
	Division/Section	Child Welfare
	Chapter No./Name	6 – Foster Care
	Part No./Name	10 – Education
	Section No./Name	Education
	Document No./Name	6-1000 Educational Services to Children in Foster Care
	Effective Date	November 1, 2022

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Foster Care (FC) case worker, in collaboration with the local school system, parents, * foster child, and foster caregivers, ensures each child in foster care receives the opportunity to receive a full time education, participates in community based public educational programs and ensures the child has a stable educational setting. In accordance with [ACT 248](#) of the 2015 Louisiana legislative session, the FC case worker, in collaboration with the foster caregivers, shall ensure all children in foster care ** are appropriately attired according to the dress code and uniform standards of the school the child attends while on the school bus, on *** school grounds, or participating in school activities. All parties are to remain in ongoing communication regarding the child’s educational progress and challenges to ensure the child is provided appropriate supports and services. * When locating a foster home placement, the Department shall consider the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity of the foster home placement to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of foster care entry. **

In accordance with Louisiana (LA) Revised Statute (R.S.) [17:238](#):

1. Each city and parish school board is required to establish a policy to provide for the placement in school and for the education of any child temporarily residing within the jurisdiction of the board including a child who is in Foster Care custody of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).
2. Children are allowed to remain in their current educational placement should they be removed from their family’s home and placed in foster care when it is in the best interest of the child.
3. Children are allowed to continue in the same school placement not only at initial Foster Care entry, but for the duration of the child’s placement in Foster Care or through completion of the highest grade level offered at that institution as long as it is in the child’s best interest.
4. The governing authority of each public school shall be responsible for providing free transportation for a child in foster care residing outside the jurisdictional boundaries of the school from a designated location within that school district located nearest the child’s residence as determined appropriate by the governing authority and DCFS, with DCFS responsible for providing the child’s transportation to the designated location.
5. Children in the custody of the department shall be eligible to attend a school in the school district or parish of the foster care placement, when in the child’s best interest (In this situation, there must be documentation to show why it is not in the child’s best interest to remain in the child’s school of origin at foster care entry.).

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6. Children in the custody of the department shall be given preference as indicated in [LA R.S. 17:3991\(C\)\(1\)\(c\)\(iii\)](#) for enrollment to attend a charter school established pursuant to [LA R.S. 17:3983](#), when in the child’s best interest.
7. Children in the custody of the department placed in a home with other children who are already attending a nonpublic or parochial school may be allowed to attend the same school if the department determines it is in the best interest of the child, but the department shall not provide payment for expenses associated with such education.
8. Children in the custody of the department placed in a home with other children who are already participating in an approved home study program pursuant to [LA R.S. 17:236.1](#) may be approved to attend an approved home study program as well if the department finds it is in the best interest of the child as long as the program:
 - a. Is approved by the Louisiana Department of Education.
 - b. Offers a sustained curriculum of quality at least equal to that offered by public schools at the same grade level, pursuant to LA R.S. 17:236.1(C)(1).
 - c. The Louisiana Department of Education provides DCFS, upon request, verification the home study program in which a foster child is participating has been approved pursuant to [LA R.S. 17:236](#). ***
 - d. The foster caregiver provides DCFS appropriate documentation, including but not limited to copies of standardized tests, to substantiate the child is progressing on grade level and at a rate equal to one grade level for each year in the program.


Additionally, in accordance with [LA R.S. 17:416\(J\)\(1\)](#), a student enrolled in grades pre-kindergarten through 5th grade shall not be suspended or expelled from school, or suspended from riding on any school bus solely for a uniform violation that is not tied to willful disregard of school policies by the child. Thus, FC case worker should consider any such actions by a school as grounds for advocating for the child’s return to the school and consult with the child’s assigned attorney for support in advocating for the child’s rights to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

II. PROCEDURES

Corporal punishment and physical discipline may not be used on any child in Department custody, even if the school program in which a child is enrolled allows physical discipline. DCFS staff are responsible for communicating this to any school in which a child in foster care is enrolled via the [CW School 1 form](#).

