



Planning for Educational Excellence with Foster Youth



Presented by
The Wayne County
Youth Support Division
Educational Planning Program

Foster Youth Face Serious Post- Secondary Education Challenges

- Likelihood of being absent from school 2x that of other students
- Percent of foster youth who change schools when first entering care 56%-75%
- Percent of 17-18 year olds in care who have experienced 5+ school changes 34%
- Likelihood of 17-18 year old foster youth having an out-of-school suspension 2x that of other students
- Likelihood of 17-18 year old foster youth being expelled 3x that of other students

Reference: National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care (2014).



Foster Youth Face Serious Post-Secondary Education Challenges – (Cont.)

- Average reading level of 17-18 year olds in foster care 7th grade
- Likelihood of foster youth receiving special education 2.5 - 3.5x that of others
- Percent of foster youth who complete high school by 18 50%
- Percent of 17-18 year old foster youth who want to go to college 84%
- Percent of foster youth who graduated from high school who attend college 20%
- Percent of former foster youth who attain a bachelor's degree 2 - 9%

Reference: National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care (2014).



Why Such Poor Outcomes in Education ?



- School mobility; foster youth attend an average of 5+ different schools.
- When moving so often, students never “catch up” to other students.
- School districts are at different points in their lesson plans.
- Delay in record transfer from previous school. This leads to incorrect class placement.

Dwayne B. v. Granholm, et al.



*VIII.A.4.b(v)
Supports for
Children
Transitioning
to Adulthood
pgs. 35-36*

- By October 2009, DHS shall hire 14 regional Education Planners who shall provide consultation and support to youth age 14 and older in accessing educational services and in developing individualized education plans, including identifying all available financial aid resources.

Dwayne B. v. Granholm, et al. Cont.'

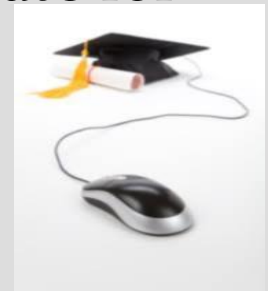
DHS shall ensure that each child is screened for general and educational needs within 30 days of his/her entry into foster care.

Ensure that school-aged foster children are registered for and attending school within 5 days of placement.

Make reasonable efforts to keep the child in a familiar or current school and neighborhood.

What will an Educational Planner Do?

- Provide consultation, technical assistance and training to workers, school personnel, foster parents, youth, and others for education.
- Act as a liaison between the education system and the foster care system.
- Ensure that foster youth get the same services and have the same opportunities as any other student.
- Advocate when needed and teach youth to advocate for themselves.
- Ensure that Michigan Policy and Fostering Connections guidelines are being met.





What Will an Educational Planner Do?

- Assist youth with developing long-term educational goals and assist with taking the steps to reach those goals.
- Assist youth with the educational transition between high school and post-secondary education.
- Assist youth with the educational transition between residential facilities and the return to the community.
- Assist youth with the transition from the educational system to the workforce.
- Assist in record transfer between schools when a move is unavoidable.

Target Population



Youth in foster care ages 14 to 21

- High School Seniors
- Youth that are below the appropriate grade level
- Youth who have experienced multiple school changes
- High school dropouts
- Youth not receiving appropriate special education services

Best interest factors Foster Care Specialist need to consider regarding school placement include:

The parent's, guardian and child's school of preference.

Input from school personnel

The child's:

- *Social and emotional state.*
- *Academic achievement/strengths/weaknesses.*
- *Continuity of relationships.*
- *Special education programming.*
- *Extra-curricular activity participation.*
- *Distance/travel time to and from current school/new placement and the impact on the child.*
- *Supportive relationships and/or services.*
- *Length of anticipated stay in placement and the permanency plan.*

Educational Factors that Impact Permanency

School suspensions/expulsions.

Need for advocacy in school/Lack of training/knowledge necessary to meet the needs of foster youth.

Need for intensive school support.

Unmet behavioral health needs.



EDUCATION

Special education needs.

Increase in risky behaviors.

Truancy issues.



