.1561, 388.1603, 388.1705, and 388.1763a)**

Foster children may attend school in the school district in which either of their biological parents or their guardian resides; any district in which the child has been placed by a court order; in the district of the child’s residence if the child is living with a relative for the purpose of providing a suitable home or if the child is 18 years of age or older. If the foster child is awaiting placement, the child may enroll in school under the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless

Assistance Act (42 USC 11301). The Homeless Education Office for Michigan can be reached at 517-241-1162.

**2. Enrollment/Proof of Identity and Age (MCL 380.1135)**

The person who enrolls a child in school has 30 days to provide “reliable proof” of the child’s identity and age. Usually a certified copy of the child’s birth certificate is requested. Other forms of reliable proof may be accepted at the school district’s discretion. If no proof is available, a sworn and notarized statement of the parent or guardian will suffice. The school district cannot mandate the release of a child’s social security number in order to enroll or attend school in their district as provided under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

DHS policy CFF 722-2 references rule 400.12409, requiring that a child must be enrolled in school within 10 school days of being placed in foster care. The supervising agency, either the Department of Human Services or a private foster care agency, is responsible for informing the school, in writing, of the person responsible for supervising the child’s case, as well as the person responsible for the child’s direct care.

**3. Prekindergarten Programming: Early On, Early Head Start, Head Start Enrollment**

Michigan has several prekindergarten programs. The Early On® program is designed to identify and provide supports to children who may have developmental lags. All foster children from birth to three must be screened for Early On® services and be provided with needed supports, if determined eligible.

All foster children are eligible for enrollment in Early Head Start and Head Start programs. These programs are not entitlements, so enrollment is on a space-available basis within each county. Early Head Start programs are not available in every county.

Michigan has an initiative designed to have all children “Ready to Succeed” when they enter school. As of this writing, that initiative is not fully developed.

**4. Kindergarten Enrollment (MCL 380.1147)**

The child may enroll if the child is “at least 5 years of age on December 1 of the school year of enrollment.” If the district has semiannual promotions, the child may enroll for the second semester if the child is “at least 5 years of age on March 1 of the year of enrollment.”

If the school district does not have a kindergarten program and the child is at least 5 years old on the first day of the school year, he or she is entitled to be enrolled in school for that school year.

**5. Special Education Enrollment (MCL 380.1701(a) *et seq.*, MCL 340.1721)**

Children with cognitive, emotional, speech, hearing, or sight impairments or developmental delays may be eligible for special education services. Anyone who believes that a child might be disabled may refer the child for an evaluation. Parental consent is required to commence an evaluation. The evaluation is to be completed within 30 school days after the parental consent to evaluate is given.

A child determined eligible for special education services is to be enrolled in the school the child would attend if not in need of special education services, unless the IEP team determines that a program at another location is more appropriate.

IEP plans are reviewed annually. Eligibility for special education services is redetermined every three years.

**6. High School Dual Enrollment (MCL 388.511-388.554)**

In 1996, the Michigan Legislature passed the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act or “dual enrollment bill.” The act modified and expanded on provisions of the State School Aid Act providing for the participation of eligible high school students in dual enrollment or postsecondary enrollment options.

The act also requires that the board of a school district or public school academy ensure that each student in eighth grade or higher be given information about college level-equivalent or Advanced Placement courses and permit students in tenth grade to take the MEAP High School Test to qualify to take postsecondary courses. The classes that students are eligible for must not be offered by the high school or academy and must lead towards accreditation, certification, or trade licensing.

**7. Foster Child Enrollment in Nonpublic Schools (CFF 722-2)**

DHS policy requires parental permission for a temporary court ward to participate in either a home schooling program or a private school program. If the parental rights of the child’s parents have been terminated, DHS can consent to these enrollments.

**8. Information Sharing (CFF 722-4)**

The foster parent/relative/unrelated caregiver is required to be given access to “copies of all case service plans and medical, mental and education reports on the child...” If the information cannot be given to the caregiver prior to placement,

the information must be presented, if in written form, within seven calendar days of the child's placement (CFF 722-4). If the caregiver submits a written request for the information listed above, the supervising agency must provide such information within ten business days.

Information contained in the case file may be released to the following persons when in the best interest of the child: Lawyer-guardian ad litem (L-GAL), teachers, foster parents, counselors, and courts. Additional instances of information release are determined on a case-by-case basis, and must be in the best interest of the child.

## **9. Transportation (MCL 380.1321)**

School districts are not required to provide transportation for regular education students. They are required to provide transportation if the student's IEP states that transportation is a specialized service necessary to carry out the student's IEP. School boards may elect to provide transportation. If they do, they must have written policies governing all aspects of the service.

## **10. Educational Supports**

In general, the school district is responsible for providing educational supports, including required educational supplies and tutoring support for students who are not achieving. Thus, discussions of educational supports should begin with the child's school. In addition, DHS Children's Foster Care manual addresses policies and procedures for meeting the educational needs of children in foster care and accessing various educational supports for them when the school is not required to provide them.

### **a. Consents**

CFF 722-11 Delegation of Parental Consent addresses these issues:

- Authorization for psychotropic medication
- Out-of-state travel
- Driver's license
- Surrogate parent for educational purposes
- Surrogate parent selection requirements
- Record of the surrogate parent appointment process

Generally, either the parent or legal guardian can give consent for the child's out-of-state travel and driver's training/license. However only the parent may give consent for the child's nonemergency medical care and education. If the parent cannot be located, after reasonable efforts to do so, then the court with jurisdiction may consent or, in the case of a child needing special education services, appoint a surrogate parent for educational purposes.

For children who are permanent wards committed to the state under the Michigan Children's Institute statute, only the Michigan Children's Institute Superintendent may give consent for the child's nonemergency medical care. The supervising agency can give permission for out-of-state travel and the caseworker can sign for a driver's training/license. A surrogate parent for educational purposes must be appointed for a child needing special education services.

The court retaining jurisdiction must give these consents for permanent wards not committed to the state as MCI wards. A surrogate parent for educational purposes must be appointed for a child needing special education services.

b. Special payments

CFF 903-9 Nonscheduled Payments addresses these issues:

- School tutoring
- Driver's education
- Costs for enrichment expenses
- Graduation expenses
- Medical expense – state wards only
- Mental health – psychological evaluation
- Transportation
- Out-of-state school tuition
- Reimbursement for birth certificates

In general, payment for all of these services is available to all children in foster care. Prior authorization of the local DHS office is required except for the medical services covered by Medical Assistance (MA). Where MA does not cover a service or there is no MA provider in the community, special payments can be made with prior authorization. School tutoring is covered only where the school does not provide it, the child has received a failing grade, and the teacher provides a written request that documents the need for tutoring.

CFF 960 the Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

The ETV program creates vouchers of up to \$5000 per year available to eligible youth aging out of foster care attending postsecondary educational and vocational programs.

Youth are eligible if they meet the following requirements:

- Were in foster care on or after their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday because of abuse/neglect or were adopted from foster care on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.



And

- Have a high school diploma or GED.
- Are under the age of 21.
- Attend, at least half-time, an accredited school.

Youth are eligible until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday if they meet the above criteria. If the youth participated in the program before his or her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, eligibility continues until age 23, if the youth received at least a 2.0 GPA.

The ETV can be used for school-related expenses such as:

- Tuition and fees.
- Room and board.
- Student loans.
- Books and school supplies.
- Transportation.
- Personal computer/supplies.
- Miscellaneous personal expenses.
- Health care expenses.
- Child care.

Youth can get the application or more information at:

- The local Department of Human Services office within the youth's county of residence
- Lutheran Social Services of Michigan  
209 E. Washington, Ste. 284  
Jackson, MI 49201  
1-877-660-METV (6388), or
- Online at: [www.mietv.lssm.org](http://www.mietv.lssm.org)

**11. Suspensions and Expulsions (MCL 380.11a, 380.1309, 380.1310, 380.1311, 380.1311a, 380.1312, and 380.1313)**

Each school district must have a Student Code of Conduct that explains the district's suspension and expulsion policies. These policies must include provisions for due process hearings and petitions for school reinstatement.