All decisions regarding a child’s educational program must take into consideration the following in relation to the individual child:

- Unique educational/developmental needs requiring supportive services in the learning environment

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- Best interest of the child
- Stability of educational setting
- Educational/developmental progress and appropriateness of educational program
- Safety of the child in the learning environment
- Preparation of the school to manage potential threats from parents
- Any bullying which may be occurring
- Repercussions being experienced in relation to any sexual orientation/gender identity expression
- Supportive services available
- Long-term educational goals
- Sustainability of a stable educational setting ***
- Contribution to permanency

A. ATTENDANCE

In accordance with federal legislation, [42 U.S.C. 1305](#), all children in foster care of compulsory school age are required to be in full time school attendance, unless the child’s medical or developmental condition makes this impossible. If a youth in foster care has fulfilled the majority of the required credits for graduation and is only required to attend school on a reduced schedule to finalize the youth’s educational credits, then mandatory attendance to fulfill those required credits will be considered full time school attendance. Also, if a child is enrolled in a HiSET, Vocational, or combined curricula/educational program, the attendance of the child according to the requirements of the program will be considered full time school attendance.

B. PRIVATE SCHOOLS

As indicated in LA R.S. 17:238, DCFS will not fund private school for a child in foster care. If the child is in a private school upon entry into foster care, the family may continue to provide tuition and other costs affiliated with ongoing attendance at the institution. If the child’s family does not wish to provide ongoing support of the child’s private education, the case worker and foster caregiver may attempt to utilize the educational voucher program, if accepted by the private school. If a child in foster care is provided a scholarship, education voucher or a foster caregiver wishes to provide tuition from their own personal resources for the child to attend a private school, which meets academic standards recognized by the Louisiana Department of Education, DCFS cannot provide any monetary reimbursement for other fees associated with private school attendance, which are beyond what the department would provide in reimbursement for tuition or the child’s participation in a public school program. If the foster child is not allotted a voucher or does not have independent funding for tuition and fees, then the case worker and foster caregiver must attempt to maintain the child in the same school the child is attending at foster care entry. If this is not in the child’s best interest, the caregiver may enroll the child in the public school assigned to the child’s residence.

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A foster child in a private school setting is eligible for the same routine school expenses allowable for any foster child and clothing purchases may include school uniforms in accordance with [6-705](#), Determining the Child’s Personal and Clothing Needs and [6-1210](#), Unusual Replacement Clothing Needs.

C. HOME SCHOOLING

Home schooling for children in foster care should not routinely be allowed. In addition to the circumstances allowed in [LA R.S. 17:238](#), the decision for the child to participate in a home schooling program should include discussion of:


- Why it is not in the child’s best interest to attend the same school the child was attending upon foster care entry.
- The child’s interest in home schooling.
- consultation with and approval of parents retaining parental rights to the child.
- The child’s unique educational needs and availability of specialized services within the public school system to meet those needs.
- The demonstrated progress of the other children being provided a home school program by the foster caregivers.
- The qualifications of the foster caregivers to provide a home school program.
- Any commitment of the foster caregivers to adopt the child. ***
- The potential of the home school program to facilitate family cohesion with a potential adoptive family.

The Department will not be responsible for costs associated with providing a home school education such as text books and instructional materials. The child will only be eligible for the same school supply expenses allowed for a child in a public school setting.

Guidelines and instructions regarding approved home study programs by the Louisiana Department of Education can be found at * [louisianabelieves.com/schools](https://www.louisianabelieves.com/schools) or by calling 1-877-453-2721.

D. STATE FUNDED SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

1. Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired (LSVI) is a school for blind and visually impaired children from PreK to Grade 12 at no cost. LSVI provides the academic, vocational, athletic, and social opportunities that will prepare them to achieve their full potential. LSVI is located in Baton Rouge. For further information visit their website: https://www.ssdofla.org/schools_programs/louisiana_school_for_the_visually_impaired **
2. Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD) is a school for deaf or hard-of-hearing children. LSD provides a comprehensive education for students PreK through Grade 12 at no cost.

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LSD provides instruction in a bi-lingual environment of American Sign Language and English. LSD is located in Baton Rouge. For further information visit their website:

* https://www.ssdofla.org/schools_programs/louisiana_school_for_the_deaf **

Foster * children may be considered for attendance in these schools if the child has educational needs which would be more appropriately served in one of these settings and meets the criteria. Case workers should consult with the child's school counselor to determine appropriateness of these schools for the child. ** Documentation in the case record regarding how all other efforts at providing the child educational stability and efforts at overcoming barriers to a successful educational experience within their community have failed will be necessary to support decision making regarding these institutional environments as most appropriate for meeting the child's needs.

E. SUMMER SCHOOL

1. Achievement of Appropriate Grade Level


Summer school programs through the local school system shall be used to assist children who are behind academically to achieve the appropriate grade level for the child's age. If a child is not performing on the appropriate grade level, the case worker and foster caregivers shall consult with the local school system to discuss interim sessions or summer school programs. The child shall be required to attend available programs which support improvement in academic performance and achievement of the appropriate grade level.

