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# Children in Foster Care:

*What Educators & Administrators  
Need to Know*

Katie Feeley, Juvenile Law Center

Maura McInerney, Education Law Center

Jill Reyes, ABA Center on Children and the Law



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# Children in Foster Care

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In their own words.....

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# INTRODUCTIONS

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- Who we are
- Focus of webinar
- Tech announcements

**Website:** [www.fostercareandeducation.org](http://www.fostercareandeducation.org)

**Join our listserv:** Email [ccleducation@americanbar.org](mailto:ccleducation@americanbar.org); include "*Join Foster Care & Education listerv*" in subject

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# Children in Foster Care in School

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- Almost every school has students in care.
  - School is often their only source of stability.
  - They face unique barriers to success but with the right support they succeed.
  - The first step is to **see** them and **hear** them.
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# Demographics

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**399,546  
children in  
care**

- 62% school aged
- 56% Black, Hispanic, Other
- 5-10% LGBTQ



# Disproportionality

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- Likelihood of Special Ed  
→ 3x
- Likelihood to be Absent  
→ 2x
- Likelihood Expelled (17-18)  
→ 3x

# What are their experiences?



Homeless



Neglected and abandoned



Exposed to drug abuse



Exposed to violence



Post-traumatic stress disorder

Severely abused



# More on experiences while in foster care

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## *The Whirlwind of Out-of-Home Care*

- Removed from home, parents, siblings, relatives, friends
- Living with strangers
- Few or none of your possessions
- Uncertainty and fear
- Frequent moves (2.8 placements)





# Experiences of youth in care: CA

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13-22% experience homelessness

58% graduate from high school

At least 14% have been incarcerated



15/16% of foster youth live in California

# Understanding the Process

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- Child welfare system
- Court system



Child welfare agencies and courts often lack basic information about a child.



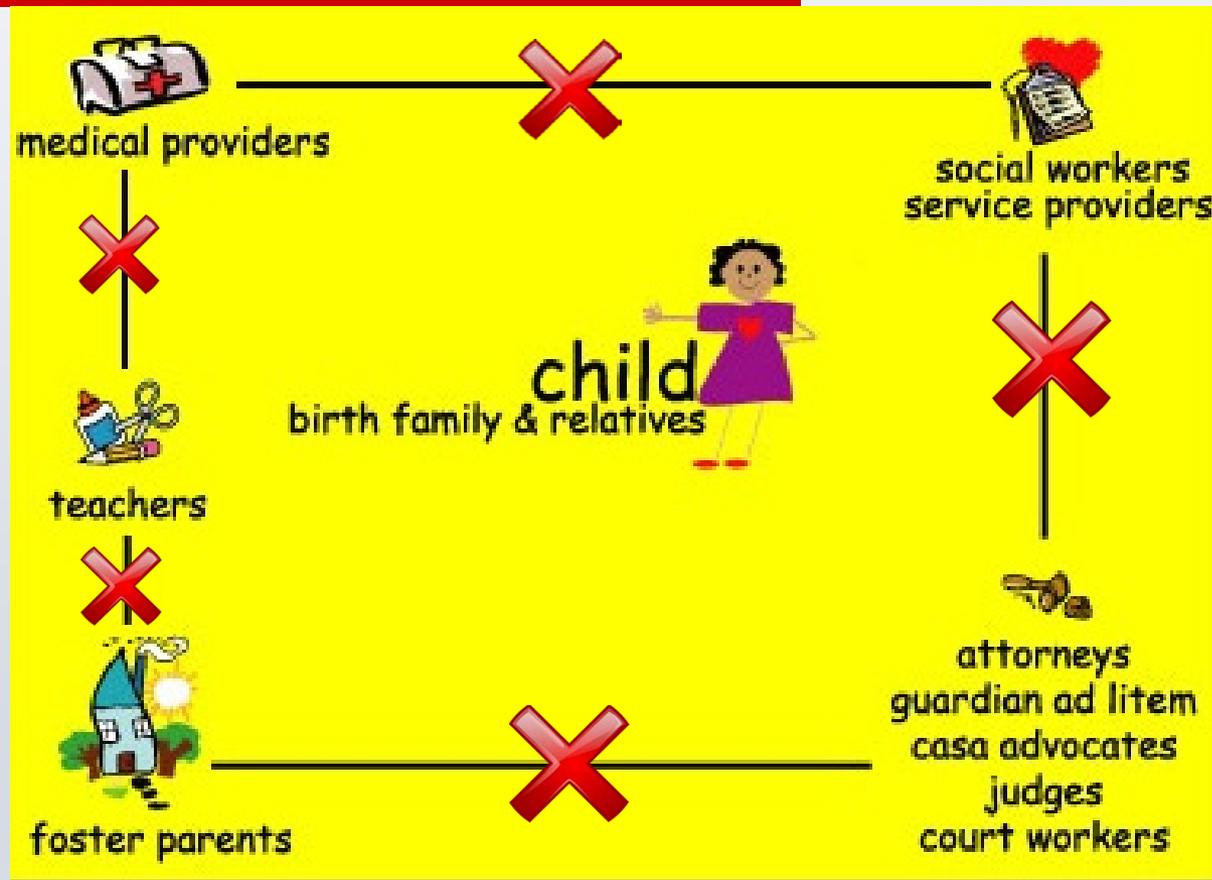
Systems are focused on safety concerns and basic needs.

