



General Education Advocacy





Training Objectives

YOU WILL:

- BETTER UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR EDUCATION ADVOCACY
- GAIN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CASA'S ROLE IN EDUCATION ADVOCACY
- DISCOVER WHERE TO ACCESS RESOURCES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATION ADVOCACY EFFORTS
- IDENTIFY WAYS TO USE THE BASIC EDUCATION ADVOCACY QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE
- LEARN TO UTILIZE THE EDUCATION ADVOCACY RESOURCES AND DEVELOPING AN ADVOCACY ACTION PLAN

Effective Advocacy
is grounded in
research, planning, and preparation.

What Advocates Do.

- Gather Information
- Learn the Rules of the Game
 - Legal rights; entitlement to “appropriate” education, not always “best” education, nor an education that “maximizes the child’s potential”
- Plan and Prepare
- Keep Written Records
- Ask Questions, Listen to Answers (5 W’s + H + E)
- Identify Problems
- Proposed Solutions

Source: Wrightslaw, “From Emotions to Advocacy” 2nd Edition

Four Key Components of the CASA Volunteer Role

Information Gathering

Carry out an objective examination of the situation including relevant history, environment, relationships and needs of the child. Acting as the same set of “eyes and ears.”

Facilitation

Identify appropriate resources and services for the child and family. In collaboration with your CASA supervisor, follow the referral procedure to initiate services and coordinate with partners and providers to expedite service delivery.

Advocacy

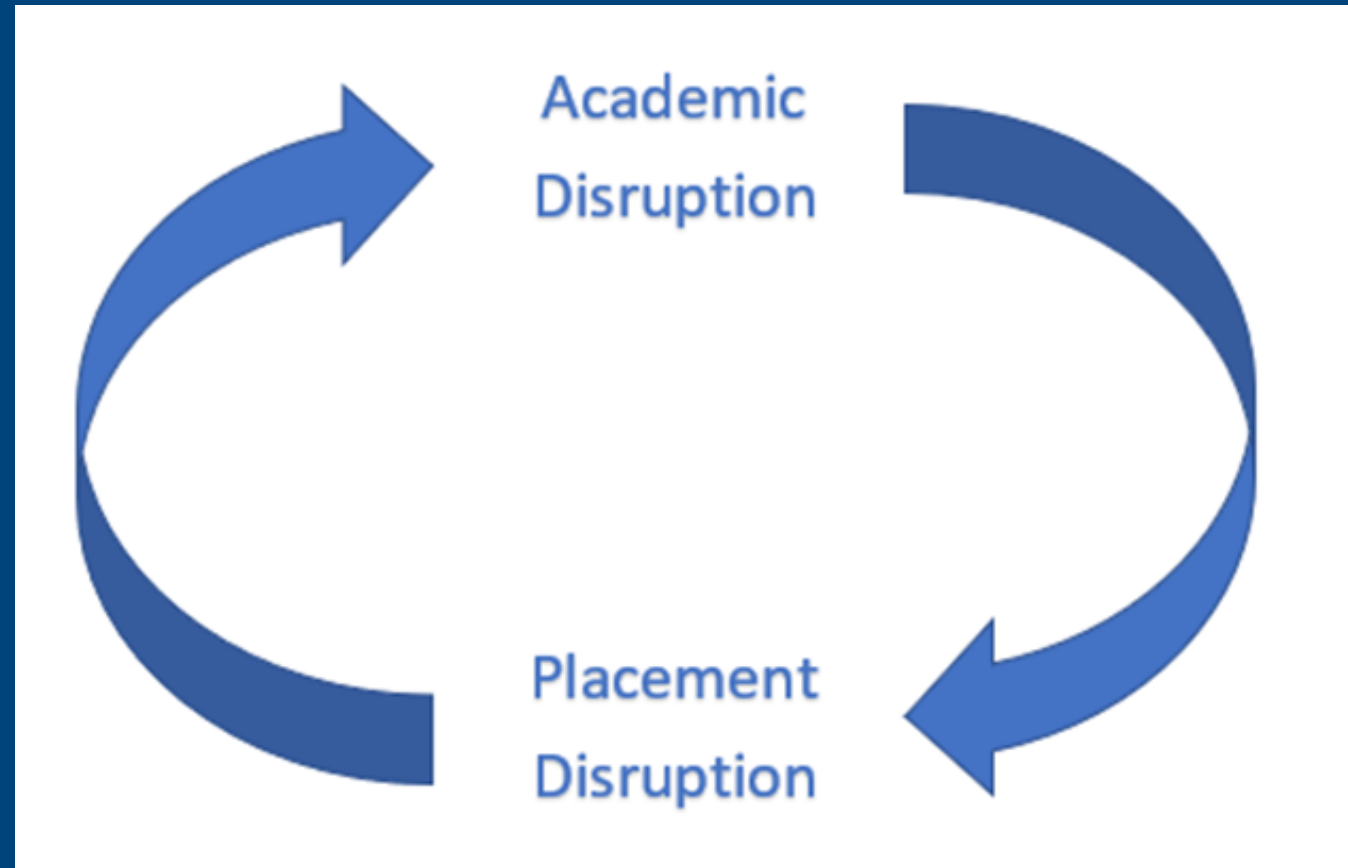
Speak up for the child by making fact-based recommendations regarding the child’s best interest.

