



Back to school

It's September, which means our children and youth are back to school. We know that this can be a stressful time of year as children and youth adjust to new settings and schedules. A great resource that could help with a student's success in school is an IEP and 504 plan. When kids struggle in school you may hear the term **IEP**. What is

an IEP? IEP is an acronym that stands for **Individualized Education Program**.

What does an IEP do? The IEP lays out special education instruction, supports and services a student needs to thrive in school. IEPs are part of PreK-12 public education. IEPs are covered by special education law, or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

How to qualify for an IEP:

- ✓ Children with any kind of disability that affects how they learn in school.
- ✓ This can be a physical or learning disability, a developmental disability, or autism.
- ✓ This can include issues in any of the following areas: physical, learning, social, behavioral, medical, communication, or developmental.

“When educating the minds of our youth we must not forget to educate their hearts”.
-Dalai Lama

What is a **504 plan**? Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A 504 plan makes changes at school so that your child can learn. A 504 plan is about making sure the classroom fits how your child learns. These changes are called accommodations.

- An accommodation is a change that removes a barrier to learning or getting work done. First identify the barrier. Is it a loud room, written text, lack of structure, or something else?

How to qualify for a 504:

To be protected under Section **504**, a student must be determined to:

- ✓ have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
- ✓ have a record of such an impairment
- ✓ be regarded as having such an impairment.



The below websites provide information on IEP and 504 plans and how to navigate these resources when needed.

- ❖ [Family Connection SC](#)
- ❖ [The Arch of South Carolina](#)
- ❖ [South Carolina Department of Education](#)

You can also check out the [South Carolina Foster Parent Association](#) website for free webinar trainings about IEPs and 504 plans.

*Please email lisa.j.armstrong@dss.sc.gov for questions on 504/IEP plans

Changes in Foster Home and Adoption Licensing Regulations

The Family First Prevention Services Act was passed into law (P.L. 115-123) as part of the Bipartisan Budget Package/ Continuing Resolution by Congress and signed by President Donald J. Trump on February 9, 2018. This act required the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish model licensing standards for foster family homes. The General Assembly approved new foster home regulations in May 2021 and become effective September 12, 2021. Additionally, the General Assembly approved these same regulations for SCDSS adoptive homes. This will help to streamline the adoption and foster home process and avoid duplication between the SCDSS adoption and foster home licensing divisions. Your Child Placing Agency (CPA), SCDSS Regional Licensing Support Worker or Adoption Family Worker will work with you to bring your home into compliance with the new regulations. **Question and answers related to the new regulations can be found [here](#).** We have highlighted several of the revised regulations below:



- Applicants who are married or who reside with another adult resident of the household (e.g. a spouse, romantic partner, or roommate) must apply together
- Income must be verified through income tax records, pay stubs, and bank account statements. Promised gifts or donations do not constitute income or financial resources
- Pool Requirements- must have a 4ft high fence around pool secured w/ lock and latch
- Vaccine Requirements
 - All children who are household members must be current on immunizations jointly recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease of Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Family Physicians **unless the immunization is contrary to the child's health as documented by a licensed health care professional or that the department determines that other extenuating circumstances exist.**
 - All household members who will be caregivers of infants must have an up-to-date pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine consistent with the recommendation of the ACIP **unless the immunization is contrary to the child's health as documented by a licensed health care professional or that the department determines that other extenuating circumstances exist.**
 - All household members who will be caregivers of infants and children with special medical needs must have an up-to-date annual influenza vaccine consistent with the recommendation of the ACIP **unless the immunization is contrary to the child's health as documented by a licensed health care professional or that the department determines that other extenuating circumstances exist.**
- FH must have an approved Carbon Monoxide alarm installed and maintained outside each separated sleeping area if a home has fuel fire appliances installed, attached garages or fireplaces.
- No more than four children total sharing a room
- Training hours will be increased by 2 hours for a total of 15 hours in a year; and you must complete CPR and Blood Borne Pathogen Training.
- **Unless the department concludes that extenuating circumstances exist, pets that are required to be vaccinated by state or tribal law must be vaccinated against diseases that can transmit to humans, including rabies.**
 - Find the new regulations at: https://www.scstatehouse.gov/state_register.php on page 542.