Youth may have no voice and worry about where they'll live and who will care for them.

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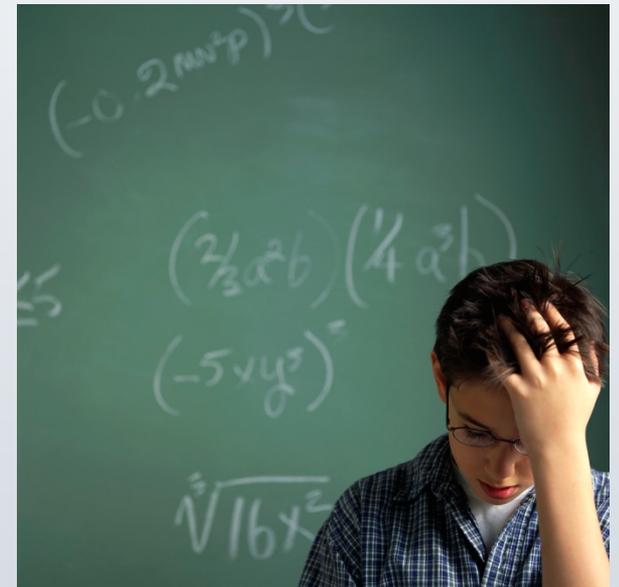
# Parties involved in the Process



# How this process impacts the classroom

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- ❑ Attendance
  - ❑ Changing schools
  - ❑ School discipline
  - ❑ Lack of connection to school
  - ❑ Inability to access extracurriculars
  - ❑ Remedial needs
  - ❑ Credit problems & lack of access to high school diploma
  - ❑ Barriers to accessing higher education
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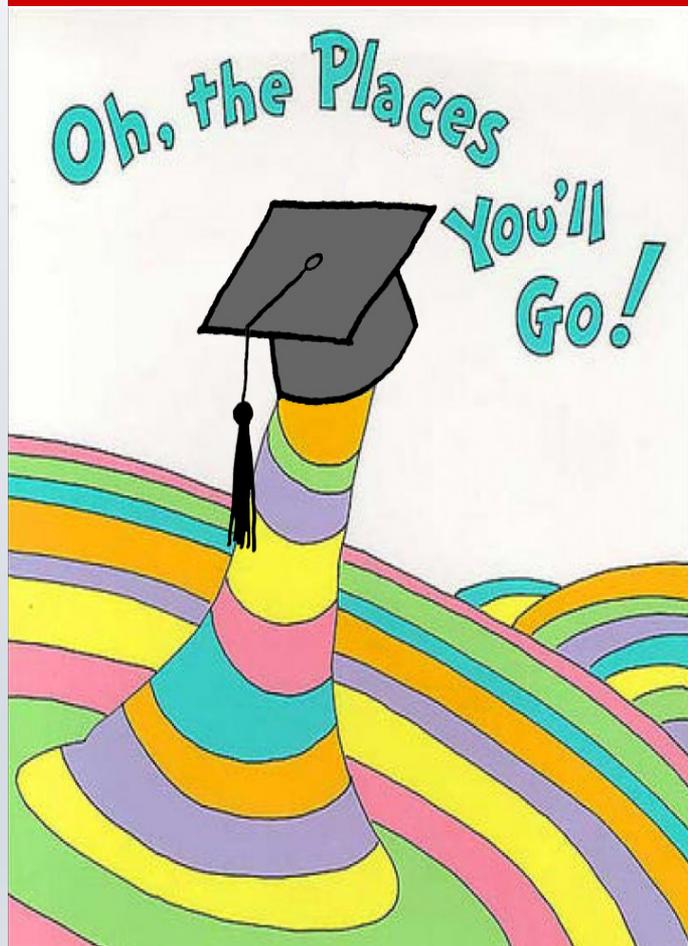


