

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 8: Out-of-Home Services	Effective Date: May 1, 2016
	Section 20: Educational Services	Version: 7

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) must obtain education records for each school-aged child in out-of-home care. DCS will review the education records at a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting or a Case Plan Conference to determine whether an Individualized Education Program (IEP) should be considered to address the child's educational needs. The CFT will develop a plan to ensure the child's educational needs are met. For further guidance, see separate policy, [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#).

DCS will encourage the child's parent, guardian, or custodian to invite the child's teacher, school social worker, local DCS Educational Liaison (EL) (if applicable), and other identified educational supports to participate as members of the CFT.

DCS will ensure that every school-aged child in out-of-home care is enrolled in school full-time, unless one (1) of the following circumstances exists:

1. The youth is eligible for, and actively pursuing, a High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate;

Note: Some scholarships and grants will not be available if a HSE Certificate is completed instead of obtaining a high school diploma.

2. An alternate education plan has been recommended by the school the child attended at the time of placement and approved by the court;
3. The youth has graduated from high school or has successfully completed a HSE Certificate; or
4. The youth has a physician verified medical condition which prohibits him or her from attending school.

DCS will strive to allow the child to remain in the school he or she attended while living with his or her parent, guardian, or custodian unless the CFT concludes his or her educational needs would be better served in a different school.

DCS will document plans to maintain educational stability for a child in out-of-home care on the [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#) and provide this information to the court. This information should include whether the child will attend the school he or she previously attended, prior to any placement change. If the child must transfer schools, information provided to the court will include, but is not limited to:

1. Efforts made to allow the child to remain at the school he or she attended at the time of removal or any placement change;
2. Why it is in the best interest of the child to transfer schools;
3. The distance of the new school from the child's current placement;

4. Enrollment arrangements with the new school including transfer of educational records;
5. The child's current placement;
6. **[REVISED]** The current residence of the child's parent, guardian, or custodian (in order for the court to determine legal settlement);
7. The school and school corporation the child will attend while in out-of-home care; and
8. The transportation plan (which ensures the child is able to attend school).

Note: Unless educational services are provided in a residential facility where the child is placed, the child should have a transportation plan regardless of whether the child will attend the same school or change schools.

DCS will not authorize a child in out-of-home care to enroll in a non-accredited educational program that is not recognized by the Indiana Department of Education (DOE). For additional information, see [Practice Guidance](#).

DCS will **not** pay for the cost associated with attendance at a private school unless it is included in services provided by a residential facility through a placement agreement. See Related Information for suggestions on responding to requests for private education for a child in out-of-home care.

[NEW] DCS will **only** pay educational fees associated with the **repair or replacement of textbooks, devices, or musical instruments**. Indiana Public Schools may not collect other fees for a child placed in out-of-home care by DCS. Fees are paid directly to the school corporation by DCS. For additional information, see the [Letter of School Textbook and Related Fees](#) and [School Invoicing Process for Repair/Replacement of Textbooks, Electronic Devices, and Musical Instruments](#).

[NEW] Note: Resource parents are required to purchase insurance if offered by the school, for any school issued devices. DCS will reimburse the resource parent(s) for the cost of the insurance and deductible. For additional information, see [Practice Guidance](#).

DCS will ensure every DCS ward in the 7th through 12th grades is enrolled in the 21st Century Scholars program and understand the requirements of the Scholar Success Program (SSP).

[REVISED] DCS will ensure youth age 17 years or older are provided with information about:

1. Pell grants;
2. Chafee grants (This information may be provided at age 16);
3. Federal supplemental grants;
4. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
5. Individual Development Accounts (IDA);
6. The Indiana Commission for Higher Education – State Financial Aid; and
7. The Indiana Division of Student Financial Aid.

Note: If the youth will be completing high school or a HSE Certificate prior to age 17, he or she should be provided the information prior to completion.

For further guidance, see separate policies [8.21 Special Education Services](#), [8.22 School Transfers and Legal Settlement](#), [11.10 Education and Training Voucher Program](#), and [11.6 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood](#).