[Foster/Adoptive Home Regulations - Questions and Answers](#)

NEW BOARD RATES

Effective July 1, 2021 (to be paid in August 2021)

Regular Foster care Board rates will begin being received in August for the month of July.

- Regular Foster Care - **Age 0-5**
 - Monthly Rate - \$605
 - Daily Rate - \$20.17
- Regular Foster Care - **Age 6-12**
 - Monthly Rate - \$708
 - Daily Rate - \$23.60
- Regular Foster Care - **Age 13-20**
 - Monthly Rate - \$747
 - Daily Rate - \$24.90



****This will replace the COVID Supplemental payment***

SCDSS Policy on 10 day notice of a non-emergency foster removal

When SCDSS decides to do a non-emergency removal of a foster child or youth from his or her placement it is required that, if the child or youth has been in that home for over 120 days, then the caseworker must give the foster parents a **10 day** notice of their right to appeal. The appeal is only to determine if the agency gave you proper notice as outlined by agency policy. The appeal does NOT determine placement. To read more about this policy click [here](#).



FIRE DRILL REQUIREMENTS!

Fire escape drills are required to be conducted and documented every three (3) months and records of the drills shall be maintained on the premises for three (3) years. Please make sure you download and print off the “**Foster Home Fire Drill Report**” found [here](#).
Fire drills shall include complete evacuation of all persons from the building/home.

A fire escape drill shall be conducted within twenty-four (24) hours of the arrival of each new foster child.

Information Required on Drill Report:

- a. Date and time of drill
- b. Weather during the drill
- c. Number of occupants evacuated
- d. Description of Drill
- e. Number of people evacuated
- f. Time required for evacuation
- g. Problems encountered



Copies of fire drill records shall be kept on file for 3 years!

[Here](#) is a copy of a **Home Fire Drill planner** that you can print off. These are some [lesson](#) plans for families to review with their children. Helping children and youth understand how to avoid dangers and major catastrophes is a life saving skill. The more we practice these safety drills the better prepared everyone will be and have the best outcome for all. We know that bad situations can happen but if we are prepared then we avoid fatal mistakes and can eliminate potential trauma.

Child and Adult Information Portal (CAIP)

Training & Access:

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has launched the Child and Adult Information Portal (CAIP) platform on March 15, 2021.

CAIP is a virtual platform to view and share health, education and well-being information about children in foster care. The training is being offered as a recorded webinar by the University of South Carolina and there is a link to the training on the SCFPALMS (<https://www.scfpalms.com/>).



This training will teach foster care providers how to access and enter a wide range of important information about the children in their care, including Child Information, Visitation and Maintaining Connections, Health Information, Education Information, Awards and Achievements, Family, Adult and Community Connections, Special Interests and Events.

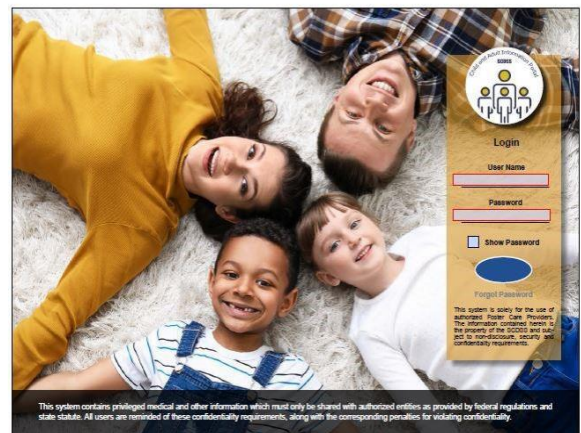
Once this virtual training is complete, foster care providers will receive a secure username and password from SCDSS to access CAIP. Foster parents can then access CAIP using a smartphone, tablet, desktop or laptop computer. With the username and password, foster parents and providers will be able to log in to a secure website to instantly view and update important information about the children in their care, such as:

- ❖ Previous school records
- ❖ Special education and 504 accommodation information
- ❖ Behavioral plans
- ❖ Educational meeting details
- ❖ Awards and achievements
- ❖ Medical appointments and medications
- ❖ Visitation and maintaining connection
- ...and much more!