Special requirements exist for determining appropriate disciplinary procedures for special education students. Your local intermediate school district (ISD) special education director may inform you of these processes, or you may contact the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services at 888-320-8384.

School districts are not required to provide an alternative education program for expelled students (Opinion of the Attorney General, 1985, No. 6271). Parents or guardians are responsible for locating and enrolling the student in an alternative education program during the expulsion period. The resident district's approval is not required for enrollment in alternative education programs. (MCL

388.1606(6)(j). Information on programs across the state can be obtained by calling 517-241-0726 or by visiting <http://michigansafeschools.org>.

## 12. Graduation Requirements

The State Board of Education approved the Michigan Merit Core Curriculum on December 13, 2005. The academic courses required for graduation for the freshman class entering in September 2006 include:

- Four years of English language arts
- one year each of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and an additional math class in the senior year
- One year each of Biology, Physics, or Chemistry, and one additional year of science
- Three years of social science, which must include a semester of civics and a semester of economics
- Two years of world languages
- One year of health/physical education
- One year of visual and performing arts

[www.michigan.gov/documents/Michigan\\_Merit\\_Core\\_144995\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Michigan_Merit_Core_144995_7.pdf)

In addition, the State Board of Education also required that all high school students take the Michigan Merit Exam, or the alternative MI-ACCESS assessment for students with severe disabilities. The board also required that all students complete at least one online credit course.

### B. Federal Laws and Policies

*NOTE: There are many federal laws pertaining to education. The laws summarized here are those that most often impact children in foster care. All of these laws have many provisions. They are summarized here to provide general knowledge of their content and to provide direction for further search if specific issues arise.*

#### 1. **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), PL 93-380, 20 USC 1232g et seq., 34 CFR Part 99.**

Protects each student's educational record with confidentiality rules and procedures; gives the student's parent/guardian the right to access the child's or ward's educational record in its entirety until the student reaches 18 years of age, a court terminates the parent/guardian's rights, or the student enters postsecondary educational institute. Once the student attains age 18 or enrolls in a postsecondary school, only the student may access his or her educational records.

Further, FERPA provides that the parent or eligible student must give written permission for the educational program to release information to a third party. Schools may disclose

the records, without consent, to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, in cases of health and safety emergencies, or to state and local authorities within a juvenile justice system as provided under specific state law.

**2. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, PL 100-77, 42 USC 11301 *et seq.***

Establishes guidelines for educating homeless youth and outlines the rights of homeless students to have “equal access to the same free, appropriate public education.” Each school district is to provide this access without delay and without residency considerations. (42 USC 11431).

**3. Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), PL 93-112, 29 USC 794 *et seq.*, 45 CFR Part 84.**

These acts and regulations protect individuals with disabilities against discrimination because of the disability. They must be provided access to all services for which they would otherwise be eligible to access and could access, but for the disability.

**4. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (IDEA), PL 105-17, 20 USC 1400 *et seq.*, 34 CFR Part 300**

IDEA is the key federal statute providing guidelines and financial assistance to states for the provision of early intervention services and educational programming for persons with disabilities between the ages of birth to 21 years.

It provides protection to students who meet the special education requirements set in this law, establishes funding for additional support to special education students, and sets guidelines for special education program administration. IDEA also requires that special education programs provide access to the general curriculum.

Part B - covers children age 3 to 21 with disabilities and assures that they will have available special education and related services to meet their unique educational needs.

Part H - covers infants and toddlers from birth to age 3 who have established conditions associated with developmental delay or who are developmentally delayed, and assures early intervention. (See SRM 265, **Early On** for more information.)

Part B and Part H provide procedural safeguards related to parental notice and consent, one of which is the appointment of a surrogate parent for educational purposes under certain conditions.

Appointment of a surrogate parent for educational purposes for children with disabilities or developmental delays is required under any of the three very limited circumstances:

- No parent can be identified,

- The responsible DHS agency, after documented reasonable efforts cannot discover the whereabouts of a parent, or
- The child is a ward of the state or court and parental rights have been terminated.

Michigan has adopted the provisions of IDEA in its special education rules, but extends the age range from birth to age 26.

**5. No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), PL 107-110, 20 USC 6301 *et seq.***

This is the key federal legislation providing funding to states designed to promote academic achievement of all students, particularly the economically disadvantaged. School districts have federal funds available to provide tutoring and other supports to students who are not achieving at grade level.

**6. Higher Education Act (HEA), PL 89-329, 20 USC 1001 *et seq.***

Establishes federal grant and loan programs to assist low income persons with accessing and paying for postsecondary education. Some of the programs are:

- Pell Grant
- Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)
- Upward Bound
- Perkins Loan Program
- Federal Direct Loan Program
- Stafford Loan Program
- Many other programs administered by colleges and high schools

In general, any child in foster care at 18 years of age or older is eligible for these programs as a “family of one.” This means that the child completes the financial aid application independently and no consideration of parental income or support is necessary. For more information, go to [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov).

*Note: The following statutes are specific to children’s protective services, foster care, and adoption programming. They are quite extensive. Only those provisions that are pertinent to the educational needs of children in foster care are included here.*

**7. Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), PL 93-247, 42 USC 5101 *et seq.***

This statute, originally enacted in 1974 and amended several times since then, is the key federal legislation supporting state efforts to prevent, identify, and intervene in child abuse and neglect matters.

The 2003 amendment requires states to refer substantiated cases of abuse and neglect to the IDEA, Part C early intervention program in the state. Michigan’s program is called Early On®.

**8. Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA), PL 95-608, 25 USC 1901 *et seq.***

Enacted to protect the sovereignty of recognized Indian tribes and establish a tribe's right to notification any time a state court intervenes in a child abuse and neglect matter involving an Indian child. ICWA also provides that the involved tribe has the right to assume jurisdiction of the case.

ICWA further provides that Indian children in the public child welfare system, whether under the jurisdiction of the tribal court or the state court, are afforded the same protections and services as non-Indian children.

**9. Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA), PL 105-89, 42 USC 1305 *et seq.***

ASFA amended the Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Act of 1980. It emphasizes three areas of concern: child safety, child well-being, and permanency.

It also requires the federal government to establish outcomes and standards for each of these areas and to conduct assessments of each state's achievement of these outcomes. This process is known as the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). An emphasis of the CFSR is that "children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs."

**10. Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (Chafee), PL 106-169, 42 USC 1305 *et seq.***

Provides funding to the states for services and programs to assist foster youth ages 14 and older to acquire necessary life skills to assist them with transitioning out of the foster care system and living independently.

## EDUCATIONAL TESTS

The following is a partial list of educational tests that can be administered to determine the child or youth's academic level. Although many of these tests may be administered without the assistance of the child or youth's school, most schools will provide educational testing services for all students in their district.

Company	Test Name	Age/Grade Range
<b>College Board</b> <a href="http://www.collegeboard.com/splash">www.collegeboard.com/splash</a>	Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)	11th – 12th grade
	Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT)	10th – 11th grade
	Advanced Placement (AP)	9th – 12th grade
	College Level Examination Program (CLEP)	During college
<b>American College Testing Program, Inc.</b> <a href="http://www.act.org/">www.act.org/</a>	American College Test (ACT)	11th – 12th grade
	Pre-ACT (PLAN)	9th – 10th grade
	ASSET	During college
	Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP)	During College
	EXPLORE	8th – 9th grade
	Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS)	8th – 12th grade
	Career Programs Assessment Test (CPAt)	Post-high school
	WorkKeys	Post-high school
	COMPASS/ESL	During college
	California Achievement Test (CAT)	K – 12th grade
Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT)	1st – 12th grade	
<b>Michigan Department of Education</b> <a href="http://www.michigan.gov/mde">www.michigan.gov/mde</a>	Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)	Elementary – High School
	MI-ACCESS	Elementary – High School

