

4. Include the service system where the youth is likely to receive services upon discharge (e.g., OMH, OPWDD) in transition meetings with the school. Encourage the school to invite these critical team members.

Be sure to know the educational rights of youth and seek out educational advocates when needed. Work in collaboration with the school in helping the young person develop meaningful connections, mentoring relationships and gaining additional supports when needed. Also communicate about challenges within the home as needed to coordinate efforts around managing behavior challenges. It is strongly recommended that planning for transition begins at the age of 14. Additionally, [ACCES-VR](#) may provide services beginning up to 2 years prior to exiting high school (11th Grade).

### Educational Resources

For additional resources, please visit <http://scdd.urmc.edu/cwb>

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## Partnering for Successful Outcomes in Education for Youth with Disabilities in Foster Care

**Recommendations to Foster Care  
Service Providers and Support  
Persons for Maximizing  
Collaboration with Schools**



## System-Focused Recommendations

Youth in foster care who have disabilities rely on the collaboration of adults and agencies. Effective communication is essential. Youth need to make meaningful life plans for the future as they transition to adulthood. Included are some recommendations to help make that happen.

- Look for ways to build relationships with school personnel in each district. An opportunity to do this efficiently may be to attend your local transition group meeting led by the Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC).
- Contact your region's RSE-TASC Transition Specialists and ask them about when the transition group meetings are held: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/rsetasc/locations.htm>



## Recommended Activities:

Upon foster care placement and all transitions, make contact with the school to:

1. Identify Designee: The person within school who can serve as primary contact for foster care services (e.g. school social worker or counselor.)
2. Meet: As soon after placement in foster care, if the initial placement is temporary, meet again after the less temporary placement is acquired. Meetings should ideally include the case worker, the foster parent and/or primary foster placement contact, the school designee, teacher and all other relevant team members to discuss potential needs and challenges. Provide the school designee with a list of contacts and ask for the same from the school.
3. School Placement: Try to keep the young person at their home school if possible by negotiating with home school about transportation. *Approximately 4-6 months of school progress is lost in each school move.\**

\*Legal Center for Foster Care and Education (2008) – American Bar Association and Casey Family Programs, Questions and Answers: Credit Transfer and School Completion.

See: <http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/AreasofFocus/EducationStability.aspx>

4. Clarify Communication: Make a plan between foster parent/residential placement and foster care services caseworker as to communication about school matters: What needs to be told to whom? Contact the designated school staff member (social worker or school counselor) as needed – this person will be the main point of contact for the young person at the school.

## IEP and Transition Planning Meetings

1. Be sure to talk to the educational designee about their plan for transition planning meetings. Let them know who should be included in any of those meetings from the foster care team.
2. Talk to the educational team about Independent Living Skills and IEP Meetings: Be sure to ask about all meetings and skill building that are available at the school for the youth.
3. If the youth is not deemed eligible for OPWDD, ask the educational program to conduct standardized assessments for the triennial evaluation to help with the eligibility process.