



# Child Welfare Professional Education Screen

## ***An Overview: Improving Educational Outcomes for Children in Care***

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# Why Education Matters

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## **A high school drop out is . . .**

- ❑ Eight times more likely to be incarcerated
- ❑ 40% more likely to be on public assistance
- ❑ Far more likely to be unemployed
- ❑ More likely to become a drug addict
- ❑ Estimated cost of a youth who drops out and turns to crime & drugs -- \$1.7 to \$2.3 million

# Improving Education = Improving Lives

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Poor academic performance affects lives dramatically and contributes to higher than average rates of homelessness, criminality, drug abuse and unemployment.

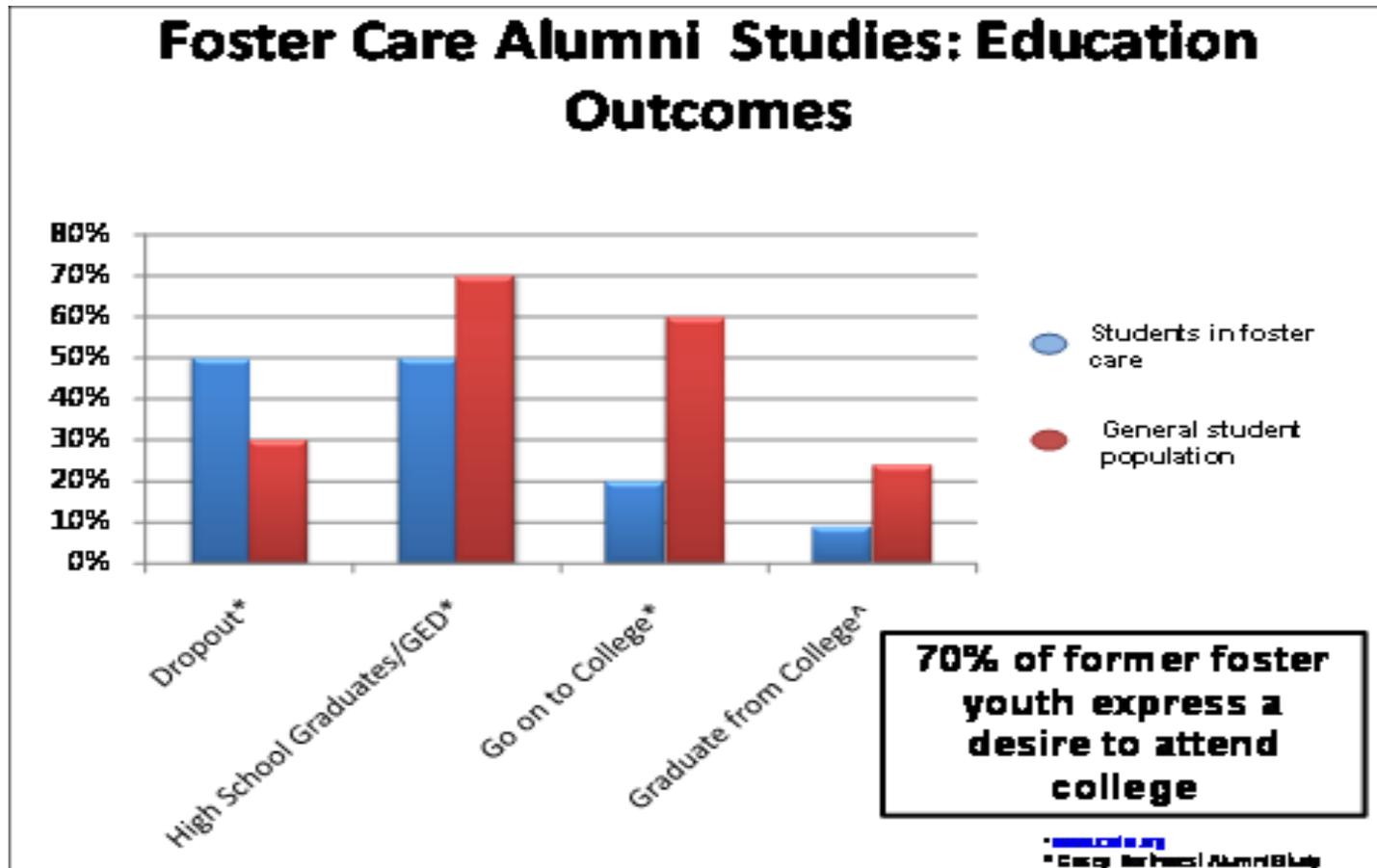
Maryland Public Policy Institute, Focus Group Study: Foster Care Families, Children, and Education, December 2006, at [www.mdpolicy.org/docLib/20061130\\_FosterCareFocusGroupStudy.pdf](http://www.mdpolicy.org/docLib/20061130_FosterCareFocusGroupStudy.pdf) (April 10, 2007).