## PREPARING FOSTER YOUTH FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

<b>Ninth Grade</b>	PLAN /PSAT	English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Computer Science, and challenging electives.	Take as many college preparatory courses as you are comfortable with and choose electives that are both challenging and interesting. Take driver's education if possible and spend at least ten hours volunteering during the school year. It is also a good idea to explore academic clubs and other extracurricular activities that interest you.
<b>Tenth Grade</b>	PLAN /PSAT	English, Math, Science, Foreign Language, Social Studies, and challenging electives.	Continue to take college preparatory classes and challenging electives. Find an extracurricular activity that you enjoy. Common activities are part time employment, volunteering, academic clubs, and sports.
<b>Eleventh Grade</b>	ACT /SAT and MEAP	English, Math, Science, Foreign Language, and challenging electives.	Continue taking college preparatory classes, challenging electives, and participate in extracurricular activities that interest you. Begin requesting information from colleges and researching scholarship opportunities.
<b>Twelfth Grade</b>	Retake ACT/SAT if necessary.	English, Math, Social Studies, Foreign Language, and challenging electives.	Continue participation in extracurricular activities and select challenging electives that interest you. Decide on a backup plan in case you are not accepted to the school of your choice. Research service learning opportunities such as AmeriCorps or secure employment for the next year. Taking classes at a community college and transferring or doing an internship are also good ideas.
<b>Post-High School (graduates and GED recipients)</b>	Take ACT/SAT if necessary for college enrollment.	Enroll in remedial classes at your local community college if necessary.	Participate in volunteer activities in your community. Research schools and career training programs as well as scholarship opportunities.

\*Reprinted with permission of the Michigan Foster Education Resource Network at [www.foster-education.org](http://www.foster-education.org)

## SERVICE AND REFERRAL AGENCIES

Summaries and contact information for the organizations listed below will be provided in this section.

### Education: General/All Ages

- Bridges 4 Kids
- Capital Area Literacy Coalition
- Casey Family Programs (A Road Map for Learning: Improving Educational Outcomes in Foster Care)
- Center for Educational Networking
- Character Counts! (CC!)
- Detroit Kids
- Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)
- Michigan Alternative Education
- Michigan Department of Education (MDE)
- Supplemental Educational Services Providers List
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

### Education: Young Children

- Be Their Hero from Age Zero Initiative (birth to five years)
- Building Strong Families (BSF) (birth to three years)
- Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) (birth to five years)
- Early On ® Michigan
- Even Start Family Literacy Program (birth to seven years)
- Great Parents, Great Start (birth to five years)
- Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MiAEYC)
- Michigan Head Start/Early Head Start Program
- Michigan Ready to Succeed Project
- Michigan School Readiness Program (four years)
- Women Infants and Children (WIC)

### Education: Youth/High School

- Advanced Placement (AP) Initiative – Michigan Department of Education
- General Education Development
- Grand Rapids Academic Summer Program (GRASP) (eighth grade)
- High School Dual Enrollment Program
- Michigan Virtual High School (MVHS)

### Education: Postsecondary (including grants, scholarships, and financial aid)

- AmeriCorps
- Casey Family Programs (“It’s My Life” Publications)
- Casey Family Scholars
- Education and Training Voucher
- Federal Student Aid
- GEAR UP Scholarship
- Michigan Adult Part time Grant
- Michigan Competitive Scholarship
- Michigan Education Opportunity Grant (MEOG)
- Michigan Foster Education Resource Network (MI-FERN)
- Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver
- Michigan Merit Award
- Michigan Nursing Scholarship
- Michigan Post-Secondary Admissions and Financial Assistance Handbook
- Michigan Tuition Grant
- Michigan Work Study
- Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship
- Subsidized Housing
- Tuition Incentive Program (TIP)

### Parent/Caregiver Support Services

- Circle of Parents
- Community Coordinated Child Care (4 C’s)
- MOMS Club
- Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) Club



### **Disabilities and Special Education/Needs**

- Arc Michigan
- Autism Society of Michigan
- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD)
- Disability Resources
- Michigan Alternate Assessment Program (MI-Access)
- Michigan Alternative Education
- Michigan Yellow Pages for Kids with Disabilities
- Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service (MPAS)
- National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Student Advocacy Center
- Zero to Five Advocacy Network (ZFAN)

### **Transition to Adulthood**

- Casey Family Programs (Casey Lifeskills Test)
- Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
- Job Corps
- Subsidized Housing
- Youth in Transition

### **Advocacy Services**

- Association for Children's Mental Health
- Autism Society of Michigan
- Children's Charter of the Courts of Michigan
- Citizen's Alliance to Uphold Special Education (CAUSE)
- Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE)
- Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)

### **Other Foster Care Services**

- Foster Care Review Boards
- Office of Children's Ombudsman
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), Michigan

### **Miscellaneous**

- *At-Risk Teens*
  - The Ark
- *Confidentiality*
  - Mythbusting: Breaking Down Confidentiality and Decision-Making Barriers to Meet the Education Needs of Children in Foster Care
- *Health*
  - Southwest Michigan Children's Trauma Assessment Center (CTAC)
- *Mentoring Programs*
  - Big Brothers Big Sisters

## **Advanced Placement (AP) Initiative – Michigan Department of Education**

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Mr. David Mills  
608 West Allegan Street  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Hannah Building  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Telephone: (517) 373-4213  
millsd@michigan.gov  
www.michigan.gov/mde

This program will pay for AP test fees, class fees, and supplementary materials for students who are taking AP courses online through selected Michigan colleges and universities. These courses are currently available at the following locations: Michigan State University Virtual University (<http://vu.msu.edu/site/>) and Michigan Virtual University (<http://www.mivu.org/>). This is a statewide resource available to high school students who are taking an advanced placement curriculum.

## **AmeriCorps**

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AmeriCorps®  
1201 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20525  
Telephone: (202) 606-5000  
TTY: (202) 606-3472  
E-mail: [questions@americorps.gov](mailto:questions@americorps.gov)

AmeriCorps® is a year-long program that allows Americans to engage in community service while receiving a small living stipend. Volunteers In Service to America (VISTA) programs also allow for an educational award of up to \$4,500 to be used while studying at an accredited postsecondary institution, or to pay back student loans. To find a program near you go online to [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org) and search for Michigan programs. Most programs are open to U.S. citizens 17 and older.

## **Arc Michigan**

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1-800-292-7851  
[www.arcmi.org/](http://www.arcmi.org/)

Arc Michigan provides support and information for Michigan residents living with a developmental disability. The website has links to local resources and Arc Chapters.

## **The Ark**

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1-800-873-TEEN  
The Ark provides crisis intervention, emergency shelter, substance abuse treatment, and counseling services for 16-21 year old runaways and at-risk youth. The program is located in the city of Kalamazoo.

### **Association for Children's Mental Health**

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1-800-782-0883  
[www.acmh-mi.org/](http://www.acmh-mi.org/)

This organization seeks to promote the development of a system of care for the families of children with emotional, behavioral, or mental health disorders through community education and awareness, family support and involvement, and the persistent pursuit of advocacy to improve the quality of life for Michigan's families.

### **Autism Society of Michigan**

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Statewide ASM Chapters and Support Groups  
All ages  
1-800-223-6722  
[www.autism-mi.org](http://www.autism-mi.org)

The Autism Society of Michigan (ASM) seeks to assure full participation and self-determination in every aspect of life for each individual. They do this by opening avenues of self-advocacy and advocating on behalf of others in a way that values equity, respect, dignity, and diversity in all communities.

### **Be Their Hero from Age Zero Initiative**

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[www.herofromzero.org](http://www.herofromzero.org)

This website contains links to information that can assist caregivers of young children from birth to age five in providing proper care and ensuring healthy development. The website has a link to each Michigan county and district.

### **Big Brothers Big Sisters**

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[www.bbbsa.org](http://www.bbbsa.org)

The goal of Big Brothers Big Sisters is providing successful mentoring relationships for all children who need and want them, and contributing to better schools, brighter futures, and stronger communities for all. The organization helps children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-to-one relationships with measurable impact. Children between the ages of 6 and 18 are eligible for participation.

