

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Superintendents and Principals  
**FROM:** Lisa Truitt, State Attendance Officer  
Jeff Wittman, Foster Youth Specialist  
Melaina Gant, Education Services Director  
Indiana Department of Child Services  
**DATE:** June 22, 2017  
**SUBJECT:** Fostering Connections Act

On May 30, 2014 The United States Department of Education and the United States Department of Health and Human Services sent a joint letter regarding the well-being of students involved in foster care. Indiana is supportive of the national goal of ongoing collaboration and cross-system coordination to support the outcomes of these youth. The Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana Department of Child Services are committed to working together for the long term well-being of our youth.

Per the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering Connections Act) our two agencies are obligated to work together. Over the past three years, we have increased collaboration between our two agencies. This partnership continues to increase in joint decisions and works together to support schools and the outcomes of foster youth.

The Fostering Connections Act determines that foster youth are entitled to:

- Education stability
- Child welfare receives Title IV-E funding in order to create a plan for foster children. The plan must include:
  1. An assurance that each placement of the child in foster care takes into account the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child was enrolled at the time of placement; and
  2. An assurance that the State child welfare agency (SCWA) has coordinated with the appropriate LEA(s) to ensure the child can remain in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of each placement, or, if remaining in that school is not in the best interests of the child, assurances from the SCWA and LEA to enroll the child immediately in a new school, with all of his or her educational records provided to the school.

The following are ways that our schools and child welfare agency can work together to support foster youth:

1. Each child involved with DCS has a case manager. Include the name of the case manager in a child's school file. If you do not know the case manager, call the DCS local office in your county. Determine a school faculty member to be available for child family team meetings.
2. If there are concerns at school regarding attendance, academics or behavior contact the DCS education liaison in your area. Their role is to work between the schools and DCS.
3. Consider involving the case manager at team meetings involving the child when important education decisions are being made. However, be mindful of any state or federal privacy disclosure laws and verify that all proper consents for disclosures have been documented.
4. Provide staff development (available from an education liaison) regarding trauma informed education.
5. Collect data on foster youth (ISTEP, attendance, etc) and ask DCS to help create goals with the child and the family.

Additional information and resources for [supporting foster youth](#) are available on the IDOE website.

The Indiana Department of Child Services and the Indiana Department of Education are dedicated to ensuring educational stability for children in foster care.

If there are any questions of assistance requested please contact:

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