# Current Outcomes: Children in Educational Crisis

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- **Only one third** receive high school diploma in four years;
- **Twice as likely to drop out**
  - Philadelphia study: **75.2% of youth in care dropped out of high school in 2005**
- **2-4 times as likely to repeat a grade**
  - California study: 83% of children in care in Los Angeles were held back in school by the third grade
- **Significantly below their peers on standardized tests**
  - lower reading levels and lower grades in core academic subjects
- While 70% of foster youth dream of attending college, 7-13% gain access to any higher education programs and **3% obtain bachelor's degrees.**

# Educational Outcomes



# Challenges: Changing Schools

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- School mobility has negative effects on academic progress and is associated with dropping out.
- Students in foster care change schools more often than their non-foster care peers:
  - Nationally, 65% of students in care experienced 7 or more school changes during K- Grade12.
- Too often changing schools results in enrollment delays and can lead to negative impacts, such as repeating courses, failing to address special needs or inappropriate classroom placements.

# Challenges: Attendance

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- ❑ Attendance Matters from Day ONE! Kindergarten attendance is the strongest, early predictor of H.S. drop out
- ❑ Students in care often have higher school absence rates.
- ❑ One study conducted in Pittsburgh found that children who missed the first day of Kindergarten on average had 18 absences that year – 2X the rate of those who attend the first day of Kindergarten!
- ❑ This 18 missed days is the benchmark for what is called “Chronic Absenteeism” (missing 10% of the school year).
- ❑ National studies re "Chronically Absent" in Kindergarten:
  - Only 17% are reading at grade level in 3rd Grade.

# Challenges: Special Education

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- Children and youth in foster care are **between 2.5 and 3.5 times more likely to be receiving special education services** than their non-foster care peers.
- Children in foster care who are in special education tend to be placed in **more restrictive educational settings and have poorer quality education plans** than their non-foster care peers in special education.

# Challenges: Ranking

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- Delayed enrollment & low attendance
- Lack of school stability
- Confusion about who has educational rights
- Special education needs remain unidentified/unmet
- Absence of “active” involved educational decision maker
- Disproportionate referrals to disciplinary placements
- Need for remedial services, ESL, PBS etc.
- Credit transfers/diploma requirements
- Youth fail to engage in school & transition planning

# Educational Success = Well Being & Permanency

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- Provides **essential stability**
- Improves **current well being**
- Increases **opportunities for permanency**  
(*e.g.*, New York, California, Toledo, Ohio)
- Supports **transition to lifelong stability and permanency**

# Educational Success IS Possible: Promising Data

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## □ School Stability

- One fewer placement change = 2x more likely to graduate
- 6 or fewer school changes = 2x more likely to graduate  
than 10 or more school changes

□ Mentoring program = 3x more likely to graduate

□ One-to-one tutoring for 6 months = increase RL 1.7 grades



\*\* Source: *Education is the Lifeline for Youth in Foster Care*

# Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Children in Foster Care

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- **8 Goals** for Youth
- **Benchmarks** for each goal indicating progress toward achieving education success
- National, State, and Local **Examples**

# Blueprint for Educational Success

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- **Goal 1:**        **Educational Stability:** Youth remain in their school of origin whenever possible and in their best interests.
  
- **Goal 2:**        Youth are guaranteed **smooth transitions** between schools.
  
- **Goal 3:**        Young children in foster care enter school **ready to learn.**
  
- **Goal 4:**        Youth have **equal access and opportunities** to participate successfully in all academic and non-academic aspects of the school experience, including support services.

# Blueprint Goals (Cont'd)

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- **Goal 5:** Youth in care have dropout, truancy and school discipline rates equal to or less than those of other children.
- **Goal 6:** Youth are involved and engaged in all aspects of their education and educational planning and are empowered to be self advocates for their education needs and pursuits.
- **Goal 7:** Each youth has at least one significant adult consistently involved in his or her life and education.
- **Goal 8:** Youth in care enter into and complete post-secondary education pursuits at rates at least comparable to those not in care.

