



# STATE OF IOWA

CHESTER J. CULVER, GOVERNOR  
PATTY JUDGE, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
JUDY A. JEFFREY, DIRECTOR

TO: District Superintendents  
AEA Directors of Special Education  
AEA Educational Services Directors  
CC: Members, Children's Justice State Council  
FR: Judy Jeffrey, Director, Iowa Department of Education  
DA: September 25, 2009  
RE: Improving Educational Outcomes for Children in Foster Care

I have attended recent meetings of the Children's Justice State Council, a statewide body that develops policy recommendations and fosters collaboration to improve outcomes for children in foster care. The Council has expressed interest in collaboration to improve educational outcomes for children who are in foster care.

This collaboration is timely and urgent. Nationwide and Iowa data show children in foster care have much lower rates of school success and school completion. This is unacceptable. How can schools continue to best serve the educational needs of children in foster care in Iowa?

The Department has several resources available to assist educators working with children in foster care. The Department has published a guidance document entitled *Education of Foster Children in Iowa*. This document, updated in July 2009, provides concise answers to frequently asked questions concerning the education of children in care, such as enrollment, school records, and the rights and responsibilities of parents, educators, DHS workers, and foster parents. The document is available here:

[http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1475&Itemid=2508](http://www.iowa.gov/educate/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1475&Itemid=2508)

Additionally, the Department's internet resources on learning supports and diverse learners may provide valuable assistance to educators who serve children in care.

Educators serving children in care also wish to consult resources provided at the following web sites.

Iowa Judicial Branch: [www.iowacourts.gov](http://www.iowacourts.gov)  
Iowa Department of Human Services: <http://www.dhs.state.ia.us>  
Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association: [www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org)  
American Bar Association: <http://www.abanet.org/child/education/home.shtml>

For more information from the Department, please feel free to contact Thomas Mayes ([thomas.mayes@iowa.gov](mailto:thomas.mayes@iowa.gov) or 515-242-5614) or Susan Walkup ([susan.walkup@iowa.gov](mailto:susan.walkup@iowa.gov) or 515-281-5718). Thank you for your attention to this matter and your continued service to Iowa's children and families.

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[www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate)

*Helping Communities Meet the Learning Needs of All Their Children and Adults*