Children's Home Society of North Carolina

School & Educational Advocacy for Foster Parents

Education can be a powerful source of stability for children in foster care. Foster parents play a vital role in advocating for a child's educational rights—helping ensure access, continuity, and the support they need to succeed in school. You do not have to be an expert. You just need to know where to go for help—and Children's Home Society of North Carolina is here to support you.

Self Care Checklist for Foster Parents

Immediate School Enrollment

In North Carolina, children entering foster care have the right to immediate school enrollment, even if records are unavailable. This means schools must not delay enrollment due to missing:

- **Academic records**
- **Immunization records**
- **Birth certificates or transcripts**

School stability helps reduce stress and supports emotional well being.

IEPs & 504 Plans

Children in foster care may qualify for educational supports to address learning, behavioral, or emotional needs. As a foster parent, you can:

- **Request** an evaluation for special education services
- **Participate** in IEP or 504 Plan meetings
- **Advocate** for classroom accommodations and supports
- **Ask** questions and request clarification—your voice matters

These plans are designed to ensure children receive equitable access to learning, not labels.

School Stability & the McKinney Vento Act

When placements change, children may still have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is in their best interest.

The **McKinney Vento Act** helps protect:

- School stability during placement changes
- Transportation support when needed
- Uninterrupted access to education

School consistency can make a significant difference during times of transition.

Free School Meals & Support Services

All children in foster care automatically qualify for:

- **Free** school breakfast and lunch
- **Additional** academic and support services

Foster parents should not have to navigate applications or approvals—schools can assist with implementation.

When You Need Help Advocating

Educational advocacy can feel complex—especially when navigating systems you may not have experienced before. Support is available through:

- **North Carolina Dept. of Public Instruction (DPI)**
  - Education Advocacy for Foster Youth
  - 919-807-3300
  - www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/federal-program-monitoring/title-i-part-improving-academic-achievement-disadvantaged/foster-care-provisions
- **Legal Aid of North Carolina**
  - Assistance for foster parents and children
  - 866-219-5262
- **National Center for Homeless Education**
  - Support related to McKinney Vento protections

You can also contact the **NC Foster Care Education Program** for additional guidance and resources.

CHS Is Here to Support You

You Do Not Have to Do This Alone!

Educational advocacy is not about confrontation — it is about collaboration, understanding, and ensuring children receive what they need to thrive.

CHS can help foster parents:

- Understand educational rights and protections
- Prepare for school meetings
- Navigate transitions and placement changes
- Advocate with confidence and support

Every child deserves the opportunity to learn in a safe, supportive environment—and every foster parent deserves guidance along the way.

For foster parents licensed with Children's Home Society, log in to your Sky Prep account for additional training about this topic.

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