



Foster Youth Education Laws and Rights

Educators, social workers, probation officers, caretakers, advocates, and juvenile courts must work together to serve the educational needs of students in foster care. All educational and school placement decisions must be based on the child's best interests and consider, among other factors, educational stability and the least restrictive educational setting necessary to achieve academic progress. *EC sec. 48850(a)(1), 48853(h); WIC sec. 361(a)(5), 726(c)(2). 850(a)(1).*

1. **Foster Youth Liaisons:** Requires Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to designate a staff person as a foster youth education liaison to ensure proper placement, transfer and enrollment in school for foster youth.
2. **School Stability:** Supports school stability by allowing foster youth students to remain in their school of origin for as long as they have an open juvenile court case. Further, they have the right to remain in their school of origin pending resolution of school placement disputes.
3. **Immediate Enrollment:** Allows a foster youth to be immediately enrolled in a school even if all typically required school records, immunizations, or school uniforms are not available.
4. **Transfer of Records:** There must be a timely transfer of students and their records when *a change of school occurs*.
5. **Partial Credit:** Requires all LEAs to calculate and accept credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed by the student and earned while attending public school, juvenile court school or nonpublic, nonsectarian school.
6. Foster youth are automatically eligible for all free school meals.
7. Requires that a comprehensive public school be considered as the first school placement option for foster youth.
8. Ensures that foster youth **will not be penalized for absences** due to placement changes, court appearances, or related court ordered activities.
9. Authorizes the release of educational records of foster youth to the county placing agency for purpose of compliance with *WIC 16010*, case management responsibilities required by the Juvenile Court or law, or as to assist with the transfer, or enrollment of a pupil.
10. Preschool aged foster youth have **priority registration in any state or federal funded pre-school programs** such as Early Start, or Head Start.

AB 167/216: Graduation Option: Foster Youth who transfer high schools after their second year may graduate by completing minimum state graduation requirements if, at the time of the transfer, they cannot reasonably complete additional local school district requirements within four years of high school. *EC sec. 51225.1*