

## ESSA/Foster Care Transportation Guidelines

Entitlement to educational stability under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) applies to all PreK-grade 12 students placed in the custody of the Commissioner for the Department for Children and Families (DCF) and in foster care. PreK students must be enrolled and attending a pre-qualified, approved education program to be eligible for educational stability entitlement under ESSA.

ESSA provisions indicate that DCF is responsible for the costs of transportation to allow a foster child to attend their school of origin when other transportation is not available. Additionally, those students who have an IEP and have transportation listed as a related service remain entitled to transportation (see below).

Outlined below are transportation options. A plan must be developed based on the needs of the individual student.

Outline the details of the plan on either the Education Stability Agreement or Best Interest Determination (BID) forms. Examples include:

- a. Public transportation (if developmentally appropriate and available)
- b. School bus routes
- c. A foster parent can agree to drive the student to school and DCF pays for it (using the Foster Parent Expense Form)
- d. A foster parent can transport part way and a school para-educator, teacher, behavior interventionist picks up and transports the remainder of the distance.
- e. A foster parent can transport part way and the student can access the local school’s bus route
- f. A student’s parent is safe and available to drive the student to school.
- g. A relative of the student is safe and available to drive the student to school.
- h. A friend of the foster or kin family is willing and able to drive the student to school and is willing to undergo the approval process.
- i. A parent of a friend of the student is willing and able to drive the student to school and is willing to undergo the approval process.
- j. A combination of the above listed with a schedule worked out to ensure the student has transportation for all that is needed.

**For students who are eligible for special education and who have transportation written into an IEP as a Related Service:**

- a. If the student continues to reside in a foster placement in the same town as a parent, and is attending the school of origin, then the school district arranges for and pays for the transportation.
- b. If the student resides in a new town and is attending the school of origin, the assigned social worker, resource coordinator (FSD Point of Contact) and the new school district’s representative will coordinate to provide transportation. The student’s team will outline the schedule on the Educational Stability Agreement Form or the Best Interest Determination Form (BID) both of which identify what each agency is financially responsible for and how that will be achieved. **If there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation for a student on an IEP, the school of origin and DCF must collaborate to determine which entity is responsible for the additional cost.**