2. Short Courses

A foster child may take courses to graduate on schedule or to graduate early. Foster children who qualify as gifted and talented students may take special college short courses offered by a state college or university. The child's teacher, counselor, or school principal must provide the Department with a written recommendation that the child participate in any summer school course. This documentation is to be filed in the child's case record.

The case worker must request approval for the summer courses from the supervisor by providing the following information in a memo:

- Child's name
- Child's TIPS number
- Reason the summer school course is needed or wanted
- Dates child will be in attendance

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- How transportation will be provided ***
- Cost of the course

The supervisor will notify the case worker of approval or disapproval by memo. If approved, the signed [TIPS 106B](#), Client Service Authorization, shall be attached for any associated costs.

Fees associated with the summer school course shall be authorized for no longer than three months. The amount on the TIPS 106B, Client Service Authorization, shall only be for tuition and fees. Transportation costs shall not be included in this amount. Payment shall be made by the local office on a TIPS 212, Vendor Reimbursement, to the school board, college, or university. The major/minor service code 700 700 shall be used for authorization for payment of tuition and fees.

Transportation costs shall be reimbursed to caregivers or residential providers on a [Form 435](#), Caregivers Supplementary Expenditure Affidavit, using the TIPS service code 300 302. Residential facilities may be reimbursed for tuition when they make payment for children for whom summer school has been approved.

F. DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM WITHIN SCHOOL SYSTEMS


JAG is a dropout prevention and recovery program that delivers a unique set of services for struggling students to help them earn a high school diploma and for out-of-school youth, to assist them in earning a high school equivalency diploma. If a youth meets this criteria and there is a JAG program in their school, staff are encouraged to enroll the youth in this free program.

G. SCHOOL RECOVERY CREDIT PROGRAM

Credit recovery for children who are behind in school, or dropout recovery programs for children who have previously dropped out of school and have fallen behind academically are options for students to take or repeat a course through classroom, online, small group, or one-on-one instruction, while focusing on the student's specific deficit areas, particularly in a previously failed course. Staff are to work with foster caregivers to utilize these programs to help children in foster care obtain or recover credits and progress to appropriate grade level.

H. HOMEBOUND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

All children in medical or behavioral health hospitals for more than one week shall be provided homebound instruction to ensure continuation of the child's educational progress. The case worker is to work collaboratively with the child's caregivers, teachers, school board where the child attends school, and the school board where the child is hospitalized to ensure the child's

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lessons and a homebound teacher are provided to support the child’s completion of assigned work.

I. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

All children in foster care ages three to five are assessed for appropriateness for participating in Early Head Start, Head Start, LA4, Preschool, and Pre-Kindergarten programs offered by the local public schools. Staff are to encourage all foster caregivers to enroll all young children in foster care into these programs to promote educational development.

J. EXPULSION


The law does not require another school system to enroll a child if the child is not permitted to attend one school due to expulsion for disciplinary actions. However, ongoing educational planning and activities are required when a child is expelled from school. The case worker and foster caregiver are to work with the school to provide the child with an alternative for a full-time education which may include any of the following options:

- Enrollment of the child in an alternative educational program, if available within the jurisdiction
- Virtual School program approved by the Louisiana Department of Education
- Independent Study programs approved by the Louisiana Department of Education
- Educational and vocational programs through the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) ***
- Enrollment in a HiSET Program if the child does not wish to receive a diploma

* Should the school fail to provide any of these options, the case worker and foster caregiver should work with the child to plan a full (8 hour) daily schedule of learning activities using videos, books, workbooks, and other educational tools to ensure ongoing learning opportunities for the child.

When the child fulfills the requirements of the expulsion from the regular school and completes the requirements of any other program in which the child is enrolled, the child shall return to the regular school system if the child has not alternatively acquired a HiSET, or other certificate of school completion. Refer to [6-1015](#), School Crisis.

Regular communication among Foster Care case workers, foster caregivers, children in foster care, birth parents, and the child’s school is critical. Early identification of problematic behaviors will allow for a more timely intervention to prevent these behaviors from becoming an impediment to a child’s educational success. **

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K. NOTIFICATION OF FOSTER CARE STATUS


When a child enters foster care and remains in the same school, the principal of the school shall be notified immediately of the child’s foster care status, allowable contacts, and the name and contact information of the DCFS case worker and supervisor. The form [CW School 1](#) form is used to make this notification and is to be completed by the case worker and mailed, * emailed, faxed, or hand-delivered to the school principal within five days of the date custody of the child is transferred to the Department.

