



Transforming systems and improving law and practice to create better outcomes for children in foster care.

PROJECT HISTORY

In 2007, three nationally respected advocates for the educational rights of children in foster care – the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, the Education Law Center and the Juvenile Law Center – formed the Legal Center for Foster Care and Education (Legal Center). The Legal Center provides expertise and technical assistance on legal and policy matters affecting the education of children in foster care and advocates for reforms that will improve school outcomes.

WHAT WE DO

We promote promising practices and reforms that support the education of children in foster care by:

- ✓ Developing and Supporting Effective Policies
- ✓ Building Strong Networks
- ✓ Providing Technical Assistance and Sharing Promising Examples from Sites

A strong voice at the federal, state and local level for policy improvements.

For nearly a decade, the Legal Center has provided expertise around foster care and education to administration leaders at the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education, as well as staff from the United States Congress. The Legal Center's advocacy has directly resulted in improvements in federal law and guidance for

children in foster care. Additionally, the Legal Center has worked in numerous jurisdictions to support improved state laws and policies.

A national foster care and education network.

The Legal Center has a wide national network that connects systems around the country focused on improving educational outcomes for children in foster care. The Legal Center:

- ✓ Facilitates the **National Working Group** on Foster Care and Education, over 25 national organizations committed to improving educational outcomes from children in care.
- ✓ Houses and maintains a **national foster care and education website** (www.fostercareandeducation.org) which serves as an up-to-date resource for materials, updates, and information.
- ✓ Supports a **national listserv** includes over 2,000 members from every state, representing child welfare, education, courts, advocates, and policymakers. Within the first year of launching our project's **Twitter** (@FosterEdSuccess), we generated over 500 followers.

The networks of individuals and organizations focused on this topic is growing daily, and the Legal

A collaboration of the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, Education Law Center (PA), and Juvenile Law Center.

Follow Us:
@FosterEdSuccess

Visit Us:
www.fostercareandeducation.org

Email Us:
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Center's ability to connect advocates is central to sustaining momentum and making change.

A national leader in providing training and expertise to support strong collaborations between agencies and courts.

Since 2007, we have provided training and technical assistance to virtually every state. Our state and local technical assistance and consulting is wide-ranging, but generally includes expert facilitation of multiple stakeholders to ensure meaningful collaboration and change. Specific areas of expertise include:

Identifying Goals and Priorities: The Legal Center has developed a framework for reform for advocates working to remove barriers to school success of children in care. Using the *Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Children in Foster Care*, Legal Center staff help states identify their

representatives; share strategies to bring (and keep) those groups together to address foster care and education issues; and promote cross-agency discussions on areas for reform.

Collecting Data and Sharing Information: The Legal Center has expertise in data collection and information-sharing between child welfare, education, and the courts. We help jurisdictions identify: what data is needed and for what purpose; how to address federal and state confidentiality laws; what mechanisms to put in place to allow information-sharing to occur; and how data should support policy and practice improvements.

Promoting Positive Court Practices: The Legal Center is experienced working with judges and attorneys to improve educational outcomes for youth in care. The Legal Center provides technical expertise to courts, promotes changes to court rules to address the needs of youth in care, and analyzes and provides training about courtroom best practices.

Implementing Federal Laws: The Legal Center helps state and local child welfare and education agencies implement federal laws, including the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (2008)*, *Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)*, and *Uninterrupted Scholars Act (2013)*.

Consulting includes:

- ✓ Developing adaptable tools and resources;
- ✓ Providing on and off-site training;
- ✓ Sharing practical strategies and best practices from around the country;
- ✓ Supporting peer-to-peer learning by connecting similarly situated jurisdictions; and
- ✓ Supporting jurisdictions to understand the legal requirements, and secure compliance.

BLUEPRINT GOALS

- ▶ **Goal 1:** Youth Are Entitled to Remain in Their Same School If In Their Best Interest
- ▶ **Goal 2:** Youth Have Seamless Transitions Between Schools
- ▶ **Goal 3:** Young Children Enter School Ready to Learn
- ▶ **Goal 4:** Youth Have Support to Fully Participate in School
- ▶ **Goal 5:** Youth Have Support to Prevent School Dropout, Truancy, and Disciplinary Actions
- ▶ **Goal 6:** Youth Are Involved And Empowered
- ▶ **Goal 7:** Youth Have Education Advocates and Decisionmakers
- ▶ **Goal 8:** Youth Have Support to Enter Into and Complete Postsecondary Programs

strengths and areas for improvement, and prioritize their policy and practice goals.

Convening Professionals: The Legal Center works with states to: identify who should be at the table, including child welfare, education, and court