Code References

1. [IC 4-4-28 Individual Development Accounts](#)
2. [IC 20-26-11-9 Notice of Legal Settlement and Placement](#)
3. [IC 20-33-2: Compulsory School Attendance](#)
4. [IC 20-33-5 Financial Assistance for Students](#)
5. [IC 20-50-2 Tutoring and Mentoring for Homeless Children and Foster Care Children](#)
6. [IC 20-50-3 Transportation of Students in Foster Care](#)
7. [IC 20-51-2-1 List of Certified Scholarship Programs](#)
8. [IC 21-12-6-1 Twenty-First Century Scholars Program; Established](#)
9. [IC 21-12-6.5 Eligibility for Twenty-First Century Scholars Program for Foster Care Youth](#)
10. [511 IAC 7-38-1: Access to and Disclosure of Educational Records](#)
11. [20 USC 1232g \(b\)\(1\)\(E\), \(L\)](#)
12. [42 USC 675\(1\)\(G\)](#)

PROCEDURE [REVISED]

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Work with school personnel to ensure the child is registered for school;
2. Ensure the appropriate school corporations are notified if the child is transferring to a school in a different corporation and notice is required under [IC 20-26-11-9](#), by completing the [School Notification \(SF47412\)](#) form. For further guidance, see separate policy, [8.22 School Transfers and Legal Settlement](#);
3. **[REVISED]** Utilize the [School Notification \(SF47412\)](#) form to notify the school of the child's placement in out-of-home care, change of placement in out-of-home care, and return to parent, guardian, or custodian, when the child remains in the same school or corporation;
4. Provide the resource parent(s) with available educational information (e.g., the name of the school the child last attended, the child's current grade level, and a summary of academic progress);
5. **[NEW]** Ensure biological parents are included in all educational meetings and decisions, unless Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) has been finalized;
6. **[REVISED]** Encourage the parent, guardian, custodian, resource parent(s), or educational surrogate parent (ESP) to refer the child for testing to identify any special education needs and/or related services, if applicable. If it is determined the child needs individual tutoring, contact the school regarding this service. For further guidance, see separate policy, [8.21 Special Education Services](#);

[NEW] Note: DCS cannot refer a child for testing or sign any IEP documentation.

7. Ensure educational goals and needs are included in the child's [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#);
8. Collaborate with the CFT to minimize school disruptions and assess the effects of placement on the child's school attendance and academic performance. For further guidance, see Related Information and separate policy, [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#);
9. **[REVISED]** Recommend and encourage the child's parent, guardian, or custodian to include the child's school social worker, school counselor, EL (if applicable), and other involved school representative(s) as members of the CFT;
10. Document information regarding educational stability in the [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#) and provide the information to the court;
11. Assist the parent, guardian, custodian, and/or resource parent(s) in the completion of forms for free or reduced lunch and textbooks, if applicable;

12. Provide each child in the 7th through 12th grades with information about the 21st Century Scholars program and the SSP. For further guidance, see separate policy [11.15 Post-Secondary Education](#);
13. **[REVISED]** Ensure an application for the 21st Century Scholars program is submitted for all youth in 7th through 12th grade in out-of-home care who are not already enrolled. Applications for the 21st Century Scholars program may be completed online by visiting www.in.gov/21stcenturyscholars. The application process requires the FCM to:
 - a. Assist the youth in completing the application, and
 - b. Ensure the youth marks “yes” to the pre-application question concerning foster care status.

Note: For further guidance, see separate policy [11.15 Post-Secondary Education](#).

14. **[REVISED]** Encourage and assist all youth in 9th through 12th grades to:
 - a. Update his or her address with 21st Century Scholars annually,
 - b. **[NEW]** Comply with all requirements set forth in the SSP (see <http://www.in.gov/21stcenturyscholars/2373.htm>), and
 - c. Sign the 21st Century Scholars Affirmation Statement (see www.in.gov/21stcenturyscholars) during his or her senior year of high school.
15. **[REVISED]** Provide the youth with information regarding Pell grants, Chafee grants, federal supplemental grants, the FAFSA, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education – State Financial Aid, and the Indiana Division of Student Financial Aid during a CFT Meeting held immediately prior to the youth’s 17th birthday. For further guidance, see separate policies, [11.6 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood](#) and [11.15 Post-Secondary Education](#);

Note: This information should be provided earlier if the youth will be applying to colleges prior to age 17.