### **Bridges 4 Kids**

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[info@bridges4kids.org](mailto:info@bridges4kids.org)  
[www.bridges4kids.org](http://www.bridges4kids.org)

Bridges 4 Kids is a nonprofit parent organization providing a comprehensive system of information and referrals for parents of children from birth through transition to adult life.

### **Building Strong Families (BSF)**

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Dawn Contreras, Program Leader, Family Strengths, Michigan State University Extension  
[Contreras@msue-msu.edu](mailto:Contreras@msue-msu.edu)  
<http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,%207-124-5439-15367--,00.html>

Building Strong Families (BSF) is a family-focused, community-based educational intervention for parents and caregivers of young children, particularly those who are at risk for poor outcomes. They offer a practical lifeskills curriculum which is taught by paraprofessional educators, who themselves were often low-income and are members of the participants' communities. Currently, MSU Extension offers BSF in 43 counties throughout Michigan. Children from birth to age three are eligible for participation.

### **Capital Area Literacy Coalition**

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1028 E. Saginaw  
Lansing, MI 48906  
Telephone: (517) 485-4949  
Fax: (517) 485-1924  
mail@thereadingpeople.org  
www.thereadingpeople.org

The Capital Area Literacy Coalition helps children and adults learn to read, write, and speak English with an ultimate goal of helping individuals achieve self-sufficiency. It provides direct services and enhances literacy efforts of community organizations in the capital area and throughout the state of Michigan.

### **Casey Family Programs**

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1300 Dexter Avenue North, Floor 3  
Seattle, WA 98109-3542  
Phone: (206) 282-7300  
Fax: (206) 282-3555  
<http://www.casey.org/>

Casey Family Programs is a national foundation that provides services for children, youth, and families in the child welfare system. The program aims to nurture youth in care and to help strengthen families at risk of needing foster care. The website includes several valuable resources, including:

- **Casey Lifeskills Test**  
[www.caseylifeskills.org](http://www.caseylifeskills.org)  
On this website, you will find free and easy-to-use tools to help young people prepare for adulthood. The lifeskills assessments provide instant feedback. Customized learning plans provide a clear outline of next steps, and the accompanying teaching resources are available for free or at a minimal cost.
- **“It’s My Life” Publications**  
[www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/IMLPostsecondaryEd.htm](http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/IMLPostsecondaryEd.htm)  
The main website contains various publications for youths in transition to adulthood, including “It’s My Life: Postsecondary Education and Training,” which helps child welfare professionals and educators prepare youths academically, financially, and emotionally for postsecondary education and training success.
- **A Road Map for Learning: Improving Educational Outcomes in Foster Care**  
<http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/RoadMapForLearning.htm>  
This website contains a guide aimed at achieving successful educational outcomes for

youth in foster care, with resources for parents, caregivers, teachers, and child welfare professionals. The guide focuses on K-12 students.

### **Casey Family Scholars**

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Orphan Foundation of America  
21351 Gentry Drive  
Unit 130  
Sterling, VA 20166  
Telephone: (571) 203-0270  
Fax: (571) 203- 0273  
[www.orphan.org](http://www.orphan.org)

This is an annual scholarship competition open to orphans and foster children who have graduated from high school and who have spent at least 12 consecutive months in foster care, or were orphaned, and were not adopted before their 18th birthday. The competition has two phases; the first ends in April and the second in June. The scholarship awards up to \$10,000 to each winner.

### **Center for Educational Networking**

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1-800-593-9146 Extension #4  
[www.cenmi.org](http://www.cenmi.org)

The Center for Educational Networking (CEN) is a statewide education information network offering products and services through a variety of print and electronic media. Children between the ages of 3 and 21 may benefit from program materials. There is also an online directory of services for children with disabilities, which is updated quarterly.

### **Character Counts! (CC!)**

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CHARACTER COUNTS!  
National Office Josephson Institute of Ethics  
9841 Airport Blvd., Suite 300  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
Telephone: (310) 846-4800  
Fax: (310) 846-4858  
[www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)

Character Counts is the most widely implemented approach to character education. It's a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian framework that teaches the Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. The CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition embraces thousands of schools, communities, and nonprofits. The national office provides consulting and training services and produces support materials and special projects.

### **Children's Charter of the Courts of Michigan**

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324 N. Pine St., #1  
Lansing, MI 48933  
Telephone: (517) 482-7533  
Fax: (517) 482-2626  
deborahjensen@childcrt.org  
www.childcrt.org

Children's Charter addresses a variety of child and family issues through general education, professional and technical training, assisting communities in developing services and programs, and providing public policy advocacy. Children's Charter oversees the Michigan Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (MICASAA) and, in partnership with the Children's Trust Fund, is the state chapter for Prevent Child Abuse Michigan. Children's Charter also provides staff support for the Zero to Five Advocacy Network (ZFAN) and the Unified System of Learning (USL).

### **Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (CHADD)**

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1-800-233-4050  
www.chaddmi.com

This is a support group for people who are dealing with ADD and ADHD. The group is formed on a city or community-wide basis, and usually meets at least once each month. The website has contact information for each support group.

### **Circle of Parents**

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Michigan Children's Trust Fund  
235 S. Grand Avenue, Suite 1411  
Lansing, MI 48933  
Telephone: (517) 373-4320  
Fax: (517) 241-7038  
www.circleofparents.org

This is a weekly support group for parents and caregivers. Some chapters also have children's support groups.

### **Citizen's Alliance to Uphold Special Education (CAUSE)**

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info@causeonline.org  
www.causeonline.org

This organization provides free information, referral, support, advocacy and workshops to parents, caregivers, and professionals who are working with children who have disabilities and/or special needs.

### **Community Coordinated Child Care (4 C's)**

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Michigan 4C Association  
839 Centennial Way  
Lansing, Michigan 48917  
Telephone: (517) 351-4171 or 1-800-950-4171  
Fax: (517) 351-0157  
mi4c@mi4c.org  
www.mi4c.org

The Michigan 4C Association promotes and advocates for the optimal care and development of Michigan's children and families through the statewide Community Coordinated Child Care (4C) Network.

### **Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE)**

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CADRE  
P.O. Box 51360  
Eugene, OR 97405-0906  
3411-A Willamette Street  
Eugene, OR 97405-5122  
Telephone: (541) 686-5060  
Fax: (541) 686-5063  
TTY: (541) 284-4740  
www.directionservice.org/cadre/index.cfm

CADRE, The National Center on Dispute Resolution, is funded by the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. CADRE uses advanced technology as well as traditional means to provide technical assistance to state departments of education on implementation of the mediation requirements under IDEA '97. CADRE also supports parents, educators, and administrators to benefit from the full continuum of dispute resolution options that can prevent and resolve conflict and ultimately lead to informed partnerships that focus on results for children and youth.

### **Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)**

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(954) 966-4489  
www.copaa.org/

The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Inc. (COPAA) is an independent, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization of attorneys, advocates, and parents that operates nationwide. The organization's primary mission is to secure high quality educational services for children with disabilities.

### **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), Michigan**

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324 N. Pine St., #1  
Lansing, MI 48933  
Telephone: (517) 482-7533  
Fax: (517) 482-2626  
patriciawagner@childcrt.org  
www.childcrt.org

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer is a trained citizen who is appointed by a judge to represent the best interests of a child in court. Children helped by CASA volunteers include those for whom home placement is being determined in family court. Most of the children are victims of abuse and neglect. The state association of CASA (MICASAA), a program of Children's Charter, provides new and existing program development, technical assistance, and volunteer and director training.

### **Detroit Kids**

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Detroit  
School Aged Children  
[www.detroitkids.org](http://www.detroitkids.org)

This is a directory of more than 4,000 programs that provide activities and support to Detroit children, teens, and families.

### **Disability Resources**

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Four Glatter Lane  
Centereach, NY 11720-1032  
Phone/Fax: (631) 585-0290  
[pubs@disabilityresources.org](mailto:pubs@disabilityresources.org)  
[www.disabilityresources.org/MICHIGAN.html](http://www.disabilityresources.org/MICHIGAN.html)

This is an online directory of resources for people dealing with a disability.

