



Jenks Public Schools Foster Care Plan

Jenks Public Schools Foster Care Contact:

Jennifer Hoag
jennifer.hoag@jenksps.org
918-299-4415 X 2344
205 E. "B" Street
Jenks, OK 74037

Fostering Connections Act

In 2008, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351, Fostering Connections Act) was signed into law. This law amends parts B and E of Title IV of the Social Security Act and seeks to promote education stability for foster children. For children in out-of-home care, child welfare agencies must include "a plan for ensuring the educational stability of the child while in foster care" as part of every child's case plan. As part of this plan, the agency must include assurances that:

- Each placement of the child in foster care takes into account the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement; and
- The state child welfare agency has coordinated with appropriate local educational agencies to ensure that the child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.

Additionally, the law requires that if remaining in such school is not in the best interest of the child, the case plan must include assurances by the child welfare agency and the local educational agencies that:

- Provide immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school; and
- Provide all of the educational records of the child to the school.

The Fostering Connections Act increases the types of federal funding that may be used to cover education-related transportation costs for children in foster care. It expands the definition of "foster care maintenance payments" to include reasonable transportation to a child's school of origin.

Identification of Foster Students

New requirements under Title I of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, highlight the need to provide educational stability for children in foster care, with particular emphasis on collaboration between SEAs, LEAs, and CWAs to ensure that all school-age children in foster care have the

opportunity to achieve at the same high levels as their peers. SEAs, LEAs and CWAs must ensure compliance with other applicable laws, such as Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title VI and EEOA 1974 (English Learners). This includes students being served with an IEP (Individual Education Plan), 504 Plan or an ELAP (English Language Acquisition Plan).

Determination of Child's Best Interest for School Placement

Within one day of placing a child in foster care, the Oklahoma Child Welfare Agency (OCWA) or other foster care agency (such as a tribal agency) will notify the Jenks Public Schools (JPS) Point of Contact to begin the child's best interest determination for placement school attendance. Once Jenks Public Schools is notified by a CWA that a currently enrolled student in JPS has been placed in a foster home, JPS and the foster care agency will work to determine if it is in the best interest of the child to remain in the school of origin or to transfer to the local zoned school in which the foster parents reside.

During the process of determining the best interest of the child, the child will remain in the school of origin until the process is complete. For the continuity of the child's education, the presumption should be for the child to remain in the school of origin for the remainder of the current school year. However, there are instances where it may be in the best interest of the child to transfer to the school district in which the foster parent resides. Jenks Public Schools shall utilize the following process in making a "best interest" determination for each child in foster care.

The preferences of the child and the foster family will be considered. After consulting with the child, the foster parents, and the other key partners about the above mentioned items, the final decision about which school the child will attend will be determined by the OCWA or other foster care agency. If there is a still a disagreement, a request may be made for an appeal through a dispute resolution process

Dispute Resolution

If any of the parties are not in agreement with the decision about which school the child will attend, that party has the right to appeal to the appropriate state agency for a resolution. Disagreements are to be resolved quickly with the child staying in the school of origin until a final decision is made.

Transportation

If the child is placed in a foster home within the district, JPS regular district transportation guidance applies. If the foster student is placed outside of JPS, and it is determined to be in the best interest of the child to continue attending Jenks, JPS and the child welfare agency will work together to make the arrangements for the transportation.

In Section 475(4) (A) of the Social Security Act, “foster care maintenance payments” are provided to those foster children who qualify for Title IV-E. This allows OCWA to pay reasonable costs of transportation to the school of origin. If the child qualifies for Title IV-E, OCWA will pay for the costs of transportation back to the school of origin.

If the child does not qualify for foster care maintenance payments, JPS and the OCWA will determine the most cost effective way to share the costs of the transportation. While plans will be determined on an individual basis for each case, JPS requests that the OCWA pay for the cost of the child to be dropped off at the closest Jenks bus stop to the foster home. The student will transfer to the bus, and Jenks Public Schools will pay for the remainder of the transportation costs using the regular bus route. If that means is chosen, the OCWA will determine how the student will be transported to and from the Jenks bus stop. Examples may include the foster parent or a CWA employee providing transportation to the bus stop. In addition, other means of transportation such as public transportation or the foster parent providing transportation could be used.