16. Provide youth with information about opening an IDA. For further guidance, see separate policy, [11.15 Post-Secondary Education](#) and Related Information;
17. **[REVISED]** Have the youth and caregiver sign an [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(SF55743\)](#). Give the youth and caregiver a copy and place the original in the youth’s case file; and
18. **[NEW]** Ensure all education information (e.g., current grade level, school name and address, and IEP date and specifics), decisions, and actions taken are documented in the Management Gateway for Indiana’s Kids (MaGIK) as changes occur, or at minimum, annually.

[NEW] The DCS Local Office Director (LOD) will ensure that before June 30th of each year the appropriate school corporations are notified of whether the child’s placement is anticipated to continue in the subsequent school year, using the [Annual Notification of Placement in School Corporation \(SF49812\)](#) form. For further guidance, see separate policy [8.22 School Transfers and Legal Settlement](#).

PRACTICE GUIDANCE [REVISED]

Exceptions for Home School and Private School Attendance

[REVISED] Education through an accredited school is optimal. However, in some unique circumstances home school or private school education may best meet the child’s educational needs. In these instances, the decision to pursue home school or private school education shall

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be decided in a CFT Meeting and shall not be made without the approval of the parent, guardian, or custodian (unless TPR has been finalized). A referral to the EL should also be considered, as his or her expertise will be beneficial in making this decision. A written request for exception must be reviewed for approval by the Regional Manager (RM) prior to seeking required court approval. The written request for exception must include a detailed plan to meet the child's academic, social, and/or other needs. If payment of tuition to attend a private school is required, the plan must include the responsibility for, and manner of, the required payment.

Virtual Schools

A virtual school is a school in which coursework is taught primarily through online methods. Virtual schools may be public schools (traditional or charter) or nonpublic schools. Nonpublic schools may not be accredited through the Indiana DOE.

Transportation for Students in Care

When a child is placed with resource parent(s) in the same school district but outside the attendance area for the school where he or she previously attended, and the child continues to attend the school he or she attended or would have attended before placement, the school district must provide transportation to and from school and the child's current placement. When the resource home is in an adjoining school district and the child continues to attend school in his or her original school district, the child's original school district and the school district of the resource home are jointly responsible for providing transportation to and from school and the child's current placement, per [IC 20-50-3-5](#).

Documenting Educational Stability in MaGIK

Information regarding educational stability should be documented in the [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#). The FCM should answer the question, "Has the child been placed in proximity to the school in which the child was enrolled at the time of placement?" Then, provide all other required educational stability details in the 'Explain' area next to the question.

Utilization of DCS Educational Liaisons

An EL provides support to the FCM in identifying educational barriers and developing effective solutions. The FCM should contact an EL to meet a wide range of educational needs. Assistance is available via referral through KidTraks.

[NEW] Resource Parent(s) Reimbursement of Insurance for School Supplied Devices

Resource parent(s) are required to purchase insurance, when offered by the school, for any school supplied devices provided to the child. The resource parent(s) will be reimbursed by DCS for the cost of the insurance and deductible if the device is damaged or lost.

1. The FCM creates a referral in KidTraks (Global Services > General Products > Other) for the amount of the insurance (or the amount of the deductible if the device is damaged or lost); and
2. The resource parent(s) requests reimbursement using the [Claim for Support of Children Payable from Family and Children Funds \(SF28808\)](#).

Note: The resource parent(s) may contact DCSResourceUnit@dcs.in.gov for assistance.

How to Determine if Tutoring Services are Needed:

1. Request a comprehensive copy of the child's school records including attendance, school placements, special education evaluations, IEPs, Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP) scores, Response to Intervention (RTI) data, and grades;
2. Determine if there are patterns documented in the records that may explain poor

academic performance (e.g., several school placements, inconsistent attendance, and/or inappropriate behaviors).

Note: If a child has poor attendance at school, a tutor should not be put in place until a pattern of regular school attendance is established.