### **Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC)**

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Great Start for Kids  
Attn: Michael Foley  
221 N. Pine  
Lansing, MI 48933  
Telephone: (517) 371-9053  
Fax: (517) 371-9080  
[info@greatstartforkids.org](mailto:info@greatstartforkids.org)  
[www.greatstartforkids.org](http://www.greatstartforkids.org); [www.michigan.gov/greatstart](http://www.michigan.gov/greatstart)

This organization works to improve early education programs and resources for children from birth to five. It distributes the popular R.E.A.D.Y. kits.

### **Early On® Michigan**

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1-800-EARLY-ON  
1-866-334-KIDS (Training and Technical Assistance)  
[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)

Early On is a system of early intervention supports and services to infants, toddlers, and their families. Early On® is based on the same service areas as the intermediate/regional school district area. Each service area has an Early On® Coordinator.



## **Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)**

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1-800-LET-ERIC (538-3742)  
[www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov)

This is a national database of educational information that contains articles, training materials, and additional literature pertaining to education research and practices.

## **Education and Training Voucher**

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Michigan Family Independence Agency, Children's Services  
Attn: Shannon Gibson, YIT Coordinator  
235 S. Grand Ave, Suite 510  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Telephone: (517) 241-8904  
Fax: (517) 241-7047  
[www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs)

This program provides funds to pursue postsecondary education and training at accredited institutions that award a degree or certificate. To be eligible, youth must have been in foster care for at least 24 hours after their 14th birthday and not have been adopted before their 16th birthday. Applications are accepted at any time and awards are made annually. The maximum award is \$5,000 per year.

## **Even Start Family Literacy Program**

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Please see the MDE website for a complete list of programs and for contact information.  
[www.michigan.gov/familyliteracy](http://www.michigan.gov/familyliteracy), [www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)

This program seeks to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the nation's low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program. Children from birth to age 7 and their primary caregivers are eligible to participate.

## **Federal Student Aid**

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[www.studentaid.ed.gov/](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/)

- **Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant** – The Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) provides grants to undergraduate students based on financial need, with the same eligibility requirements as the Pell Grant. The program gives preference to students with the most significant financial need and to those also receiving federal Pell Grants. An FSEOG can be between \$100 and \$4000, and does not need to be repaid. Check with your intended school's financial aid office for information about their FSEOG money.
- **Federal Work Study** - This program provides funds to colleges to subsidize work done by students. The total award amount is included in the student's financial aid package and the time it takes to earn the award varies depending on the hourly wage.
- **Pell Grant** - A Pell Grant is awarded to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or professional degree, based on financial need. The federal financial aid

grants are one year in duration and there is a maximum award of \$4000. Eligibility is determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The application may be filled out at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

- **Perkins Loan Program** – The Perkins Loan Program provides low-interest loans for undergraduate and graduate students based on financial need. The program is not dependent on credit history and does not require a cosigner. Students can borrow up to \$4000 each year for undergraduate studies and up to \$6000 each year for graduate studies. Payments and interest are deferred while the student is attending school at least half time, and there is a 9-month grace period after graduation before loan payments must be made.
- **Stafford Loan Program** – Stafford loans are fixed-rate, low-interest loans for undergraduate students awarded based on financial need. The loans are not dependent on credit history and do not require a cosigner. Payments and interest are deferred while the student is attending school at least half time, and there is a 6-month grace period after graduation before loan payments must be made. Repayment plans include standard, graduated, income-sensitive, and extended. Contact the Direct Loan Servicing Center – Borrower Services: 1-800-848-0979 or 1-315-738-6634; Fax: 1-800-848-0984; TTY: 1-800-848-0983; [www.dl.ed.gov](http://www.dl.ed.gov).

### **Foster Care Review Boards**

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Foster Care Review Board Program, State Court Administrative Office  
PO Box 30048  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Telephone: (517) 373-1956  
Fax: (517) 373-8922  
[www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/services/fcrb/fcrb.htm](http://www.courts.michigan.gov/scao/services/fcrb/fcrb.htm)

The Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) provides citizen review of court and social agency efforts to find permanent families for children in foster care. The need for review resulted from the perception that children entered foster care to escape an abusive home, but then languished in the system. Although the family division of circuit court, Department of Human Services (DHS), and private child placement agencies all play major roles in addressing children in care, it is difficult for any single one of them to provide an independent, objective assessment of the foster care system. Local citizen review boards can provide an objective look at the activities of the primary players in the foster care system.

### **GEAR UP Scholarship**

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1-877-323-2287  
[www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid](http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid)

Students may be eligible for a postsecondary scholarship if they attended school in Muskegon, Detroit, or Flint.

## **General Education Development**

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Diversified Computer Services  
P.O. Box 2199  
Kenosha, WI 53141-2199  
Telephone: (262) 652-2492  
[www.GEDonline.org](http://www.GEDonline.org)

This organization provides online preparation tools for taking the GED.

## **Grand Rapids Academic Summer Program (GRASP)**

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Judy Johnson – Program Director  
Telephone: (616) 819-2548  
[johnsonju@grps.k12.mi.us](mailto:johnsonju@grps.k12.mi.us)  
[www.grps.k12.mi.us/academics/grasp/](http://www.grps.k12.mi.us/academics/grasp/)

The GRASP program is a 9-week correspondence summer program for math and reading written by Grand Rapids Public Schools staff. It is designed for children who have completed grades K-8. Children receive a packet of materials for the 9 weeks of summer, and mail in one lesson a week. The lessons are scored, the results are recorded, and the lessons are returned to the children.

## **Great Parents, Great Start**

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Please see MDE website for a complete list of programs and contact information.  
[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)

This program provides information on development of children from birth to age 5. The information provided includes methods to enhance parent/child interaction, and examples of learning opportunities to promote intellectual, physical, and social growth of children birth to five years of age.

## **High School Dual Enrollment Program**

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Mr. David Mills  
608 West Allegan Street  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Hannah Building  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Telephone: (517) 373-4213  
[millsd@michigan.gov](mailto:millsd@michigan.gov)  
[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)

The classes that students are eligible for must not be offered by the high school or academy and must lead towards accreditation, certification, and/or trade licensing.

### **Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative**

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Shannon Brower, (231) 526-1047  
3141 N. Lamkin Drive  
Harbor Springs, MI 49740  
Susan Kelly, (734) 547-9164  
213 Oakwood Street  
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197  
Fax: (734) 483-6224  
[www.jimcaseyyouth.org/communities.htm#michigan](http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/communities.htm#michigan)

Wayne County and ten counties in Northern Michigan have programs designed to assist older foster youth with successful transitioning and independent living skills.

### **Job Corps**

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11801 Woodrow Wilson Street  
Detroit, MI 48206  
Telephone: (313) 852-0301  
Fax: (313) 865-8791  
<http://Jobcorps.doleta.gov/centers/mi.cfm>

At Job Corps, students enroll to learn a trade, earn a high school diploma or GED, and get help finding a good job. Youth who join the program are paid a monthly allowance that increases the longer they stay in the program. Job Corps provides career counseling and transition support to its students for up to 12 months after they graduate from the program. Some areas of training are business occupations, health occupations, painting, carpentry, facilities maintenance, computer repair, and advanced career training. There are centers in Detroit, Flint, and Grand Rapids. Youth between the ages of 16 and 24 may participate.

### **Michigan Adult Part-time Grant**

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Michigan Department of Treasury, Office of Scholarships and Grants  
Bureau of Student Financial Assistance  
P.O. Box 30462  
Lansing, MI 48909-7962  
Telephone: 1-888-4-GRANTS  
Fax: (517) 335-5984  
[treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov](mailto:treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov)  
[www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid/](http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid/)

This is a Michigan need-based grant administered by schools for adult part-time students who have been out of high school for at least two years.