How Trauma Impacts Foster Children

- Primary trauma experienced by children is precipitated by factors such as: domestic violence in the home and community, maltreatment, neglect, physical violence, accidents and environmental disasters.
- Trauma upon foster children is experienced as both primary and secondary trauma.
- In addition to the experience of primary trauma (which led to their removal from their home due to abuse or neglect), foster children are also dealing with secondary trauma issues, due to the actual separation from their birth home, current school, and communities.
- Primary and secondary trauma invokes children to have a stress response that impacts their daily behaviors and social functioning requiring clinical treatment and interventions.

Understanding Trauma in Children

Research speaks to the fact that repeated exposure to traumatic events can alter psychobiological development and increase the risk of low academic performance, engagement in high-risk behaviors and difficulties in peer and family relationships among children (Ko, et al, 2008).

Ko, S. J., Ford, J. D., Kassam-Adams, N., Berkowitz, S. J., Wilson, C., Wong, M., & ... Layne, C. M. (2008). Creating trauma-informed systems: Child welfare, education, first responders, health care, juvenile justice. *Professional Psychology: Research And Practice*, 39(4), 396-404. doi:10.1037/0735-7028.39.4.396

Educational Success = Well Being

- Placement stability.
- Social/emotional stability.
- Increases access to services.
- More likely to attain permanency.
- Less likely to be incarcerated, unemployed, abuse drugs etc.
- Increased income potential.
- Increased stability later in life.



Educational Success Outcomes

Hallmarks of progress/success to Improve permanency outcomes for foster youth:



- Graduation from HS.
- Standardized tests/performance at/above grade level.
- Attend school regularly.
- Fewer school changes.
- Fewer discipline problems.
- Receive special education services they need.
- Higher education and work skills attained.



Research on School Mobility

It takes children an average of **4-6 months** to recover academically after changing schools.

Mobile students score **20 points lower** on standardized tests than non-mobile students.

Mobile students are **less likely to participate** in extracurricular activities and more likely to act out or get into trouble.

Average test scores for **non-mobile** students were significantly lower in high schools with high student mobility rates.

Students who changed high schools **even once** were less than half as likely as stable students to graduate, even controlling for other factors.

Project Forum at NASDSE, March 2007

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, 2006

What You Need to Know About Homelessness in Michigan

1 of every 3 homeless persons in Michigan is a child.*

The average age of a homeless child is 7.8 years.**

30% of homeless families are working poor.**

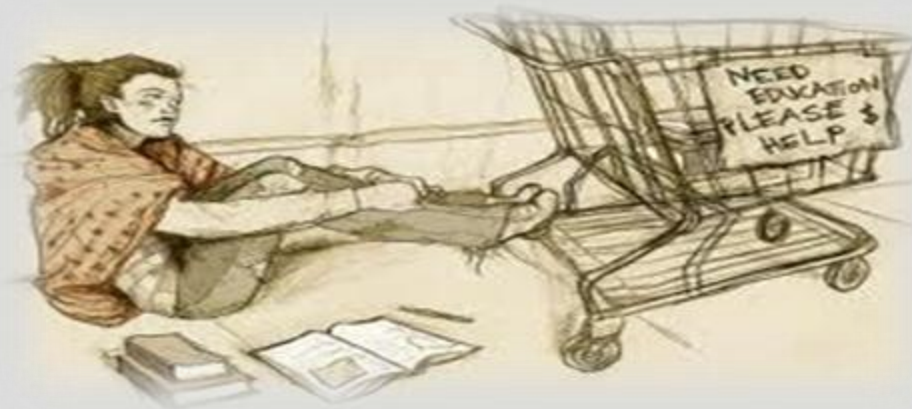
77% of families are homeless due to lack of affordable housing.*

Of homeless families, 45% reported being homeless more than once.*

Between 2007 and 2008, family homelessness increased 10.8% in MI, with the largest increases in rural Michigan.**

Homeless Students in Michigan

- As of 2011-2012 school year, Michigan's had , 43,418 students who were homeless
- As of 2010-2011, the number homeless students in Michigan's public schools *alone* rose from a count of 7,500 to **31,133**
- During the 2009-10 school year, **22,673** students in Michigan were considered homeless, while nationally that number reaches more than 1 million, according to the U.S. Department of Education.



Reference:

Retrieved on March 12, 2014 from: <http://mea.org/michigan-facing-growing-number-homeless-children>

Legal Basis- Federal and State Law:

- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008.
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001.
- Michigan law permits a foster child to remain in the school of origin or attend the school of residence.



McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

In Michigan, a youth is considered “homeless” if he/she has been in the same placement for less than 6 continuous months.



- Ensures homeless children transportation to and from their school of origin free of charge.
- Requires schools to register homeless children even if they lack normally required documents, such as immunization records or proof of residence.

McKinney-Vento Act

Rights and Services



The act gives students the right to:

- Remain in their school of origin, if it is in their **best interest**.
- Immediate school enrollment (even if they cannot produce the normally required documents, i.e. birth certificates, proof of guardianship, school records, immunization records, etc.).
- Supplemental services (such as special education services, tutoring, mentoring, school lunch).

Important services through the McKinney Vento/ Homeless Liaisons



- Free lunch and breakfast programs.
- Tutoring and mentoring to keep the youth on target in classes.
- Clothing and school supplies.



McKinney Vento Act-Transportation

- If it is in the child's best interest to remain in the school of origin, under the McKinney-Vento Act local education agencies are to provide transportation to the eligible children and youth.
- The local liaison and school district are responsible for arranging the transportation.
- Case workers must provide the information necessary in a **timely fashion** to schools/homeless education liaison to facilitate transportation.

Collaboration Process Between Schools & Child Placing Agencies – McKinney Vento

- Every School district has a local homeless education liaison, who must ensure each eligible child receives his/her rights under McKinney-Vento.
- The foster care worker participates in the process by contacting the education liaison, talking with school staff, parents, and caregivers, sharing the appropriate information and providing assistance as needed to ensure the child's educational needs are met.
- The local school district must enroll the child in the school the foster care worker determines is in the child's best interests, either the school of origin or the school of residence.

McKinney Vento - Payment for Transportation

- As long as the foster child is eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act the school district is required to provide transportation (including transportation costs).
- If the only method of transportation available is for the child to be driven by car and the caregiver agrees to transport, the school district may provide transportation payment to the provider via a gas card or stipend (each school district has their own method).
- Although mileage may be paid by school district, the case worker is responsible for communicating the transportation plan to the caregiver and providing follow-up to ensure coordination.

Fostering Connections Act

Educational Provisions

The case plan must document the educational stability of the child.

DHS must ensure that child welfare agencies:

- Consider appropriateness of school and proximity to school of origin when making foster care placements.
- Work with schools to ensure child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at time of placement.

Fostering Connections Act

Educational Provisions



If the child changes schools, the case plan must include assurances that child welfare agencies have worked with the schools to:

- *Provide immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school; and*
- *Provide all of the educational records of the child to the school.*

Fostering Connections Act

Transportation Costs



- When a youth is no longer eligible for transportation services under the McKinney-Vento Act but still requires transportation to school of origin, DHS will have the full responsibility for transportation payment and coordination.
- The Fostering Connections Act includes payment for reasonable transportation in the foster care maintenance payment (i.e. payment to foster parents).
- Case workers **must provide oversight** to ensure that payments are not being received under both McKinney-Vento and their foster care payment (no 'double-dipping' of federal funds).

Local Homeless Resources

DPS Homeless Grant Coordinator George Eason
(313) 748-6388 george.eason@detroitk12.org

EAA Homeless Grant Coordinator-Judith Berry
(313) 456-3110 jberry@eaaofmichigan.org

For Wayne County residents outside of Detroit:

Julie Davis, Homeless Grant Coordinator
(734) 284-4497 jdavis@waynemetro.org

Kathy Gibson, Homeless Grant Coordinator
(734) 334-1608 gibsonk@resa.net

Michigan Department of Education Homeless Education Program Office

Contact Information:

Phone: 517-241-1162

Pam Kies – Lowe, State Coordinator for Homeless
Education

kies-lowep@michigan.gov

Sam Sinicropi, Consultant

sinicropis@michigan.gov

Website

www.michigan.gov/homeless

Education Planning Unit Initiatives

- Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) With Michigan Works
- UTOOLS-University of Michigan Dearborn
- MCAN-Local College Access Networks :
 1. *Highland Park*
 2. *Detroit Northend Central*
- YIT Coalition Meetings
- Building Community Partners (BCP)
- DHS Community Partners Education Planning Committee
- Detroit Youth Violence Prevention Committee
- Detroit Urban League College Clubs
- Wayne County Foster Youth Summer College Tours
- Wayne State university Bridging the Middle Collaborative
- School Justice Partnership High School Drop Out Prevention Program



Higher Education Options

**There are many options to
Choose from
Community College
Universities
Trade/Vocational Programs
Military**

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):

- Apply for a pin @ www.pin.ed.gov
- Fill out the FAFSA at www.fafsa.edu.gov
- Applications to be done January 1st through deadline of March 1st.
- If the March 1st deadline is not met the student may not receive all funding he/she is eligible for.
- **Foster youth are considered independent**, therefore they typically receive the full Pell Grant of \$5,550 per year.