If there are additional costs to JPS for transportation of the foster student due to extenuating circumstances, the OCWA will pay the additional costs to the district. Additional costs include such things as rerouting a bus route or requirements of additional fuel or staff to transport the foster child. The Jenks Transportation Office will bill the proper agency once per month with the number of days for billing verified through the student’s attendance records. The agency and the school Transportation Department will agree annually on a rate to be charged. Bills for the costs will be paid to the school within 30 days of receipt. The OCWA will provide a contract for billing purposes with the proper name and contact information of the person responsible for the payment of the bill. This contract will be reviewed until all parties agree.

Immediate Enrollment and Records Transfer

Students have the right to “immediate enrollment” when placed in out of home care in a new district. Immediate enrollment means the student will be attending school as “soon as possible”-- within one school day of the notification of the intent to enroll from the CWA. The CWA will be responsible for getting the child to the school until collaboration can take place to arrange transportation for school attendance. The final transportation plan should be in place within four working days.

The following information is needed to begin the enrollment process for a child in foster care:

- 1) Legal documentation that the child has been placed in foster care.
- 2) The photo identification from the child welfare agency or other legal documentation of proof that the person enrolling the student is authorized to do so.

In addition to the above mentioned items, the JPS Enrollment Center requires documentation of residency and other necessary documents of the foster parents within three working days of the student's enrollment.

If the foster student is transferring out of JPS, the district will send the student's educational records to the new school within 3 working days of the request.

Educational Success of Foster Students

The JPS Homeless/Foster Care Liaison will monitor the progress of our foster care students monthly and will report to the Point of Contact. As needed, the Point of Contact will collaborate with the CWA to determine strategies to support the academic success of the child..

Jenks Public Schools Point of Contact:

Date: _____

OKDHS Liaison:

Date: _____

Best Interest Determination Evaluation

Child's Name: _____
 Birthday: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____
 Current District: _____ Current Site: _____
Student will remain in the current school unless consideration of the following factors indicates a change of school placement is in the child's best interest (check all that applies.)

	School of Origin (A)	Receiving School (B)	Other Previous School Attended (C)
<p>Which school will better meet the relational needs of the child? Select all that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Siblings <input type="radio"/> Relationships with peers <input type="radio"/> Relationships with staff <p>Describe the relationship connections at current school: _____ _____</p> <p>List strategies for maintaining important connections should other best interest determination be made: _____ _____</p>			
<p>Which school will better meet the individual academic needs and challenges of the child? Select all that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> IEP <input type="radio"/> 504 Plan <input type="radio"/> Gifted Program <input type="radio"/> Career Tech <input type="radio"/> EL Services 			
<p>Which school will better meet the social/emotional needs and challenges of the child? Select all that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Social <input type="radio"/> Emotional <input type="radio"/> Safety 			
<p>Which school will better meet the unique needs and interests of the child? Select all that apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Extracurricular Activities <input type="radio"/> Sports <input type="radio"/> Other <p>Student will describe the areas of desired school involvement: _____ Which school will best meet the permanency goal and likelihood of reunification with parents or siblings?</p>			

Which school is more appropriate for the child's age and length of travel? Explain: _____ _____			
Describe the child's transfer history. _____			
Which school does the student prefer to attend? Explain: _____ _____			
Which school do the caregiver and /or current placement provider recommend the student attend? Explain:			
Identify strategies for successful transition to new school and/or support in current school:			
Other Factors to Be Considered:			
If the student's location needs to be kept from the biological parent or other person involved with the child.			
If the number of days remaining in the school year is appropriate to remaining in the school of origin.			
If the student is older and has been enrolled in the school of origin for most of his /her school years.			
If the student would lose credits due to the new school not offering the courses in which the student is currently enrolled.			
If the student is expected to remain in the current out of home placement or is expected to be moved to a new placement.			

Supporting Documentation

Attach any supporting documentation used to determine best interest of child:

- Report Cards
- Progress Reports
- Achievement Data (test scores)
- Attendance Data
- IEP, Section 504 Plan, ELAP
- Other: _____

Determination

Based on the information provided and considering the best interest of the child, the team has determined the following school is the most appropriate educational placement for the child: _____

Team Members:

LEA Representative: _____
Printed name *Signature*

CWA Representative: _____
Printed name *Signature*

Education Decision Maker: _____
Printed name *Signature*

Other: _____
Printed name *Signature*

Transportation Agreement

Child Welfare Agency Name

Transportation cost agreed to: _____

Attest: _____
Board clerk

Date: _____

Receiving School District Name

Transportation cost agreed to: _____

Attest: _____
Board clerk

Date: _____

Date: _____

School District Name

Attest: _____
Board clerk

Date: _____