As of July 9, 2021

CAIP - Child and Adult Information Portal has:

- **12** Awards
- **89** Visitations
- **289** Appointments
- **146** Medical Encounters
- **18** Special Interests
- **26** Education Updates
- **73** Uploaded Documents (Awards, After Visit Summaries, School Photos, etc.)



SC Voucher



Formerly known as **ABC Quality Program** is now called **SC Voucher**.

SC Voucher makes payments to child care providers to care for children, so their parents and foster parents can work.

The Division of Early Care and Education pays providers within 4 - 6 days of receipt of online payment documents.

- SC Voucher supports work; foster parents must be working or attending school or training to be eligible for child care services.
- Parents choose the provider who will care for their child, whether it is a child care center, family or group child care home, church, synagogue, school, employer, or a family member, friend or neighbor
- All the money paid to child care providers goes back into South Carolina's economy to benefit the citizens of the state.

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

- If SC Vouchers are needed for childcare and this information is shared at the time of placement, the Foster Family and Licensing Support Placement Staff forwards the Contact Information and Name of the Daycare to our SC Childcare Department. The SC Childcare Department Staff contact the Foster Parent directly to request any additional information needed to process the request.
- Once placement has been secured, Foster Family and Licensing Support Placement Unit notify the requesting County Staff of the contact information and any details needed for the placement. The County Staff are expected to reach out to the Foster Parent immediately and communicate any additional information.

Please visit the official [SC Child Care](https://www.dss.sc.gov/childcare) website for more information.

Email questions to: fosterchildcare@dss.sc.gov



COVID-19 Update



New Guidance for Close Contact Identification in Schools

DHEC has adopted the same guidance as the CDC on close contact identification. This will impact who might be identified at school or on the bus as a close contact. Please read and look at the most recent guidance booklet for schools to help understand how the “close contact” child/youth or staff is identified. This information can be found on pages **28-30** at:

[SCDHEC COVID-19 Guidance for K-12 Schools.](#)

This is an excellent resource on understanding how DHEC has now said that yes under 3 feet remains a close contact, but 3-6 feet both the positive student and the exposed student must be wearing masks, or the exposed student will need to quarantine, and the positive student will need to isolate.

Covid-19 Vaccines for Youth ages 12 to 16

The FDA recently approved the Pfizer/ BioNTech Covid-19 vaccines for individuals 12 to 15 years old, including adolescents/youth between 12 and 16 who were not previously approved in the 16 years and older category. On May 12, 2021, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the CDC recommended the use of this vaccine for the prevention of Covid-19 in persons aged 12 and older. SC DHEC now offers the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 Vaccine to people 12 years of age and older. Agency policy makes immunizations “routine (ordinary) care”. However, parental engagement in all health care decisions is best practice and is encouraged as well as listening to the youth’s voice in the matter. But DSS does have the authority to consent to routine (ordinary) medical care without parental authorization when we have legal custody. DSS staff and caregiving providers should consult the (1) parents and (2) the youth regarding Covid-19 vaccination for those over 12 years old, as well as (3) the healthcare provider for the youth, if possible, or that provider’s general recommendations regarding the Covid-19 Vaccine for youth in the age group. The decision of the parent and youth should be memorialized in writing and/ or signed by the parent and youth. For those youth who parents have had parental rights terminated, the decision rests with DSS but again the youth’s voice should be heard, and the preference is to obtain medical advice or guidance on each child from their healthcare provider as well. If parental rights have been terminated and the youth is in adoptive placement, DSS should consult with the prospective adoptive parents and youth. The decision of the prospective adoptive parent and youth should be memorialized in writing. We encourage foster parents and youth to learn more about their vaccination options and move quickly to schedule your vaccinations. All South Carolinians aged 12 and up are currently eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. You can make an appointment by visiting scdhec.gov/vaxlocator. If you need help, call 1-866-365-8110. We know that over 2.3 million (54.5%) SC citizens have had at least one dose of a vaccination while 46.1% have been fully vaccinated.

You can find Pfizer/ BioNTech vaccine fact sheet information [here](#).

If you require further clarification, please email FPhelp@dss.sc.gov