### **Michigan Alternate Assessment Program (MI-Access)**

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Peggy Dutcher, Coordinator, [dutcherp@michigan.gov](mailto:dutcherp@michigan.gov)  
State Assessment for Students with Disabilities  
Michigan Department of Education  
Telephone: (517) 241-4416  
Fax : (517) 335-1186  
[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that all students with disabilities be assessed at the state level. If the state's general assessment is not appropriate, the IEP team must determine how the student will be assessed. MI-Access is designed for students for whom the IEP team has determined that the MEAP assessments, even with assessment accommodations, are not appropriate for the student.

### **Michigan Alternative Education**

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Mr. David Mills  
608 West Allegan Street  
4th Floor  
Hannah Building  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Telephone: (517) 373-4213  
millsd@michigan.gov  
www.michigan.gov/mde

Alternative education programs often include expanded services from the regular program, such as counseling, childcare, and transportation. Students served include those who have special needs and are lacking sufficient credit to graduate with their class.

### **Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children (MiAEYC)**

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Beacon Place  
4572 South Hagadorn Road, Suite 1-D  
East Lansing, MI 48823-5385  
Telephone: (517) 336-9700; (800) 336-6424  
Fax: (517) 336-9790  
MiAEYC@MiAEYC.org  
www.miaeyc.org/

The Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children is committed to improving the education and welfare of children from birth through age 8. MiAEYC works for young children, their families, and early childhood professionals. MiAEYC supports the professional development of its members through quality training, materials, and services.

### **Michigan Competitive Scholarship**

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Michigan Department of Treasury, Office of Scholarships and Grants  
Bureau of Student Financial Assistance  
P.O. Box 30462  
Lansing, MI 48909-7962  
Telephone: 1-888-4-GRANTS  
Fax: (517) 335-5984  
treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov  
www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid

This is a Michigan financial aid program based on both need and merit. Currently the ACT qualifying score for this award is 23 or higher. Alternate assessment options are available for students who do not take the ACT, including MEAP testing.

### **Michigan Department of Education (MDE)**

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[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)

The Michigan Department of Education provides oversight and support for all Michigan educational programs that are accredited by the state.

### **Michigan Education Opportunity Grant (MEOG)**

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Michigan Department of Treasury, Office of Scholarships and Grants

Bureau of Student Financial Assistance

P.O. Box 30462

Lansing, MI 48909-7962

Telephone: 1-888-4-GRANTS

Fax: (517) 335-5984

[treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov](mailto:treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov)

[www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid](http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid)

This is a Michigan need based grant that is administered by each participating school to needy students.

### **Michigan Foster Education Resource Network (MI-FERN)**

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P.O. Box 19997

Kalamazoo, MI 49019

Telephone: (269) 544-0448

[info@foster-education.org](mailto:info@foster-education.org)

[www.foster-education.org](http://www.foster-education.org)

The Michigan Foster Education Network seeks to enhance the postsecondary educational opportunities of youth who are current and past foster care recipients in the state of Michigan. MI-FERN offers development workshops, publishes a student guide, informational brochures, and a quarterly student magazine, and provides an educational planning service for students between the ages of 14 and 25. All current or former foster care recipients currently residing in Michigan are eligible to make use of MI-FERN services free of charge.

### **Michigan Head Start/ Early Head Start Program**

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115 W. Allegan, Suite 520

Lansing, MI 48933

Telephone: (517) 374-6472

Fax: (517) 374-6478

[www.mhsa.ws](http://www.mhsa.ws)

Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs that serve children from birth to age 5, pregnant women and their families. They are child-focused programs and have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families. Head Start grantee and delegate agencies provide a range of individualized services in the areas of: education and early childhood development; medical, dental, and mental health; nutrition; and parent involvement. In addition, the entire range of Head Start services is responsive and appropriate to each child's and family's developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience.

### **Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver**

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Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan  
Telephone: (517) 335-7782  
[www.itcmi.org/ituition.html](http://www.itcmi.org/ituition.html)

An application must be approved by the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan. Students can pick up an application in any financial aid office at public Michigan colleges and universities. Awards are made to high school graduates who are at least one quarter Native American.

### **Michigan Merit Award**

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Michigan Department of Treasury, Office of Scholarships and Grants  
Bureau of Student Financial Assistance  
P.O. Box 30462  
Lansing, MI 48909-7962  
Telephone: 1-888-4-GRANTS  
Fax: (517) 335-5984  
[treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov](mailto:treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov)  
[www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid](http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid)

This is a Michigan-based scholarship awarded for outstanding performance on the MEAP test. Alternative qualification processes are available for youth who do not take the MEAP, which can be used both in-state and out-of-state for college.

### **Michigan Nursing Scholarship**

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Department of Treasury, Office of Scholarships and Grants  
P.O. Box 30462  
Lansing, MI 48909  
Telephone: 1-888-447-2687  
[www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid](http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid)

This is a Michigan award for students enrolled at a Michigan higher education institution in a program leading to the LPN certification and/or the BSN Degree. Recipients must work full time as a direct care nurse in Michigan for each year that the scholarship is awarded.

### **Michigan Post-Secondary Admissions and Financial Assistance Handbook**

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<http://michiganfahandbook.net/>

This is an online handbook for college bound students and their primary caregiver; it may also be useful for caseworkers who wish to gain general knowledge about the higher education admission and financial assistance process.

### **Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service (MPAS)**

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Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service (Lansing Office)  
4095 Legacy Parkway, Suite 500  
Lansing, MI 48911-4263  
Telephone: 1-800-288-5923 (Toll Free) or (517) 487-1755  
Fax: (517) 487-0827  
[www.mpas.org](http://www.mpas.org)

This organization tries to answer any questions that people may have relating to disabilities. It has experience in discrimination in education, employment, housing, and public places; abuse and neglect; social security benefits; Medicaid, Medicare and other insurance; housing; vocational rehabilitation; HIV/AIDS issues; and many other disability-related topics. MPAS also provides representation to children and adults in select cases dealing with the issues noted above. MPAS has developed an excellent resource entitled, *Special Education: An Advocate's Manual*, that may be obtained by contacting MPAS.

### **Michigan Ready to Succeed Project**

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[www.readytosucceed.org](http://www.readytosucceed.org)

The Ready to Succeed Project brings together leaders in business, education, faith, government, health, labor, law enforcement, media, and philanthropy to promote the vision of every Michigan child ready to succeed in school and in life.

### **Michigan School Readiness Program**

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Please see MDE website for a complete list of program contact information.

[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)

These are preschool programs for four year old children who may be “at risk” of school failure. Each child must have two of the 25 identified risk factors; more than 50 percent of the children must come from low-income families. Both center-based and home-based models are available. All programs must provide strong family involvement/parent education components as well as preschool education.

### **Michigan Tuition Grant**

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Michigan Department of Treasury, Office of Scholarships and Grants

Bureau of Student Financial Assistance

P.O. Box 30462

Lansing, MI 48909-7962

Telephone: 1-888-4-GRANTS

Fax: (517) 335-5984

[treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov](mailto:treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov)

[www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid](http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid)

This is a Michigan need-based grant program for students at independent, degree-granting, nonprofit Michigan postsecondary institutions. Grants are awarded by each school's financial aid office.

### **Michigan Virtual High School (MVHS)**

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Michigan Virtual High School @ Michigan Virtual University

3101 Technology Pkwy., Suite G

Lansing, MI 48910

Telephone: (800) 393-6052

Fax: (517) 664-5395

[mvhs@mivu.org](mailto:mvhs@mivu.org)

[www.mivhs.org/](http://www.mivhs.org/)



The Michigan Virtual High School (MVHS) is an online resource that enables Michigan high schools to provide courses, all taught by certified teachers, and other learning tools that students would not otherwise have access to. It was funded by the Michigan Legislature in July 2000 to be operated by the Michigan Virtual University, a private, not-for-profit Michigan corporation. MVHS does not independently grant diplomas or course credit; instead, it works in cooperation with each individual school district. Through MVHS, Michigan high school students can prepare for standardized tests such as MEAP and AP exams, take a variety of courses, and learn any place there is a computer and an internet connection. Eligible students include: gifted and talented students, special needs students, students who need to “make up” credit, public and non-public school students, and home-schooled students.

