
CARITAS HAS SOMEONE IN YOUR CORNER !

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Dear Potential Foster Parent,

While DCFS has several Education Advisors in several regions around the state, Caritas is the only Social Service Agency in Southern Illinois to have a full time Education Liaison on staff.

I was an educator in Special Education specializing in Learning Disabilities and Behavior Disorders for 30 yrs. I have been with the agency for 10+ years.

My main job here is to assist Case Managers with education problems facing foster children on their case load. These can be anything from children refusing to attend school, to failing classes and needing to be assessed for learning problems, to attending IEP meetings.

I occasionally am called upon to mediate at meetings between the school and foster parents or to contact some state agencies when schools are not following the state guidelines pertaining to how their child should be educated. Please remember: Foster parents should work with their case managers first on any education issues or concerns. The case managers will then contact me if I need to be involved.

My main concern is that our foster children here at Caritas receive the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that the state wants them to receive. To do this I work with the schools, the foster parents, the case managers, Head Start, daycares, and sometimes Child and Family Connections to assure they start out on the right foot, educationally, with our agency.

Ron Lanterman, Education Liaison

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BEING AN EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATE



CARITAS
FAMILY SOLUTIONS



A Guide for
Foster Parents

Along with mental, physical and emotional health – educational health is also something that is taken very seriously by the State of Illinois for the wards in State care. Here are a few pieces of information to help you understand what to expect while being a licensed foster parent.

WHAT IS MY ROLE IN MY FOSTER CHILD'S EDUCATION?

As a foster parent, you are responsible for monitoring your foster child's educational needs along with your foster child's case manager. You are also responsible to keep in contact with all appropriate professionals like your child's teacher, school counselor, etc. When your child's case manager visits your home, this is a perfect opportunity to discuss how you feel your foster child is doing in school and share the feedback that you have received from your child's teachers.

HOW DO I SIGN MY FOSTER CHILD UP FOR SCHOOL?

Materials that are required to sign your foster child up for school include:

906 Placement Authorization Form – this document is given to you by your child's case manager and shows the school that the child is residing in your home

Birth Certificate - a copy of this document is also given to you by your child's case manager and shows the school that the child is a resident of United States.

Current Physicals and Immunization Records – these documents can either be provided to you by your child's case manager or you may have to attain these records yourself for the foster child by taking them to a physician.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY FOSTER CHILD NEEDS ADDITIONAL SERVICES AT SCHOOL?

Your foster child will be identified by school staff as possibly needing additional services. As a foster parent, you may also be able to identify needs of your foster child regarding his/her education. If you are concerned about any aspect of your foster child's educational progress you should share this information with your child's case manager.

WHAT IS AN IEP?

Each child enrolled in public school who receives special education and related services must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Each IEP must be designed for one student and must be a truly individualized document. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. The IEP is the cornerstone of a quality education for each child with a disability.

To create an effective IEP, parents, teachers, other school staff and often the student must come together to look closely at the student's unique needs. These individuals pool

knowledge, experience to design an educational program that will help the student be involved in, and progress in the general curriculum. The IEP guides the delivery of special education supports and services for the student with a disability.

GENERAL STEPS IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS

1. Child is identified as possibly needing special education and related services.
2. Child is evaluated.
3. Eligibility is decided.
4. Child is found eligible for services.
5. IEP meeting is scheduled.
6. IEP meeting is held and IEP is written.
7. Services are provided.
8. Progress is measured and reported to parents.
9. IEP is reviewed.
10. Child is reevaluated on a yearly basis.

ARE THERE TRAININGS THAT WOULD HELP ME BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED WITH THESE PROCESSES?

Yes! A training entitled *Educational Advocacy* is offered by DCFS in a classroom setting and is required for all licensed foster parents. This training consists of two, 3-hour sessions. To find out upcoming dates for Educational Advocacy and to be referred to one of the classes, contact your Licensing Specialist.