# Promising Practices - Ranking

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- Keep Children in Same School
- Ensure Immediate Enrollment
- School Liaison/Single Point of Contact
- Prioritize Access To Early Childhood Education
- Address Unfair Treatment/Discrimination
- Improve Access to Services (e.g., remedial, special ed.)
- Provide Mentoring and other Adult Support
- Improve Responses to Discipline and Truancy
- Support Post-Secondary Education

# Role of Courts: Juvenile Rules

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- Ensure school stability
- Identify decision-maker
- Ensure “appropriate education” & progress
- Support transition to adulthood
- Ensure services & accommodations for disabilities
- Examples – NY, CA, PA

# Pennsylvania Tool: Child Welfare Education Screen

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- History & Purpose of Screen
- Development, Structure & Input
- Infrastructure Supporting Screen: Ed Liaisons in each county receive specialized ongoing training and serve as resource to caseworkers
- Accountability
  - Reviewed/Signed by Supervisor
  - Subject to citation by State's audit/review

# Child Welfare Professional Education Screen

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- Purpose
- How the Screen Will Be Used
- How Often
- Role of Education Liaison
- Role of Caseworker
- Role of Private Provider
- Use of Education Screen in Court
- Use of Screen to Track Outcomes

# Who Completes the Education Screen

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- If child is in **placement** – placement provider does initial screen, subsequent screens and 30 day screen if new placement
  - Note – if a DHS Independent Living Education Liaison is assigned to a child, he/she will take over screening responsibilities after the initial screen is done.
- **Independent Living**
  - When an IL Provider is assigned to a child IL Provider is responsible for every screen after the 30 day initial screen
- If family receives **services in the home**
  - Truancy/Special Casework Assignment
  - Family Group Decision Making
  - Inua Ubuntu
  - Crisis or Regular in-home worker
- CYF staff responsible if no ‘purchased’ service – hierarchy is as follows
  - OCYF Foster Care Caseworker
  - OCYF FGDM CW
  - OCYF Inua Ubuntu CW
  - OCYF Family Services CW
  - OCYF Intake CW (GPS)
  - OCYF Intake CW (CPS)

# How Often?

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- The Education Screen is to used with children
  - In in-home care AND
  - Out-of home care
- Most sections WILL apply (w/ exception of school stability etc.)
- Timelines are different
  - Annually for in-home care
  - Every 6 months for out-of-home care
- Screen SUPPORTS children who remain in in-home care by supporting placement stability & life-long permanency.

# Demographic Information

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- **Student's Name:**
- **Case Number:**
- **Date of Birth:**
- **Education Decision-Maker:**
- **Special Education Decision-Maker:**
- **Student ID Number:**
- **School Grade:**
- **Current School:**

# Education Screen: Topical Sections

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## □ Screen Elements

- Education Records & FERPA Consent
- School Stability & Prompt Enrollment
- Special School Settings/Situations\*\*
- Progress Towards Graduation/Promotion
- Preparation for Post Secondary Ed
- Need for Special Ed Evaluation
- Adequacy of Special Ed Services
- Need for Special Ed Decision Maker
- Need for Accommodations for Disability

# Education Screen Tools/Action Steps

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- What does the law say
- What should a caseworker do
- Step-by-step guide
- Citations to statutes, Regs & Education agency guidance

# Role in Court

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## **Juvenile Court Rules, Effective July 2011**

Child Welfare Professionals must be prepared to address education issues in court including:

- ❑ School enrollment/attendance
- ❑ School stability
- ❑ Identify or recommend Education Decision Maker
- ❑ Appropriate placement, services & progress
- ❑ Special education Issues
- ❑ Transition planning & services

# Know What Other Information is Available From Other Systems

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- ❑ Early Intervention/Head Start Participation
- ❑ Truancy/Attendance
- ❑ Assessments completed by other systems;
- ❑ Counseling Evaluations
- ❑ Student Assistance Programs
- ❑ Vocational Assessments

# Allegheny County Data Warehouse

ent and Historic Data will be Integrated

PS  
Identifiers  
ovement  
ndance  
ed Programs  
ed Test Results

## DHS Data Warehouse

- Allegheny County Housing Authority
- Allegheny County Jail
- Allegheny County Medical Examiner's Office
- Department of Public Welfare
- Housing Authority City of Pittsburgh
- Juvenile Probation
- Aging
- Children, Youth and Families
- Community Service Block Grant
- Drug & Alcohol
- Early Intervention
- Employment & Training
- Family Support Center
- HeadStart
- Human Services Development Fund
- Hunger & Housing Assistance Program
- Low Income Housing Assistance Program
- Maximum Participation
- Medical Assistance Transportation Program
- Mental Health
- Mental Retardation
- System of Care Initiatives

# Contacts and Resources

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- DHS Ed web site:

[www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/education/index.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/education/index.aspx)

- PA child welfare training web site:

[www.pacwcbt.pitt.edu/Curriculum/306AchievingPositiveEducationalOutcomes.html](http://www.pacwcbt.pitt.edu/Curriculum/306AchievingPositiveEducationalOutcomes.html)

- AIU Homeless Children's Ed Fund web site

[www.aiu3.net/Level3.aspx?id=1250](http://www.aiu3.net/Level3.aspx?id=1250)



# Contact Information

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