### **Michigan Work Study**

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Michigan Department of Treasury, Office of Scholarships and Grants  
Bureau of Student Financial Assistance  
P.O. Box 30462  
Lansing, MI 48909-7962  
Telephone: 1-888-4-GRANTS  
Fax: (517) 335-5984  
treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov

This is a Michigan financial aid program designed to assist needy students with paying qualified educational expenses. Positions and pay rates vary; however, students will be paid at least the federal minimum wage.

### **Michigan Yellow Pages for Kids with Disabilities**

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[www.yellowpagesforkids.com/help/mi.htm](http://www.yellowpagesforkids.com/help/mi.htm)

This is an online resource site to help find educational consultants, psychologists, diagnosticians, health care specialists, academic tutors, speech language therapists, advocates, and attorneys. The site also contains links to government programs, grassroots organizations, special education schools, and parent support groups.

### **MOMS Club**

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[www.momsclub.org](http://www.momsclub.org)

This is a support group for stay-at-home moms. There are chapters in Berkeley, Canton/Westland, Fruitport, Grand Rapids, Livonia, Millington, Otisville, St. Clair County, Watersford, and Zeeland/Hudsonville.

### **Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) Club**

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[www.mops.org](http://www.mops.org)

This organization is for mothers of preschoolers so that they may interact and gain support from other mothers in their area.

## **Mythbusting: Breaking Down Confidentiality and Decision-Making Barriers to Meet the Education Needs of Children in Foster Care**

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[www.abanet.org/child/rclji/education/home.html#11](http://www.abanet.org/child/rclji/education/home.html#11)

This online document, written by Kathleen McNaught, answers common questions by child welfare practitioners, judges, children's attorneys, parents, foster parents, youth, caseworkers, and court appointed special advocates about confidentiality of records and ensuring proper education for foster children.

## **National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues**

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National Resource

All Ages

<http://www.abanet.org/child/rclji/>

This organization works to address issues of permanency, safety, and well-being for abused and neglected children through improved laws and judicial decision-making. The Resource Center also works to broaden the knowledge of agencies, courts, bar organizations, and other professionals on issues involving child maltreatment, foster care, permanency planning, and adoption. It organizes and assists with training, produces and disseminates publications on law-related child welfare topics, develops training materials, and helps others to improve laws, regulations, court rules, and policies.

It also has an education issues page available on its website with valuable information for professionals involved in providing educational access and stability to foster children.

## **Office of Children's Ombudsman**

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P.O. Box 30026

Lansing, MI 48909

Telephone: (517) 373-3077 or 1-800-642-4326

Fax: (517) 335-4471

TTY: 1-800- 649-3777

[www.michigan.gov/oco](http://www.michigan.gov/oco)

The Office of Children's Ombudsman (OCO) is an independent state agency established by the Children's Ombudsman Act, 1994 Public Act 204. This act gives the Ombudsman authority to investigate complaints about children in Michigan's child welfare system (protective services, foster care, and adoption) because of abuse or neglect issues. The OCO investigates the actions, decisions, policies, and protocols of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and child placing agencies as they relate to a particular child. The Ombudsman also makes recommendations to the Governor, Legislature, and DHS for changes in child welfare laws, rules, and policies.

The OCO has no authority to investigate complaints that exclusively involve child custody, parenting time, divorce, child support, guardianships, school issues, court orders, or concerns about how law enforcement, attorneys, or judges have handled the case. The OCO is not an emergency intervention service. Anyone, including a child, can make a complaint to the OCO.

### **Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship**

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Bureau of Student Financial Aid, Office of Scholarships and Grants  
P.O. Box 30462  
Lansing, MI 48909-7962  
Telephone: 1-888-4-GRANTS  
treasscholgrant@Michigan.gov  
www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid

This is a federally funded merit-based financial aid program for students enrolled in accredited postsecondary education programs. This scholarship is renewable for up to four years and recipients are nominated by their high school principal.

### **Southwest Michigan Children's Trauma Assessment Center (CTAC)**

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CTAC  
1000 Oakland Drive  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
Telephone: (269) 387-7073  
ctac@wmich.edu  
www.wmich.edu/traumacenter/

This center provides assessments of victims of child abuse, neglect, and other trauma.

### **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)**

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Please see the Michigan Department of Education Website for a list of members.  
www.michigan.gov/mde

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is Michigan's IDEA-mandated State Advisory Panel to the State Board of Education and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

### **Student Advocacy Center**

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www.studentadvocacycenter.org

This organization provides support to students and caregivers who are dealing with disciplinary and special education issues. It also provides general advice for primary caregivers and others on advocating in schools.

### **Subsidized Housing**

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www.michigan.gov/mshda/0,1607,7-141--84992--,00.html

This is an online directory of subsidized housing programs across the state. You may also contact your local DHS office for a list of programs.

### **Supplemental Educational Services Providers List**

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www.michigan.gov/mde

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, students in schools that have been identified as "in need of improvement" may be eligible for supplemental services, which include tutoring, small group

instruction, or computer instruction in reading or math provided before or after school, on weekends, or during the summer.

### **Tuition Incentive Program (TIP)**

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1-888-4-GRANTS

[http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid/0,1607,7-128-1728\\_1938-6034--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid/0,1607,7-128-1728_1938-6034--,00.html)

This program will pay 100 percent of tuition and fees at a community college for 56 semester credits, and then pay \$500 per semester for four semesters while a student earns a four year degree. Eligibility is based upon the student's past Medicaid status. You may contact TIP to determine a specific child's eligibility status.

### **21st Century Community Learning Centers**

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Please see MDE website for a complete list of program contact information.

[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Grant Program is designed to create community learning centers for those times when school is not in session. The centers provide K-12 students with activities designed to complement their regular academic program, as well as additional enrichment opportunities. There are currently 55 sites throughout the state.

### **Women Infants and Children (WIC)**

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[www.michigan.gov/mdch](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch)

WIC is a health and nutrition program that has demonstrated a positive effect on pregnancy outcomes and child growth and development.

### **Youth in Transition**

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Attn: Shannon Gibson, YIT Coordinator

Michigan Department of Human Services, Children's Services

235 S. Grand Ave, Suite 510

Lansing, MI 48909

Telephone: (517) 241-8904

Fax: (517) 241-7047

[www.michigan.gov/dhs](http://www.michigan.gov/dhs)

The Youth in Transition program prepares foster care youths between the ages of 14 and 21 for living on their own. The program offers various supports, including:

1. Daily Living Skills
2. Educational Supports
3. Employment Services
4. Mentorship
5. Transportation
6. Physical and Mental Health Services, and
7. Parenting Skills if alternate funding is not available.

The aim is to equip youths with educational, vocational, and psychological skills needed to survive as independent adults.

### **Zero to Five Advocacy Network (ZFAN)**

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324 N. Pine St., #1

Lansing, MI 48933

Telephone: (517) 482.7533

Fax: (517) 482-2626

[deborahjensen@childcrt.org](mailto:deborahjensen@childcrt.org)

[www.childcrt.org/zfan.html](http://www.childcrt.org/zfan.html)

The Zero to Five Advocacy Network (ZFAN) is a diverse statewide partnership that advocates for the safety and value of children prenatal to five years. Members advocate for the prioritization of policies and programming to assure the safety, health (both physical and social-emotional), education, and value of children from birth through age five, and to improve the capacity of communities in Michigan to provide high quality, sustainable parent support and education services to families, so that parents might nurture their children to reach their fullest potential.

