

Know Your Rights

CCSD guarantees educational services for children in foster care.

By Dr. Leslie Strasser Murdock

Did you know that children in the foster care system have several special rights under both federal and state laws to help them achieve academic success? Currently, children in the foster care system in Nevada fall under the same set of rights as homeless children. The Wraparound Department (Wraparound) in the Clark County School District (CCSD) has been assigned to oversee the education of children in care.

Via Wraparound, CCSD has required that schools assign a School Based Foster Care Advocates (Foster Care Advocates) at every school campus to help foster children navigate and obtain services. CCSD has recently reauthorized the Guidelines for Serving Children in the Foster Care system which includes the following rights/services:

- Automatic Free and Reduced Meals (FRM) immediately at any school without a lapse when a child moves schools. The child remains eligible for FRM through the entire school year even if the child exits care before then.
- Upon moving placements, a child may either stay at the last school the child attended at the previous placement/when placed into care (School of Origin) or attend the local school of the new placement (Local Area School) based on the best interest of the child. If it is in the best interest of the child to stay at the School of Origin, CCSD must provide reasonable transportation for the child to attend that school.
- An annual academic plan for elementary school children developed by the school counselor in collaboration with the child's teacher and other staff that assists the child in achieving academic success.
- Career and guidance planning for middle and high school children via school counselors. High school children are

entitled to an academic plan starting in ninth grade and to have the plan reviewed annually.

- Foster Care Advocates who are trained in current rights/ supports and who can help DFS staff/foster parents navigate school systems to receive these rights/supports
- Information sharing between CCSD and Department of Family Services to help the child succeed academically. CCSD is aware that any representative of a child welfare agency has access to and may request school records.

In order to ensure that a child receives those rights, it is necessary to let the child's school know the child is in the foster care system for coding purposes. Please ask the child's school who the Foster Care Advocate is, introduce the child, and ensure that the child is coded as being in foster care in CCSD's information system called Infinite Campus.

Once a child is designated in the CCSD system as receiving foster care, the child will receive the above mentioned rights/supports.

For any questions/concerns, contact the Foster Care Coordinator in CCSD's Wraparound at 702-799-7435 or contact the child's DFS Manager to obtain administrative support via the DFS Educational Liaison.



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