Education and Training Voucher (ETV)

- Up to \$4,000 per year.
- Covers any school related expenses.
- Eligible if in foster care after their 14th birthday.
- Eligible if adopted from foster care on or after their 16th birthday.
- Must attend an accredited, college or trade school at least part time.



Application available at:
www.mietv.lssm.org

Tuition Incentive Program (TIP)

- Eligible if you received Medicaid for 24 months in a 36 consecutive month period.
- Phase I: Pays tuition and mandatory fees for an associates degree or certificate program.
- Phase II: Pays \$2,000/year towards a bachelors degree.
- Only good for identified Michigan colleges and universities.
- Call 1-888-4GRANTS or visit: www.michigan.gov/osg.

Orphan Foundation of America (OFA)

- **Eligibility Requirements, a youth must:**
 - Have been in foster care one consecutive year at the time of their 18th birthday, or
 - Have been adopted or placed in a guardianship after their 16th birthday, or
 - Have lost both parents due to death before the age of 18.
 - Be accepted into a post-secondary college or trade school at undergraduate level.
- **Apply at <http://orphan.org>**
- **Applications accepted from Jan 1st thru March 31st.**
 - The majority of this application is done on-line.
 - Two letters of reference required.
 - Applicant required to show that he/she has applied for at least two other scholarships.

Foster Care Scholarships

- United Way – Macomb Community College.
- Foster Youth & Higher Education Initiative – Western Michigan University.
- University of Phoenix – First Chance Scholarship Program.
- Spartan Youth Program – Michigan State University.
- Aquinas College “Fostering Success” Scholarship.
- University of Michigan – Blavin Scholarship.
- Ferris Youth Initiative – Ferris State University.

More Scholarships for Foster Youth

- Arissa Scholarship (\$500.00): Michigan Adoptive, Foster Care and Kinship Care Parent Association. Contact Ruth Kenaga (989)984-7372 Email rukenaga@yahoo.com
- Big Family Scholarship (\$1000) (586) 445-7735
<http://www.bigfamilyofmichigan.org/scholarships.php>
- Casey Family Scholars Program: (\$1,500 - \$6,000)
<http://www.fc2success.org/programs/casey-family-scholars/>
- Foster Care 2 Success: Scholarships and grants
<http://www.fc2success.org/our-programs/information-for-students/>
- Love Our Children USA: For youth who have aged out of Foster Care.
http://www.loveourchildrenusa.org/aboutus_programs.php
- National Foster Parent Association (NFPA): For post-secondary help.
<http://nfpaonline.org/nfpascholarship>

Foster Care College Coach Programs

- Baker College Flint-Living Independently Networking Knowledge (LINK)
- Eastern Michigan University-Mentorship Access Guidance and College (MAGIC)
- Ferris State University-Ferris Youth Initiative
- Michigan State University-Fostering Academics Mentoring Excellence (FAME) Program
- Saginaw Valley State University-The Fostering an Academic Successful Transition (FAST) Program
- University of MI-Flint-Mpowering MY Success
- Wayne State University-Transition To Independence Program (TIP)

Foster Care Finance Options to Support Education

- Youth In Transition Funds (YIT)
- Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative (MYOI)
- Education Success Program (ESP) – Wayne and Kent Counties
- State of Michigan College Campus Navigation Programs

Helpful Websites

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid
 - www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Foster Club
 - www.fosterclub.com
- State Voucher Programs
 - www.statevoucher.org



WAYNE COUNTY EDUCATION PLANNERS

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bashirik@michigan.gov

Western Wayne District

Laverne Robinson (313) 456-3173

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Remember...
The stakes are
HIGH
for our Youth!



THANK YOU
for attending today's training