If it is necessary for a child to change schools upon foster care entry or during the foster care episode, the principal of the school the child is leaving shall be notified of the child’s drop status from their school and the foster care worker shall immediately send an updated CW School 1 form to the principal of the child’s new school. Notification to both schools must occur prior to or within five days after the change to ensure a timely transmission of records to the new school and prevent un-excused absence days being counted against the child. Notification to the school the child is leaving may be made using local office letterhead. Notification to the school the child is entering is made using the CW School 1 form. The CW School 1 form ** is also to be used to notify the principal of the school the child is attending of any significant changes, such as a change in case worker, placement, and/or allowable contacts.

When a child who is in special education or *** needs * an assessment for special education enters a new school, the Special Education Director and the Child Search Coordinator of the school district shall be notified by the case worker through a copy of the CW School 1 form. The Special Education Director and the Child Search Coordinator must be made aware of any existing IEPs, IFSPs, special education assessments, 504 evaluations, and any special needs that need to be assessed. Existing evaluations or assessments must be attached to the CW School 1 form.

The DCFS case worker shall participate in IEP meetings, when possible related to the child, but may not act as the surrogate parent representing the child’s interests in an IEP meeting. The child’s birth parents should be encouraged to represent the child in IEP meetings unless their rights to do so have been limited by court order. If the parents are unwilling, unable, or prohibited ** by court order from representing the child’s interests, the foster caregiver may serve as the child’s surrogate parent in IEP meetings ***. If neither the parents nor caregivers can represent the child, the school district will designate a surrogate parent to represent the child’s interests in the proceeding.

Parents continue to have the right to access their child’s academic records in accordance with [LA R.S. 17:406.9](#), unless their rights are limited by court order. It is the responsibility of the Department to support continued parental involvement in their child’s educational progress. Parents must be notified of school meetings, events, and activities in which they may

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participate, and provided verbal or written reports of the child’s educational and developmental progress.

Written notification must also be provided to schools when DCFS is relieved of custody of a child and is no longer involved with a family. All notifications to schools and school district staff are to be * documented in FATS and printed out and placed in the child’s case record and ** *** uploaded into the child’s OnBase case record.

L. DOCUMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The foster care case worker must document the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity of all potential placement options to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of initial foster care placement in the case record. Documentation must indicate how the selected placement is in the best interest of the child based on this consideration. The form [98-A](#), Authorization for Emergency Services, is used to ensure the placement provider is aware of the school the child is currently attending in order to be able to advocate for the child’s educational needs within the school setting and facilitate timely transfer of records if necessary. Continued documentation regarding the child’s current school placement, grade level, test scores, availability of an IEP, * all educational assessments, and other educational history information is documented online in the child’s FATS Educational Record. A copy of this documentation is provided to the placement provider at each change in placement for the child.

M. REMOVAL OF CHILD FROM SCHOOL

In accordance with ACT 324, any DCFS staff removing a minor child in DCFS custody from a school shall provide the following information before being allowed to remove a child:

- a. First and last name of child
- b. Address of child
- c. Date of birth of the child

DCFS staff shall provide the above information about the minor child to the school administrator. The school administrator shall not release the minor child unless DCFS provides the above information.

III. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

[Form 98-A / Instructions](#) Child Placement Agreement


[Form 435 / Instructions](#) Caregiver’s Supplementary Expenditure Affidavit

[Agreement Terms - Provider Requirements](#) **

[School 1 Form / Instructions](#)

FATS Educational Record

[TIPS 106B / Instructions](#) Client Service Authorization

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TIPS 212 / [Instructions](#) Vendor Reimbursement

IV. REFERENCES

[Louisiana R.S. 17:236](#)

[Louisiana R.S. 17:238](#)

[Louisiana R.S. 17:236.1\(C\)\(1\)](#)

[Louisiana R.S. 17:406.9](#)

[Louisiana R.S. 17:3983](#)

[Louisiana R.S. 17:3991 \(C\)\(1\)\(c\)\(iii\)](#)

[42 U.S.C. 1305](#)

* [louisianabelieves.com/schools](#) **

[ACT 248 of the 2015 Louisiana legislative session](#)

[Louisiana R.S. 17:416\(J\)\(1\)](#)

[Louisiana R.S. 17:1971-1976](#)

[Louisiana R.S. 36:651\(D\)\(9\)](#)

[Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired](#)

[Louisiana School for the Deaf](#)

[Jobs for America's Graduates \(JAG\)](#)

* ACT 324 **