

Who we are

The Legal Center for Foster Care & Education (Legal Center FCE) was launched on January 1, 2007, and is a collaboration between Casey Family Programs and the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law (with support from the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues) in conjunction with the Education Law Center-PA and the Juvenile Law Center. The Legal Center FCE's mission is to bring attention and important legal resources to bear on the educational needs of children and youth in the nation's foster care system.

What we do

The Legal Center FCE serves as a national technical assistance resource and information clearinghouse on legal and policy matters affecting the education of children and youth in out-of-home care. The Legal Center FCE provides expertise and relevant information to states and constituents, facilitates networking to advance promising practices and reforms, and provides technical assistance to respond to the ever-growing demands for legal support and guidance.

For more information visit the
Legal Center for Foster Care and Education website at
www.abanet.org/child/education.

To contact us: ccleducation@staff.abanet.org.

Legal Center *for* Foster Care *and* Education



What we offer

WEBSITE

The Legal Center FCE has a dedicated website, www.abanet.org/child/education, which contains up-to-date information on important legal and policy resources. The website includes the following information:

ADVOCATES LISTSERV

This Listserv supports information sharing across numerous stakeholder groups. Subscribers can include judges, attorneys, caseworkers and child welfare agency personnel, school staff and system level staff, foster parents, CASAs, GALs, and any other individuals who identify themselves as advocates for the education needs of children in out-of-home care. The Listserv provides important announcements about events and new resources; access to questions and answers related to relevant foster care and education topics; and an opportunity to post your own questions, answers, or information to advocates around the country who are working on these issues.

TOPICAL CONFERENCE CALLS

The Legal Center FCE conducts regular topical calls, announced on the website and over the Listserv, and open to anyone interested in joining the call. Each call focuses on a topic of immediate relevance to our work and provides an opportunity to share the collective knowledge of callers from around the country. Call information, including topics, dates, and times, can be found on the website.

SEARCHABLE STATE AND NATIONAL DATABASE

This database is a central clearinghouse of materials and resources related to the education needs of children in care, all searchable by state, topic, and format. This database is continuously updated with new information received from the field.

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

The Legal Center FCE has created a critical new resource, the *Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Children in Foster Care*. This detailed framework is structured around eight concrete Goals for Youth (see below), and includes Benchmarks that demonstrate progress towards each Goal. The document includes national and state examples under each goal of programs, resources, and strategies from around the country. The *Blueprint for Change* is a multifunctional framework that can be useful for various purposes and by various stakeholders. The *Blueprint for Change* is designed to provide information for direct case advocates to enhance educational opportunity and achievement for children in out-of-home care, as well as serve as a guide for more advanced system reform efforts. It is a tool for all stakeholders, including judges, attorneys and GALs, biological and foster parents, youth, child welfare administrators and caseworkers, educators, and legislators.

EDUCATION GOALS FOR YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

- 1 Youth Are Entitled to Remain in Their Same School When Feasible
- 2 Youth Are Guaranteed Seamless Transitions Between Schools and School Districts When School Moves Occur
- 3 Young Children Enter School Ready to Learn
- 4 Youth Have the Opportunity and Support to Fully Participate in All Aspects of the School Experience
- 5 Youth Have Supports to Prevent School Dropout, Truancy, and Disciplinary Actions
- 6 Youth Are Involved and Engaged in All Aspects of Their Education and Educational Planning and Are Empowered to Be Advocates for Their Education Needs and Pursuits
- 7 Youth Have An Adult Who Is Invested in His or Her Education During and After His or Her Time in Out-Of-Home Care
- 8 Youth Have Supports to Enter into, and Complete, Postsecondary Education

Excerpt from the *Blueprint for Change*. For free download of the full *Blueprint for Change* see www.abanet.org/child/education/blueprint.

OTHER TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES

In addition to the *Blueprint for Change*, the Legal Center FCE has created, and will continue to create, a variety of tools and resources to assist all stakeholders, including articles, issue briefs, and fact sheets. The Legal Center FCE has created a series of materials focusing on **Special Education and Children in Out-of-Home Care**. Other priority areas include **Education Stability and Continuity** and **Confidentiality and Information Exchange**. For a complete list of publications see www.abanet.org/child/education/fce-pub.shtml.

The Legal Center FCE continues to provide **Technical Assistance** to states and communities on the complex legal issues associated with the education needs of children in out-of-home care. The Legal Center FCE also provides **Targeted Onsite Training** at national and state conferences. The project mobilizes small **Work Groups** to tackle complex issues including Confidentiality and Information Exchange, Special Education, Education Stability and Continuity, and Federal and State Foster Care/Education Legislation Analysis and Implementation.

The Legal Center FCE is a member of the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education. This National Working Group has joined together numerous national organizations with a goal of ensuring successful educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care across the country. The Working Group heightens national awareness of the educational needs of children and youth in care, and promotes best and promising practices and reforms across educational, child welfare, and juvenile and family court systems. For more information, please visit: www.casey.org/friendsandfamilies/partners.

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