**Division of Family and Children Services**

**Educational Stability Checklist to Assess and Support Appropriateness of Educational Setting**

**Guidance**: This checklist provides a structure for child welfare practitioners to ensure educational stability when determining the appropriateness of the educational setting for children and youth in foster care. It is important to engage other child welfare professionals, educational experts, and legal personnel (when appropriate) during this assessment and planning process. WHEN APPROPRIATE, THE CHILD/YOUTH MUST BE ENGAGED IN THE DECSION MAKING PROCESS.

**Notes:**

1. **It is imperative that you maintain current and accurate information on the Education Detail Page in Georgia SHINES.**
2. **Refer to the Foster Care Policy *10.4 “Educational Needs”* and *“The Educational Stability Field Practice Guide”.***

| Practice Issues | Actions/ Comments | | |
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| **Educational Needs Assessment** | **Yes** | **No** | | |
| Has the child/youth been referred to the Education Programming Assessment and Consultation (EPAC) Unit for a diagnostic educational assessment? |  |  | | |
| Does the youth have an Educational Action Plan? |  |  | | |
| Have you performed a search in GA SHINES via the GaDOE “EDU tab” to locate longitudinal education profile on the child/youth?  **Note: Use the child/youth GTID Number to search** |  |  | | |
| **School of Origin** | **Yes** | **No** | | |
| Will the child/youth remain in his/her school of origin with no additional supports beyond EPAC? |  |  | | |
| What are the considerations and services needed to keep the child in his/her school of origin?  Consider these additional Considerations:  Is the youth in his/her 11th or 12th year of school  More than (5) unexcused absences in current school year  Has the child recently been released /discharged from the follow settings:   1. Department of Juvenile Justice facility 2. Psychiatric Residential Treatment facility (PRTF) 3. Child Caring Institution (CCI) |  | | |
| If a child cannot remain in his/her school of origin, what were the considerations and barriers? What is the best interest determination?  Were there safety issues/concerns that could not be resolved?  Did the permanency goal impact the educational stability/setting of the child/youth?  Was it the child’s/youth’s/family’s preference not to remain in the school of origin?  Was proximity to current placement not reasonable or conducive to learning (for example: travel time, resources, educational programming, and etc.)?  Other outstanding issues? |  | | |
| **School of Origin** | **Yes** | | **No** |
| Did you engage the school of origin and/or the family/caregiver to obtain the following educational information?    School reports and records  Current Grades/ Achievement data (test scores)  Teacher and support team meetings  Discipline and Attendance Records  Parental documentation registration forms  Resident information  “Student Pass codes” and/or Georgia Identification Testing Number (GTID) to parent portals to obtain student information |  | |  |
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| Educational Services and Entitlements | | | |
| What planning and or processes have you engaged in to ensure the following parties/entities are informed of the educational services and entitlements available for the child/youth? Did you include the following entities and processes: The court process?  The assessment and case planning process (EPAC, ILP, Roundtables)?  The roles and responsibilities of caregivers for the educational well-being for the child/youth placed in their care? |  | | |
| **Educational Well-being and Permanency** | **Yes** | **No** | |
| Have you considered the educational well-being of the child/youth while developing permanency goals and making placement arrangements? Consider the following:  Expected length of the child’s foster care placement, considering whether the child is likely to be returning home after a brief stay in foster care, or whether a change in placement is anticipated in the near future. How would this impact educational instruction and academic performance?  The child’s permanency goal and plan.  The expected date for achieving the permanency goal.  The number schools the child has attended. The number of schools the child has attended this year.  The affects the moves have had on the child emotionally, socially, academically, and physically.  The permanency plan is updated and accurate.  The placement with siblings or relatives is feasible.  The resources that are available to help the child academically, socially, and physically.  The child’s feelings about any upcoming move. |  |  | |
|  | | |
| Have you identified additional educational/emotional needs of the student including:  The child’s need for proximity to the family  The child’s actual age, maturity level, and grade level  The number of schools the student has attended  The schools that all siblings attended  Child’s preference to change schools or remain in the current school |  | | |
| **Educational Settings** | **Comments** | | |
| Determining factors for a suitable educational setting:  What are the current academic performance trends of the student?  Does the child participate in additional instruction? (e.g., gifted program, career and technical programs)  What are the student’s career and academic goals? Does the school have programs that meet the needs of the student that other schools may not have?  Does the child have ties to his/and her current school and how? Especially ties in regards to relationships with teachers, administrators, coaches, and support staff.  Would the move affect the student’s ability to earn full academic credit and hinder the child from participating in sports? Also, would this move impede the student from transitioning to the next grade, or graduate on time and if so how?  Consider the point of time in the school year and how the timing of any school transfer would coincide with a logical juncture such as standardized testing and/or grade report periods.  What Special Education entitlements have been identified to assist with academic achievement and protections for the student (if applicable)?  The student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) if applicable  The student’s 504 plan if applicable  *Note: Special Education Laws*:   1. Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). 2. The Americans with Disabilities 3. Amendment Act (ADAAA). 4. Section 504 Rehabilitations Act (including Free and Appropriate Public Education – FAPE) |  | | |
| Have you identified and integrated information from multiple sources to make key case decisions regarding appropriate educational settings? Consider the following:  Identify the schools all sibling groups attend that reside in the foster home.  Input from representatives of the child’s current school at the time of removal or move.  Proximity of the placement home to the child’s current school.  The number of schools the child attended (throughout academic career). The number of schools the child attended this year?  What is the parent’s preference to have the child change schools or remain in the current school of origin?  The appropriateness of educational programs in the current school or another school, and how each school serves or can serve the child’s needs (including special education and other interests).  Number of school disruptions the child has already experienced due to medical and discipline issues. |  | | |
| **Educational Transportation Services** | **Yes** | **No** | |
| Have you considered any of the following transportation options when determining the type of transportation to ensure educational stability for the child/youth?  Foster parent/caregiver – Can the foster parent/caregiver provide transportation?  Local transportation options – Are there local transportation options available? See options listed below. These options include, but are not limited to:   * + - * + Public transportation/Mass Transit         + Van pools         + Taxis *(DFCS does not necessarily encourage the use of taxis however, in some instances this may be the only option. Be sure to consult with your Supervisor/Director before using taxis.)*   Are Wrap transportation services available?  Have you considered the following determining factors when deciding on the most appropriate transportation option:   * + - Age of child/youth     - Location of placement and distance from school of origin     - Child/youth’s physical and cognitive abilities     - Child/youth’s developmental abilities |  |  | |
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