

The logo for the Education Law Center features the words "EDUCATION" and "LAW CENTER" in white, uppercase letters. "EDUCATION" is positioned above "LAW CENTER". The text is centered within a blue rectangular box. This blue box is flanked by two yellow rectangular bars, one above and one below, creating a stylized, layered effect.

EDUCATION
LAW CENTER

Tips for the 2021-2022 School Year for Students in the Foster Care

Youth in foster care experienced unique challenges during the pandemic and many experienced significant stress and anxiety. In some cases, youth who would have aged out of foster care were allowed to remain in care until September 30, 2021. This tip sheet helps families, advocates, and youth think through – and take action on – key education issues to support young people in foster care, including accessing remedial help, compensatory education services, making school stability determinations, understanding new graduation requirements, and undertaking transition planning.

Connect with your school’s “[Foster Care Point of Contact](#)” and raise any new issues that may impact the youth, including the need for counseling and guidance to prepare for life after graduation. This Point of Contact and the [Education Liaison](#) from the county children and youth office can work together to address the youth’s concerns and needs, including access to support services.

If you are working with a young person who has **disengaged from school**, talk to them about their individual situation and consider whether they need **additional supports and services** upon returning to school. Many students experienced regression in core subjects such as math and reading and many schools are now offering additional remedial assistance at no cost.

Whether the youth is changing foster care living placements or in a residential setting consider whether school stability is possible based on a [best interest determination](#) that centers the youth.

If there are options to learn in different school placements or in person or remotely, work with the youth’s educational decision maker (EDM) to determine the **best learning option** for the youth. If a youth is learning virtually, make sure they have the technology and support they need to make progress.

Consider whether to **request an evaluation for special education services** if a youth is struggling in school academically or behaviorally. Consider whether a youth with a qualifying disability such as ADHD, anxiety or depression may need accommodations to access learning through a **Section 504 Plan**.

All young people with disabilities who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) should be screened to determine their eligibility for [COVID Compensatory Services \(CCS\)](#) – make up services for hours that a student failed to receive a free, appropriate public education due to COVID-19 closures. Request an IEP team meeting to discuss this and ensure that appropriate additional services are listed in their IEP.

Work with your school to develop a graduation plan in light of [new state graduation requirements](#) that apply in June, 2023.

Work with the youth’s school and child welfare teams to develop a [clear and detailed transition plan](#) that addresses the youth’s post-graduation goals and activities needed to achieve those goals.