# High School Drop Out Rates Higher than National Average



- ❑ National grad. rate is about 80%
- ❑ Lower graduation rates for youth in care

# Few Obtain a Bachelors Degree



- ❑ 84% of 17-18 year old foster youth *want* to go to college
- ❑ 2-9% of former foster youth obtain a bachelor's degree

# Often change schools & experience enrollment delays

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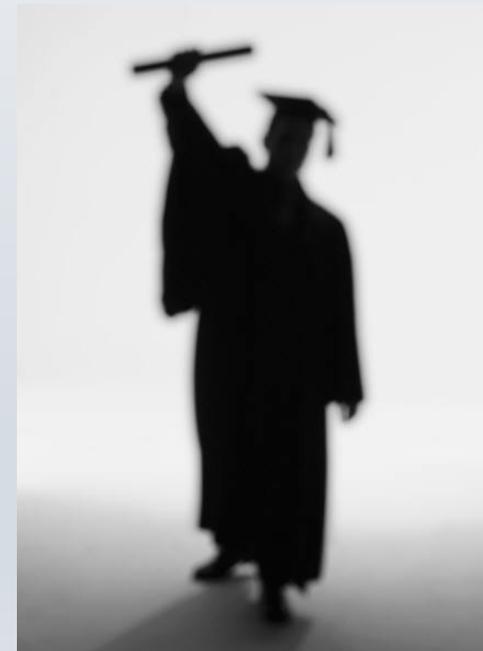




# Stability Encourages Growth

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Youth with fewer placement changes are more likely to graduate.





# What can I do?

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- Tips for Frontline educators
  - Tips for Administrators
  - Overview of Tools
    - Blueprint for Change
    - Meeting the Educational Needs of Students in the Child Welfare System
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# What can I do?

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- Tips for Frontline educators
    - Welcome and orient
    - Learn about trauma-informed approaches
    - Identify & communicate with education decision makers (e.g., foster parents, EDMs appt. by court, surrogate parents)
    - Engage students in school community
    - Help plan grad & post-grad opportunities
    - Refer to mental health providers
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# What can I do?

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## Administrators

- Adopt policies or practices to address needs of children in foster care such as:
    - Establish **point of contact** at school level
    - Offer peer **mentorship program**
    - Ensure **prompt appointment of surrogate parents** for kids with disabilities
    - Maintain, update & provide **education records** to child welfare representatives (Uninterrupted Scholars Act)
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# What can I do?

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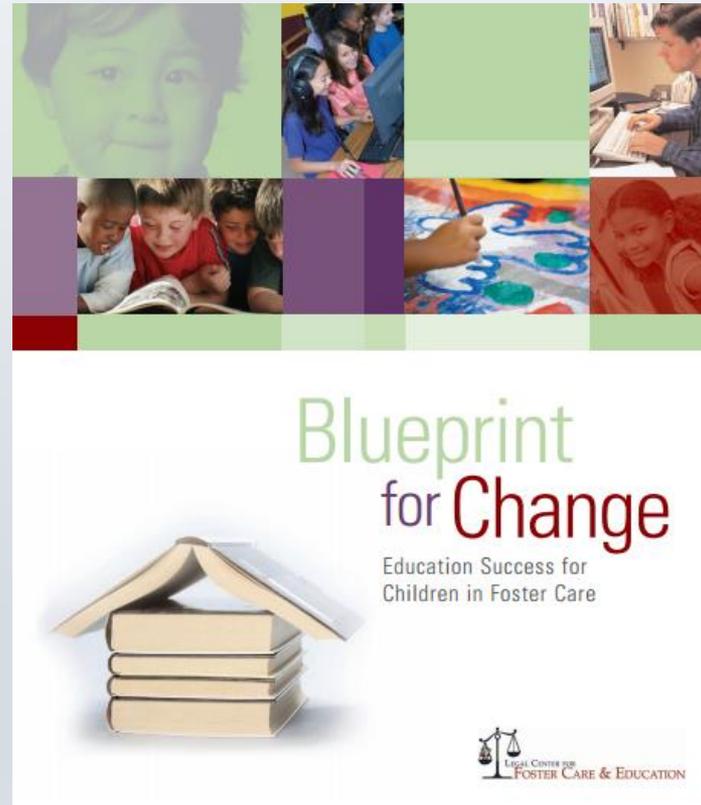
- Administrators
    - Ensure immediate enrollment
    - Facilitate transportation
    - Ensure academic & social supports:
      - Trauma-informed Educators
      - Access to mental health providers
      - Access to extra-curriculars mid-year
      - Credit waiver policies
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# Tools

## □ Blueprint for Change

- 8 goals
- Geared towards Advocates & Admin.



