

FOSTER CARE



The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 contains educational provisions to promote educational stability and success for students in foster care.

A student in foster care is *a child or youth in the custody of a child welfare agency (i.e. Department of Child Safety or Tribal Social Services) and placed away from parents/legal guardians*. This might include students in a licensed or non-licensed kinship placement, foster home, group home, residential facility, or other such placement.

Provisions for students in foster care include:

- Remaining enrolled in their school of origin for the duration of their time in care, unless a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest to attend the school of origin.

The term school of origin means the school in which the student was enrolled at the time of placement in foster care, including preschool. If a child's foster care placement changes, the school of origin would then be considered the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of the placement change.

- If decided that it is not in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the child is immediately enrolled in the new school, or school of residence, even if the child is unable to

produce records normally required for enrollment. This would include, but not be limited to, a birth certificate, immunization record, former school record, or proof of residency.

- Transportation to the school of origin provided in collaboration with the child welfare agency.
- Categorical eligibility to receive free school meals through the National School Lunch Program during their time in foster care.

Students in foster care may also receive assistance with the following:

- Enrollment in school
- Backpacks and school supplies
- Clothing, toiletries, and other basic needs
- Information on school programs, including early childhood programs
- Referrals to community resources

ESSA requires that districts designate a point of contact to facilitate communication and collaboration with the Arizona Department of Education, the state and local child welfare agencies, and to participate in the discussion around best interest, school changes, enrollment, educational services and other concerns. If you have questions or concerns about your student in foster care, you may contact Mayra Martinez, Foster Care Point of Contact for Red Rock School District.

Additional resources:

AZ State Coordinator for Foster Care Education – Joey Taylor
602.542.3569

[Arizona Department of Education - Foster Care Information](#)