

Foster Parent Facts

Back to School Edition 2022

IT IS BACK TO SCHOOL TIME ONCE AGAIN!

No matter our age, the back to school season is a time of change, anticipation, excitement, and nervousness. For many children in foster care, school adds to an already hard situation. Foster Parents have the privilege and responsibility of walking alongside the children in your home, whether for one day or a lifetime.

We are thankful for our foster parents who invest, advocate, and inspire the children in their homes to unlock their possibilities and potential. We know the days can be long and challenging, but it matters! Your impact might not show while the child is in your home, but your impact on a child's future can be life changing!

You are not in this alone. DSS has a team dedicated to Well-being and Education for children in Foster Care, so please reach out to FPHelp@dss.sc.gov or 803-898-4174 with any school or education questions or needs. Together, we will help South Carolina's children and youth prepare for their future!

"EVERY CHILD DESERVES A CHAMPION — AN ADULT WHO WILL NEVER GIVE UP ON THEM, WHO UNDERSTANDS THE POWER OF CONNECTION AND INSISTS THAT THEY BECOME THE BEST THEY CAN POSSIBLY BE."

— Rita F. Pierson

Foster Parents should enter information on a child's education, hobbies, and school development into the CAIP portal. [Go here for the CAIP training!](#)

Many after-school programs for elementary-aged children accept child care vouchers.

A Best Interest Determination (BID) meeting must be conducted before a child's school is changed.

A child in Foster Care is eligible for free meals and considered a household of one (1).

Be sure to know your school district zone.

District lines can change. Be sure to stay informed.

The child's case manager must be listed as an emergency contact in addition to Foster Parent(s).

DSS and court ordered visits are considered excused absences. Ask your case manager for documentation.

Discuss with the case manager before placement:

- The school/ district child is currently attending
- Transportation plans to current school for at least the first few days.
- Any IEP or 504 accommodations
- Grade level
- Extra-curricular involvements

Children should continue attending their current school without disruption unless specifically told by case manager.

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IEP? 504? WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

Plan or program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives **specialized instruction and related services**.

Requires an IEP evaluation.

504 PLAN

Plan developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives **accommodations** that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment.

Does not require an evaluation, only a diagnosis by a doctor.

For more information on IEPs, 504s, and navigating the education system in South Carolina please visit [Family Connections](https://www.familyconnections.org/education/)
<https://www.familyconnections.org/education/>

Education breeds **confidence**.
Confidence breeds **hope**.
Hope breeds **peace**.
CONFUCIUS

FREQUENT QUESTIONS

Q. What is a BID meeting? Can foster parents be a part of it?

A. A Best Interest Determination (BID) meeting will take place within 3 days of placement to determine if a child will stay in the current school or change.

Foster parents are encouraged to join and participate.

Q. Is a birth certificate required for enrollment?

A. Birth certificates are not required for enrollment.

Q. Who signs as the child's guardian?

A. DSS maintains legal rights over the child, so school changes, IEP/ 504, and similar must be signed by DSS personnel. Foster parents may sign other documents. Always check with your case manager if you have questions!

Q. Who requests an IEP or 504 Meeting?

A. Either the foster parent or a DSS staff member can request a meeting with the school principal.

Q. A child just left my home for a new placement or reunification. Do I withdraw them from school and turn in their technology devices?

A. No. A BID meeting will take place for a new placement and DSS/ school system will handle withdraws. Please send all technology devices with the child or case manager.

Q. Is traditional public school the only education option for a child in foster care?

A. Not necessarily. There are many options for schools in South Carolina and each child is a specific person with different needs. Work with your child's team to find the best solution. However, the child must be enrolled in a public school until DSS approves a different option.

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THE CHAFEE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

Provides youth with opportunities to learn needed skills and increase the likelihood of successful transition from foster care to independence.

Funds for school expenses and furthered learning are part of this program.

WHAT IS COVERED

- School sponsored activities
- Non-school sponsored activities
- School related fees
- Summer school
- GED Program
- Tutoring
- Leadership and Scholar Programs

ELIGIBILITY

Youth who were in foster care any time after their 14th birthday.

Funds can continue after 18.
Restrictions may apply.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR EXCLUSIVES

- Prom Package
- Graduation Package
- Technology Assistance
- Recognition for achieving academic goals

PRE-COLLEGE SUPPORT

- College applications
- College deposit
- SAT/ACT preparation and tests

EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING VOUCHERS (ETV)

Grants awarded for youth with foster care experience who are pursuing a postsecondary education in an approved educational program.

Eligible Youth can receive up to \$5,000.00 per year in ETV funding!



[View and download further information on Chafee and ETV Programs here!](#)

PRUDENT PARENTING AND SCHOOLS

Foster Parents Consent:

- School and recreational sports
- After school programs
- School social events
- Field trips - day and local overnight
- Excused absence notes due to illness or pre-approved vacation
- Yearbooks and public acknowledgements

Case Manager/ DSS Consent:

- IEP or 504 Plan
- School change/withdraw (BID)
- Official absent notices (DSS purposes)
- Field trips – International, extended overnight

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PRE-KINDERGARTEN

	FIRST STEPS 4K	SCHOOL SYSTEM 4K	HEADSTART
OVERVIEW	Statewide program in partnership with non-public providers to offer families with access to high-quality early care and education.	State funded prekindergarten in selected school districts to serve children in the “most at-risk” category.	Federal program to promote development through services that support early learning, health, and family well-being.
WHERE	Child care centers and private schools	Select public schools	Select public schools and public learning centers
AGE BY SEPT 1	4 years old	4 years old	Early Headstart: 3 years old Headstart: 4 years old
QUALIFICATIONS	Current foster care placement	Depends on school system. Contact local school district system for more information.	Depends on school system. Contact school district system for more information.
TIME	Many providers offer a full day, year-round program.	School day – bell schedule will vary.	School day – bell schedule will vary.
PROGRAM SPONSOR	First Steps South Carolina	Public School System	Federal program implemented by Public School System
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	https://www.scfirststeps.org	https://ed.sc.gov	https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

HOMESCHOOLING

A caregiver, parent or guardian, can **request** that a child or youth in foster care be homeschooled. The request is then sent to SCDSS to approve or deny.

Considerations:

- The child has special needs that are not being met in the public-school setting; or,
- The child is a victim or survivor of Child Trafficking and is at risk for recruiting, running away, or being trafficked; or,
- Any other special circumstance that requires the child to be considered for homeschooling.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PUBLIC SCHOOL OPTIONS

(IN ADDITION TO ASSIGNED TRADITIONAL SCHOOL BY ZIPCODE)

	MAGNET SCHOOL/ PROGRAM	PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL	VIRTUAL EDUCATION
OVERVIEW	Offers a specialized curriculum, not available elsewhere focused on world class knowledge, skills, and preparation for life and career.	A publicly funded school run by independent contracts. Typically, with more flexibility and non-traditional learning opportunities; can be in person or online.	A flexible and rigorous online public learning option, which allows students to acquire knowledge, skills, and characteristics for the future.
PURPOSE	Specialized curriculums include: STEM; Arts; International Studies; Career and Technical; and Languages	Create new, innovative, and more flexible ways of education with increased parent engagement.	Partner with diploma-granting public, private, and home schools to provide online courses for high school credit.
WHO GOVERNS	Same district and administration as public schools	Board of trustees and sponsor who grants the operating charter.	General Assembly and the State Board of Education
WEBSITE	ed.sc.gov/magnet-schools/	ed.sc.gov/charter-schools/	ed.sc.gov/virtual-education/