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Child Welfare Agency (CWA) Responsibilities Related to ESSA

Education Point of Contact Role and Responsibilities

In order to enhance collaboration at the community level, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requested that county and tribal child welfare agencies (CWAs), along with local education agencies (LEAs), identify a Point of Contact (POC). Each school district was asked to identify a **Foster Care** Point of Contact (FCPOC) with whom county and tribal child welfare agencies should communicate. Similarly, each county and tribal child welfare agency was asked to identify an **Education** Point of Contact (EDUPOC) with whom school districts should communicate. The chart below outlines the general duties associated with the EDUPOC role, best practice recommendations, and useful resources.

Communication

Responsibilities

- Serve as the communication liaison with the LEA.
- Facilitate the sharing of information subject to laws and agency procedures, including:
 - Wis. Stat. §§ 48.396, 48.78, 48.981(3)(c)6., 115. 298,
 - Wis. Stat. § 118.125(2)(q); the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) [20 U.S.C. § 1232g], and
 - the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) [20 U.S.C. § 1400 et. seq]

Practice Considerations

- Initiate contact with the Foster Care POC(s) in the school district(s) you work with regularly.
- Allow time for cross-system education; share expertise and knowledge with one another so each better understands the other's work.
- Explore ways to remain connected.

Resources
Notification to school (see sub. (1r)): https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/48/XIV/64 Points of Contact: LEA Staff https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1P4LqjBagGusqe3mU5yjBTdjDPROFK6uK IECDranfZQ/edit#gid=613075740 Points of Contact: CWA Staff https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/map/essa

Policy/Procedure Development

Responsibilities

- Collaborate with the LEA Foster Care POC to develop policies and procedures around making best interest determinations and transportation.

Practice Considerations

- Review the guidance provided by the DCF and the DPI prior to meeting with the FCPOC.
- Establish a process or forum for regular internal communication on school related issues.

Resources
Promoting School Success for Children in Foster Care Desk Guide: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/fc/fcschoolsuccess-dskguide.pdf

Best Interest Determination (Educational Stability)

Responsibilities

- Coordinate with the LEA when a child is placed, or will be changing placements, to implement the best interest determination procedure;

OR

- Provide the best interest determination procedure, and training on implementing the procedure, to child welfare staff so they can facilitate the best interest determination with the LEA.

Practice Considerations

- Assess the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement into out-of-home care, in conjunction with other placement considerations.
- Consider use of the Education Passport as a means to facilitate the sharing of information needed to assist all in making the best interest determination.
- Establish a process for occasionally reviewing the policy established for making the best interest determinations with all of the LEAs with overlapping jurisdictions.
- Review the guidance provided by the DCF and the DPI prior to meeting with the FC POC.

Resources
Best Interest Determination Worksheet: https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/foster-care/best-interest-determination_worksheets.pdf
Best interest page: https://dpi.wi.gov/foster-care/best-interest-determination
Education Passport Quick Reference Guide: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/person-management/education.pdf

Transportation

Responsibilities

- Collaboratively develop and coordinate local written transportation procedures, which are to include:
 - How transportation to the school of origin will be arranged, provided, and funded
 - Identification of the agency responsible for funding immediate transportation needs while a permanent arrangement is being developed
 - A statement that transportation to the school of origin will begin immediately
- Coordinate with the LEA when a child is placed, or will be changing placements, to implement the transportation procedure;

OR

- Provide the transportation procedure, and training on implementing the procedure, to child welfare staff so they can facilitate the transportation conversation with the LEA.

Practice Considerations

- Review the guidance provided by the DCF and the DPI prior to meeting with the FCPOC.
- Come to the table ready to explore all possible options – reimbursing foster parents through an exceptional payment in the foster care rate; reimbursing group home providers through an extraordinary rate; public transportation; use of volunteers; etc.

Resources

Transportation page:

<https://dpi.wi.gov/foster-care/transportation-procedures>

Model Transportation Procedure:

https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/foster-care/model_transportation_procedures.pdf

Sample Student Transportation Plan:

https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/foster-care/sample_student_transportation_plan_2.pdf

Joint DPI/DCF Letter re: Transportation Policy:

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/foster-care/Updated%20Joint%20Letter%2C%20signed%2C%20scanned.pdf>

Dispute Resolution

Responsibilities

- Assist child welfare and LEA staff when issues arise and/or the joint policies and procedures need to be amended.

Practice Considerations

- Trouble-shoot issues identified by their respective agency staff that may exist between the LEA and CWA.
- If disputes over transportation arise, the recommendation is to split the cost.
- Always consider the best interest of the child.
- Consult with the DCF and DPI POCs.

Resources
State-Level Points of Contact: https://dpi.wi.gov/foster-care/foster-care-point-of-contact

Enrollment

Responsibilities

- Coordinate with the LEA when a child is placed, or will be changing placements, to facilitate immediate enrollment of the child in school (when applicable);

OR

- Provide specific information regarding the expectations for enrollment to child welfare staff so they can facilitate the immediate enrollment of the child with the LEA.

Practice Considerations

- Clearly identify roles and responsibilities for enrollment when working with the LEA; ensure caregivers understand their role.
- Update and share the Education Passport with school staff.
- Ensure the LEA has contact information for all individuals who need to be involved in the child's education.
- Ensure all notifications occur as outlined in the Promoting School Success Desk Guide.

Resources
Promoting School Success for Children in Foster Care Desk Guide: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/cwportal/fc/fcschoolsuccess-dskguide.pdf
Education Passport Quick Reference Guide: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/person-management/education.pdf

Training/Professional Development

Responsibilities

- No formal requirement.

Practice Considerations

- Provide or arrange for inter-agency training on the following:
 - The complex educational, emotional, psychological, and sociological needs of children placed in out-of-home care and their families.
 - The responsibilities, authority, and limitations of each agency.
 - Collaborate to provide and publicize training and professional development opportunities to improve educational outcomes for children in out-of-home care, including credit transfers between elementary, middle, and high schools; and between those schools and post-secondary educational institutions; and the availability of financial and other assistance for post-secondary education.
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