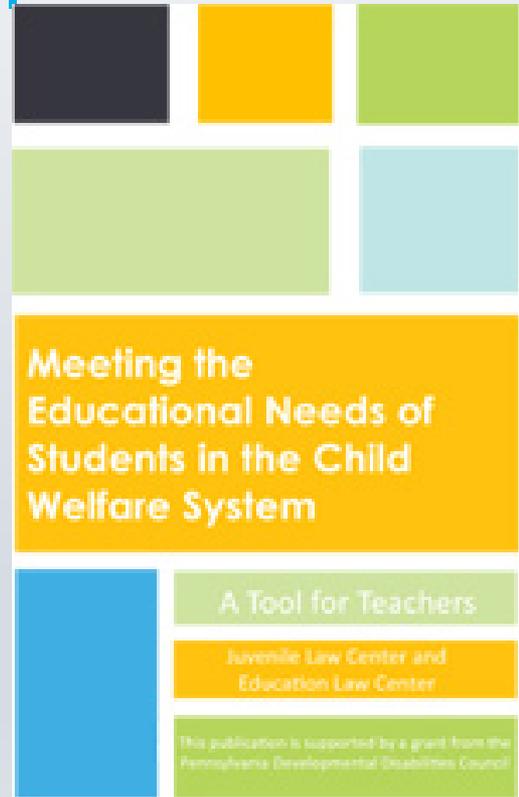
# Tools

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## □ Meeting the Educational Needs of Students In the Child Welfare System

- For teachers
- For administrators

□ <http://www.jlc.org/educatortools>

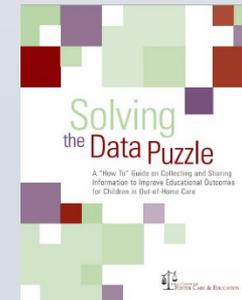
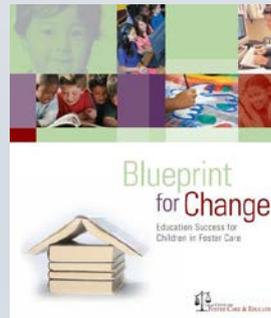


# Where can I find tools & support?

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- Legal Center exists to help you
- Resources



# Legal Center Website

**LEGAL CENTER FOR FOSTER CARE & EDUCATION**

**ABA** Center on Children and the Law  
AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Home About Us Database National Work State Work Areas of Focus Materials News & Updates

**WE SUPPORT ALL THOSE WHO WISH TO IMPROVE EDUCATION OUTCOMES: COURTS, SCHOOLS, CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES**

Learn more

You Are Here: Home  Signin

### Getting Started?

Are you new to the topic of foster care and education? Start here. Or, access our [searchable database](#) to find resources on a particular topic and read our [publications](#).

### Federal Highlights

Learn about what is happening in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, as well as the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services around foster care and education. [Start here](#)

### State Highlights

Across the country, child welfare agencies, schools, and courts are working together to improve education outcomes for children in foster care. [Learn more here](#).

### Fostering Connections

The Fostering Connections Act is designed to ensure school stability for children in foster care. [Learn more](#)

### Data & Information Sharing

Collecting, evaluating, and sharing information on the education of children in foster care is essential to improving their educational outcomes.

### Special Education

Who holds special education decisionmaking rights for children in foster care? Check out [our materials](#) on this topic.

www.fostercareandeducation.org



# Contact Information

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**Maura McInerney**

Education Law Center

[mmcinerney@elc-pa.org](mailto:mmcinerney@elc-pa.org)

**Katie Feeley**

Juvenile Law Center

[kfeeley@jlc.org](mailto:kfeeley@jlc.org)

**Legal Center for Foster Care  
and Education**

[CCLEducation@americanbar.org](mailto:CCLEducation@americanbar.org)

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