

Education Advocacy

A student's academic potential should not be limited by his/her experience in state custody.

For all students, CASA should:

Review the local school board policy for the rules and policies that govern the school in which the student is enrolled.

Determine whether DFCS has any educational services in place and work with DFCS to support the implementation of such services.

Contact the school in which the student is enrolled and request access to the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)/Parent Portal. This online system provides access to current academic information about the student as well as historical test data.

Advocate for participation in extracurricular, sports, and supplemental activities and ensure that the student has the requisite supplies and transportation to participate.

Ensure that a high-school aged student is aware of his post-secondary options and has assistance in completing applications for acceptance, financial aid, and preparation for entrance exams, etc.

Consult with the student regarding whether there are any issues with regards to school performance, relationships, or other education needs or requests.

Provide the court with detailed education-related information and recommendations in the court report.

Request that the student remain in his school of origin whenever it is in the best interest of the student to do so.

Advocate for fewer school placements and identify any logistical barriers to enrollment (timing, distance, transportation, etc.).

If the student must switch schools, help ensure he is immediately enrolled and that his records transferred. Schools, or the Local Education Agencies (LEAs), are required to immediately enroll a student who is in the physical or legal custody of DFCS or DJJ and ensure that a written request for the transfer of the student's school records is made at the time of enrollment.

Verify that class credits transfer, in addition to the transcripts, when school settings must change to avoid any duplication or delays in graduation.

Consider whether the student is in the most appropriate school setting and whether an alternative school setting or online credit recovery programs would be appropriate for a student who has not been successful in a traditional setting or for any students who are missing necessary high school graduation credits.

Recommend that a pre-school aged student is enrolled in an early education program.

Verify the student's attendance and number of absences.

Determine whether the student exhibits any behavioral issues in school and whether that has led to in or out of school suspensions.

Contact the student's teachers and counselors as needed and help troubleshoot situations to avoid any disruption in attendance and to avoid a change in schools.

Review any previous assessments and/or recommendations specific to the student's learning styles, preferences, and/or areas of interest/need.

Consider whether the student is performing at grade level and has satisfactory grades. Ensure the student has needed assistance with homework and receives tutoring services if needed.

Consider whether the student exhibits exemplary performance that should result in enrollment in advanced or gifted classes or has a disability that would require additional support services. See the *Education Advocacy for Children with Special Needs Topical Guide* for more information.

When the need for student discipline arises:

Review the Student Handbook to ensure that the school abides by its stated progressive discipline plan.

Request documentation whenever a student is excluded or suspended from school.

Disciplinary Tribunals are required to be held when the principal recommends expulsion or suspension of greater than 10 days. Students have a right to be represented in these proceedings. If a disciplinary tribunal is scheduled, help ensure the student is represented.

