

---

# Aspiranet

## ~October 2024~

### Monthly Regulation Topic

---

#### Supporting Your Foster Child's Education

For children and youth in foster care who have experienced frequent absences or changes in schools, school can be challenging and bring up a variety of feelings and behaviors. Resource parents can help by offering support, advocacy and guidance. This can include helping them to recognize their strengths and interests, which some children and youth may find difficult to identify. With encouragement to identify and pursue their strengths and interests, this facilitates trust, which helps them to share their goals, hopes and concerns. It's also helpful to recognize that success can look a lot different for children in care. Success may be attending school regularly, small improvements in classroom behavior, making a new friend, etc. Help children and youth to recognize their accomplishments, no matter the size.

#### **School Attendance**

It's not surprising research shows that children who attend school regularly have better school achievement. For this reason, it's vital to support regular attendance with consistency. Schedule medical, dental, and therapy or other appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

Children and youth in care may struggle with motivation to attend school regularly for a variety of reasons. With absences and / or school changes, they may not feel accepted by their peers and teachers. Academic struggles are common as well – not understanding the curriculum, fear of failing or feeling defeated by previous lack of success and regular attendance.

If your child or youth is refusing to attend school (or finds "reasons" to not attend), talk with your Aspiranet Social Worker and with the school (teacher, counselor, administrator).

It's important to consider other possible reasons besides defiance for not wanting to attend, such as bullying, previous abuse related to school issues, possible need for special education services or additional support through tutoring. In addition to informing your Aspiranet Social Worker, bring school concerns forward during Child & Family Team meetings in order for the team to explore supports and services. It's also helpful to write down a "log" of events, conversations, or observations to share related to your child's educational strengths and challenges.

#### **Stay in Tune**

As a resource parent, it is important to understand the tensions and difficulties your child may be facing in order to advocate for your child and identify opportunities for building on their strengths. Watch for potential signs your child is feeling stressed and overwhelmed. Signs may include difficulty sleeping, complaints of headaches, stomachaches, and behavior changes, such as irritability, impatience and temper tantrums. If you observe any of these in your child, trust your instincts and intervene as soon as possible. Approach your child with compassion and check in. Let your child know that you are available to listen and help with struggles they may be experiencing at school. Share your child's struggles with their teacher as well as your Aspiranet Social Worker.

#### **Maintain Communication with the School**

Children in foster care benefit greatly from resource parent advocacy and involvement. You can support your child's success by having regular contact and communication with their school. Routine interactions with the teacher(s), whether in person, by phone or text/email, are helpful to monitor your child's progress, both academically and emotionally. If your child seems stressed at home, ask the teacher(s) if they are seeing signs of stress or uncharacteristic behavior at school. Your child's teacher can provide valuable insight into how your child is coping during the school day. Likewise, it can be helpful for your child's teacher to have "need to

know” information that may assist the teacher in supporting your child. To protect your child’s privacy and confidentiality, information shared with the school must be limited to only information necessary for the school to provide appropriate education and/or behavioral services for the child. Please consult with your Aspiranet Social Worker before disclosing information about a child to the school.

### **Special Education**

Special education is specially designed instruction and related services to meet the unique educational needs of children with disabilities, such as a specific learning disability, speech and language, hearing, or vision impairment, autism, etc. Eligible children may receive special education services from 3 - 22 years or upon high school graduation, whichever comes first. Nearly 50% of children in foster care qualify for special education services.

An assessment is required to determine if a child or youth is eligible for services. If eligibility is determined, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) document must be developed that includes goals and specific services, accommodations or adaptations to meet the child or youth’s unique education needs.

### **IEP’s**

Once an IEP is developed a team meeting is held to review and sign the IEP document for implementation. The child’s Educational Rights Holder must sign the IEP for implementation to begin. The court must approve the Educational Rights Holder for the child, who may be the birth parent or other relative, a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), child’s attorney, or sometimes a resource parent. If you are not the Educational Rights Holder, you may not sign to authorize the IEP implementation, but you will sign as an IEP meeting participant. Resource parents have a pivotal role as a member of the child’s education team, and more specifically, in supporting the child’s educational growth, with direct knowledge of the child’s needs, status and progress.

If a child comes into your care with an IEP, the school is required to implement the existing IEP and provide services as outlined. IEP’s are reviewed yearly, and required to be assessed every 3 years, or as requested.

If you are concerned a child’s educational needs are not being appropriately addressed through the IEP, please advocate on behalf of the child by speaking with the child’s school (teacher, counselor, administrator) as well as your Aspiranet Social Worker.

Each school district also has a Foster Care Education Liaison who can be contacted to assist with advocacy on behalf of children and youth in foster care.

### **Friendly Reminder - Resource Parent Responsibilities:**

As outlined in the Aspiranet Foster Parent Manual, the following are expectations for resource parents to best support the education of children in your care:

- Transport the child to/from school, when necessary.  
If bus service is not available or if walking to school is not safe, not developmentally appropriate, or a long distance, resource parents are to provide or arrange for transportation of children to school.
- Monitor your child’s progress academically and school attendance
- Help with and check homework daily
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and other school events, meetings
- Advise your Aspiranet Social Worker of any school issues, conferences, progress reports and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings
- Participate, when requested, in assessment of your child for special education programs
- Provide a copy of your child’s report card to Aspiranet Social Worker upon receiving
- Purchase needed school supplies & clothing: this includes additional school expenses such as school pictures, items for school projects, yearbooks, senior trip, prom and graduation.

Please sign and return this page to your Aspiranet Social Worker for training credit. My signature below indicates that I have completed the October 2024 "Supporting Your Foster Child's Education" training.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature Resource Parent #1*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name Resource Parent #1*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature Resource Parent #2*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name Resource Parent #2*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Aspiranet Authorized Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

Training credit: \_\_\_\_ minutes