

Understandably, it's a very difficult time for children when they enter foster care.

They are away from their home and family and separated from everything that is familiar, including their school and friends. However, under a new law children can remain in their home school if it's in their best interest to do so. Studies show that foster children who remain in their home school do better academically, behaviorally and socially. They also can continue to be involved with their after school activities and keep their classmates and favorite teachers.

Evidence suggests that school stability will have a positive effect on education outcomes including increase in grade-point-average (GPA) and standardized test scores, reduction in failure and grade repetition, and an increase in high school degree attainment.

Quick Facts:

- **80% of children who enter foster care in New Jersey are reunited with their parents**
- **On average, school age children are reunited with their families within 6-12 months of their initial placement.**

For more information

If you have any questions, please contact the Educational Stability Liaison at your DYFS Local Office.

DCF Local Office

School Stability for Children in Resource Home Care



DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
DIVISION OF YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
www.nj.gov/dcf



Determining “best interest”

When a child enters out-of-home placement the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) caseworker will make a decision if the child should remain in his/her current school. This very important decision is not made alone. The worker will talk to people involved in the case including parents, the child’s attorney (law guardian), school staff and the child.

The worker makes this decision based on “best interest” factors such as:

- Safety considerations
- Distance of the current school to the foster family
- Child’s age and grade level
- Child’s needs and preference
- How the child is doing in their current school and their involvement
- Child’s special education needs
- Point of time in the school year
- How long the child may be in the foster home

School placement decision and appeals

The DYFS worker will make a decision within five business days. During this time, the child will continue to attend his/her current school. It’s also the responsibility of the worker to arrange for transporting the child to school during this time. Once a final decision is made, DYFS will immediately notify both school districts. The “district of residence” (the district where the parent or guardian resides) must arrange and pay for transportation to whichever school the child attends.

If a decision is made to move the child to the resource parent’s school district, the parent and child’s law guardian will be notified, in writing, explaining why it is necessary. If a parent or law guardian disagrees, they have five days to ask the court to reconsider the decision. During the appeal process, the child’s school will not be changed.

If neither the parent nor law guardian objects to the decision within five days, the decision is considered final.

At any time, if the circumstances surrounding the DYFS case change, a parent, law guardian or child can ask the court to review the child’s school placement.

School district of residence responsibilities:

- Identifying a staff person to serve as a contact person for the DYFS educational stability liaison
- Requesting a determination of residency, if necessary
- Collaborating with DYFS in the best interest determination
- Arranging for, and providing the cost of transportation for the child to attend school in another district (five school days after a best interest determination is made)
- Where possible, assisting DYFS to arrange transportation during the initial placement period when the cost is paid by DYFS
- Promptly providing student records in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32
- Contacting the County Office of Education regarding any issues or concerns
- Tuition payments to the district or school providing the child’s education