3. Communicate with the school administration team to determine what tutoring services are provided through the school. If the child is placed out-of-home, the following Indiana Code applies to tutoring:

IC 20-50-2-3 Tutoring of children who are in foster care or are homeless

Each school corporation shall provide tutoring for a child enrolled in a school operated by the school corporation who is:

- (1) in foster care; or
 - (2) a homeless child;
if the school corporation determines the child has a demonstrated need for tutoring;
4. Communicate with the school's administration team or multidisciplinary team (M-Team) to determine what academic interventions are being used to meet the child's current academic needs. Ask to see data that measures the child's progress and supports the school's decision to use certain interventions;
 5. If the child receives special education services, ask to see progress monitoring data to determine if the child is making adequate progress toward academic goals. For a child with an IEP, grades on the report card are not always the best measure of progress and academic performance;
 6. If the child has received in-school tutoring and is still struggling, it may be appropriate to make a referral to an outside tutoring service. Make sure the tutoring service knows who to communicate with at the school to determine what interventions and strategies are being used with the child; and
 7. Ask for regular updates from the tutoring provider on the child's progress toward the child's individual goals.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#) - Available in MaGIK
2. [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(SF55743\)](#)
3. [School Notification \(SF47412\)](#)
4. [Annual Notification of Continuation of Placement in School Corporation \(SF49812\) form](#)
5. [Letter of School Textbook and Related Fees](#)
6. [School Invoicing Process for Repair/Replacement of Textbooks, Electronic Devices, and Musical Instruments](#)
7. [Claim for Support of Children Payable from Family and Children Funds \(SF28808\)](#)

RELATED INFORMATION [REVISED]

Minimizing School Disruptions

School disruptions may cause extreme emotional stress for a child and affect his or her academic performance, development, and/or overall well-being. The FCM should attempt to minimize school disruptions by:

1. Placing the child with resource parent(s) living in the same school district;
2. Assisting resource parent(s) living in a different district with transportation arrangements, so the child can continue to attend the same school;

3. Delaying a change in placement until the end of a school semester or year, when waiting does not endanger the child's safety and/or well-being;
4. Scheduling medical and court appointments during non-school hours, whenever possible; and/or
5. **[REVISED]** Contacting the school the child will attend when it is in the same or adjoining school district as the school of origin, regarding the requirement for school-provided transportation between the school and the resource home. If there are questions or concerns regarding this, please contact your local EL for assistance.

Private Schools

The CFT should review requests for a child to attend private school. For further guidance, see separate policy, [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#). The CFT should consider whether any of the following conditions apply:

1. The child attended the private school prior to being removed from his or her home;
2. The child has documented educational, medical, and/or psychological needs that would be better served by a specific private school; and/or
3. The child is placed in a residential facility that runs an in-house school or educational program.

If private education is requested, the CFT should consider funding options including, but not limited to, payment of tuition by the child's parent, guardian, or custodian and scholarships offered by the school. For further guidance, see separate policy, [5.7 Child and Family Team Meetings](#).

[REVISED] High School Equivalency (HSE) Certificate

Indiana has implemented the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC), a replacement for the General Education Development (GED). TASC is the high school equivalency exam which measures an examinee's levels of achievement relative to that of a graduating high school senior. TASC also assesses for career and college readiness. For additional information, see <http://www.in.gov/dwd/HSE.htm>.

Education Records

Education records include a range of information about a student that is maintained by the school. Examples of information include, but are not limited to:

1. Date and place of birth, parent(s) and/or guardian addresses, and where parents may be contacted in emergencies;
2. Grades, test scores, courses taken, academic specializations, activities, and official letters regarding a student's status in school;
3. Special education records;
4. Disciplinary records;
5. Medical and health records that the school creates or collects and maintains;
6. Documentation of attendance, schools attended, awards conferred, and degrees earned; and
7. Personal information, such as a student's identification code, social security number, picture, or other information that would make it easy to identify or locate a student.

Note: Personal notes made by teachers and other school officials that are not shared with others are not considered education records. Additionally, law enforcement records created and maintained by a school or district's law enforcement unit are not education records.

Legal Settlement and Termination of Parental Rights

The court should redetermine legal settlement when parental rights are terminated. If the child is in his or her permanent placement, then the address of that placement should be provided to the court. If the child is not in his or her permanent placement, the address of the current resource parent(s) should be provided to the court. The address of the DCS local office should only be provided for the purpose of determining legal settlement if no other address can be used.

[NEW] Individual Development Accounts (IDA)

An IDA is a matched savings account program designed to assist individuals in achieving self-sufficiency through financial literacy and asset generation. There are a limited number of IDAs available in Indiana. In order to open an IDA, individuals must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Indiana resident;
2. Below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines;
3. Have at least \$400 per year in earned income;
4. Be able to save a minimum of \$35 per month; and
5. Meet minimum screening requirements.

Youth interested in opening an IDA should visit www.ihcda.in.gov or call 1-317-232-7777 for county specific information.