## Additional Websites and Hotlines

- ABA Child - <http://www.abanet.org/child/clp/>
- Center for Law and Education - [www.cleweb.org](http://www.cleweb.org)
- Center for Law and Social Policy - [www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org)
- Child Welfare League of America - [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)
- Children's Bureau - [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/index.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/index.htm)
- Families and Communities Together (FACT) Coalition - [www.fact.msu.edu](http://www.fact.msu.edu)
- Family Resource Center – MSU - [www.frc.msu.edu/WL/frc.htm](http://www.frc.msu.edu/WL/frc.htm)
- High/Scope Educational Research Foundation - [www.highscope.org](http://www.highscope.org)
- Macomb Literacy Partners (MLP) - [www.macombliteracy.org](http://www.macombliteracy.org)
- Michigan Council for Exceptional Children (MCEC) - [www.michigancec.org](http://www.michigancec.org)
- Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health (MCMCH) - [www.mcmch.org](http://www.mcmch.org)
- Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC) - 1-800-760-4600, [www.copower.org/](http://www.copower.org/)
- Michigan Federation for Children and Families - [www.michfed.org](http://www.michfed.org)
- Michigan League for Human Services - [www.milhs.org](http://www.milhs.org)
- Michigan Learning Disabilities Association (MLDA) - 1-888-597-7804, [ldami@aol.com](mailto:ldami@aol.com)
- Michigan Reading Association (MRA) - [www.michiganreading.org](http://www.michiganreading.org)
- Michigan Works - [www.michiganworks.org](http://www.michiganworks.org)
- Michigan's Children - [www.michiganschildren.org](http://www.michiganschildren.org)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) - [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)
- National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) - [www.famlit.org](http://www.famlit.org)
- National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center - [www.nectas.unc.edu](http://www.nectas.unc.edu)
- National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) - 1-800-695-0285, [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)
- New York State Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children – <http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/justiceforchildren/index.shtml>
- Oakland Literacy Council - [www.oaklandliteracy.org](http://www.oaklandliteracy.org)
- Ozone House - [www.ozonehouse.org](http://www.ozonehouse.org)
- Parent Empowerment Project (PEP) – Parent Hotline - 1-800-262-0650 / (517) 726-0200, [www.for-rudy.com/](http://www.for-rudy.com/)
- Project Find - [www.earlychildhoodmichigan.org/PF.htm](http://www.earlychildhoodmichigan.org/PF.htm)
- Project PERFORM - 1-800-552-4821, [www.wash.k12.mi.us/perform/](http://www.wash.k12.mi.us/perform/)
- RAP Line - 1-800-621-4000
- Success by Six - [www.successbysix.info/](http://www.successbysix.info/)
- Triangle Foundation - [www.tri.org](http://www.tri.org)
- TRIO Programs - [www.trioprograms.org](http://www.trioprograms.org)

## **INITIAL OR UPDATED SERVICE PLAN – SUGGESTED CONTENT FOR EDUCATIONAL STATUS SECTION**

This is suggested language to help caseworkers **remember to include specific, relevant information** about the child's educational progress as required in service plans.

### **CHILD NOT YET ATTENDING SCHOOL**

#### **Early On Assessment Not Done**

<Child's name> is currently not attending school. <He or She> has been referred for an Early On® screening. The screening is scheduled for <date>. Once the results are available, appropriate services, if necessary, will begin.

#### **Early On Services Not Required**

<Child's name> is currently not attending school. <He or She> has had an Early On® screening which determined that <he or she> was functioning at expected age level. The caregiver engages in the following cognitively stimulating activities with the child: <list the types of activities>.

#### **Early On Services Required**

<Child's name> is currently not attending school. <He or She> has had an Early On® screening which determined that s/he was in need of the following services: <list the types of activities>. These services are being provided by <list the service, the provider, and the frequency of service delivery for each identified service>.

Reports from the service providers indicate that <child's name> is <summarize the individual provider reports with respect to the child's progress for each service and state recommended changes in the service>.

The caregiver reports that the child <insert caregiver's comments about the child's improvements in areas for which services are being provided>.

In the next quarter, <child's name> will <continue to receive services to address the challenges identified>; or <receive the following services: list them>.

## **CHILD ATTENDING SCHOOL – K – 8TH GRADE/SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **Regular Class Student**

<Child's name> is currently in the <insert grade> grade at <name of school> in the <name of school district>. The child has been attending this school since <insert date/or grade>.

On the most recent report card dated <insert date>, s/he received the following grades:<list the classes and grades received>.

This caseworker talked with the teacher on <date>. The teacher reported that <child's name, summarize teacher's assessment of child's academic performance in relation to cognitive ability, behavior, attendance, demeanor, unique strengths or needs, caregiver involvement...>.

This caseworker talked with <child's name> on <date> regarding <his or her> educational performance and extracurricular activities. <He or She> offered the following in response to the grades received and the teachers' assessments: <summarize child's comments>.

<Child's name> is interested in making the following changes in academic performance and behavior during the next marking period: <summarize child's stated desires>.

In addition to these changes, this caseworker encouraged the following changes:  
<list any additional changes>.

This caseworker talked with <parent/foster parent/relative> on <date> regarding the child's educational performance. <He or She> offered the following in response to the grades received and the teacher's assessment of the child's performance: <summarize the parent/foster parent/relative's comments here>. <He or She> commits to doing the following to help the child make the desired and necessary changes: <list specifically what caregiver will do>.

To assist <him or her> with making the changes, the following services/supports will be provided: <list the service, the provider, and the frequency of service delivery for each identified service>.

### **Student Who is Receiving Special Education Services or Supports**

<Child's Name> is currently in the <insert grade> grade at <name of school> in the <name of school district>. <He or She> is in a special education program for <state the specific IEP program>. The most recent IEP was completed <date>. The child has been attending this school since <insert year> and has been in this special education program since <year>.

On the most recent report card dated <insert date>, s/he received the following grades or performance assessment :< list the grades or changes noted>.

This caseworker talked with the teacher on <date>. The teacher reported that <child's name> is <summarize teacher's assessment of child's academic performance in relation to cognitive



ability, behavior, attendance, demeanor, unique strengths or needs, caregiver involvement...>. is caseworker talked with <child's name> on <date> regarding her/his educational performance and extracurricular activities. S/he offered the following in response to the grades received and the teachers' assessments: <summarize youth's comments>.

<Child's name> is interested in making the following changes in academic performance and behavior during the next marking period: <summarize youth's stated desires>.

In addition to these changes, this caseworker encouraged the following changes:  
<list any additional changes>.

This caseworker talked with <parent/foster parent/relative> on <date> regarding the child's educational performance. S/he offered the following in response to the grades received, the teacher's assessment of the child's performance and behavior, and the child's assessment. S/he commits to doing the following to help the child make the desired and necessary changes: <list specifically what caregiver will do>.

To improve performance, the following services <will be> provided: <list the service, the provider, and the frequency of service delivery for each identified service>.

### **CHILD ATTENDING SCHOOL - HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

<Child's name> is currently in the <insert grade> grade at <name of school> in the <name of school district>. The youth has been attending this school since <insert year/grade>.

On the most recent report card dated <insert date>, s/he received the following grades: <list the grades received>.

This caseworker talked with the teachers/counselor on <date>. The teachers/counselor reported that <child's name>, <summarize teachers'/counselor's assessment of child's academic performance in relation to cognitive ability, behavior, attendance, demeanor, unique strengths or needs, caregiver involvement, extracurricular activities...>.

This caseworker talked with <child's name> on <date> regarding her/his educational performance, educational plans, and extracurricular activities/interests. S/he offered the following in response to the grades received and the teachers'/counselor's assessments: <summarize youth's comments>.

<Child's name> is interested in making the following changes in academic performance, behavior, and involvement in extracurricular activities during the next marking period: <summarize youth's stated desires>.

In addition to these changes, this caseworker encouraged the following changes:  
<list any additional changes>.

This caseworker talked with <parent/foster parent/relative> on <date> regarding the child's educational performance. S/he offered the following in response to the grades received, the teachers' assessment of the youth's performance and behavior, and the youth's assessment. S/he commits to doing the following to help the youth make the desired and necessary changes: <list specifically what caregiver will do>.

To assist her/him with making the changes, the following services/supports will be provided: <list the service, the provider, and the frequency of service delivery for each identified service>.

<Youth's name> <was encouraged to begin> or <has been thinking> about post-high school education or vocational training. We discussed the importance of high school performance to acceptance in post-high school programs. S/he was referred to the school counselor for more specifics on the options and the specific courses to take during high school.

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