Monitoring

Track orders of the court and DFCS Case Plans regarding fulfillment of treatment and services for all parties. If parties fail to carry out plans, inform the court in collaboration with DFCS.



Why Education Advocacy?



CASA Education Advocacy Framework

- Advocate for all children in DFCS custody to have access and the ability to receive a free and appropriate public education.
- Work collaboratively with Case Managers, EPAC ESMs and LEAs/School Districts to eliminate barriers that might otherwise prohibit a child in DFCS custody from participating in educational experiences in a manner similar to their peers who are not in care.
- Teach age-appropriate, self-advocacy skills and strategies so that children and youth can have an active voice in their own education.
- Provide courts with necessary education information to make well-informed decisions on placement and services on behalf of children.

Key Terminology and Acronyms

- SEA (State Education Agency)/DOE
- LEA (Local Education Agency)/School District
- EPAC (Educational Programming, Assessment, and Consultation)
- FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education)

Available Resource: Georgia CASA Acronym Alphabet Soup (Georgia CASA Intranet)

Free

No cost to caregivers, agency, etc.

Appropriate

Meaningful, relevant, “even playing field,” not always “ideal”

Public

Available via LEA (local school district)

Education

Core curriculum; instructional nature

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 794

School Partnership



Successful School Partnerships

- Attempt to develop relationships with school personnel before an ask or need.
- Role clarifications are critical.
- Clarify expectations and need. Be precise as to what you are looking for.
- Explore local school district policies or procedures are for accessing the youth's information for whom you are advocating.
- Ask questions, listen actively, communicate respectfully.
- Understand and implement confidentiality need for all educational information obtained.
- In developing a plan for advocacy, consider the perspectives of all parties.
- Be mindful of OSFA (One Size Fits All) supports and “we can’t make an exception” language.
- Schedule time to gather updates.
- Request an opportunity to observe the youth in the classroom for younger children.
- Take thorough notes on contact(s) for future reference.
- Leave your name and contact information, along with an invitation to contact you or the CASA program office at any time if there are any concerns related to the youth.

Situations to Avoid

- Making “You should...” types of statements to education providers.
- Becoming too adversarial. Don’t make meetings seem too much like a legal proceeding.
- Badmouthing the child’s family or home situation. Rise above the temptation to join in with such gossip, even if you hear others doing it.
- Sharing information you get from one education source with another education source, even within the same building. For example, the school psychologist or counselor may share information with the CASA volunteer that is not to be shared with the teacher. If such confidentiality is breached, it will be difficult to enlist friendly cooperation in the future. However, your sources should be aware that a CASA/GAL volunteer cannot keep secrets from the court.
- Signing papers in the school setting regarding the child, such as medical status, permission to test, or school transfers. That is the job of the parent/guardian or educational surrogate. However, you may be asked to sign forms indicating attendance at some school meetings.
- Making educational recommendations that don’t fit with recommendations of the education team at school (especially as related to special education).
- Dropping in at the school. Always call in advance to request an appointment or, at the very least, to notify the staff that you will be visiting.

Adapted from: Washington State CASA and TeamChild®

Records Gathering



Records Review

- Identify gaps in supports and services
- Look for trends in academics and behaviors
- Highlight and summarize prior data progress, assessments, and evaluations completed
- Assess supports and services that have been successful or unsuccessful in the past

Parent Portal / Infinite Campus

- **Free, online resource made available by local school districts** to parents, caregivers, and advocates of students in grades K-12.
- **Allows parents/caregivers/advocates continuous, secure access to information** about their children and their academic career (e.g., grades, attendance, discipline reports results of standardized tests, bus route, etc.).
- Allows **communication directly with child's teacher directly** from the portal.
- In order to access the portal, a parent/caregivers/advocate needs a computer or mobile device with internet access, **a unique user ID and password** that should not be shared with others.
- **Each school district is unique**, so the functionality of the Parent Portal may vary. Determine the local procedure for registering to gain access to your appointed child's information online. If you are a CASA volunteer, reach out to your CASA Supervisor for direction.

Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)

Georgia's Department of Education's (DOE) SLDS captures education data including **school enrollments, withdrawals, attendance, course grades, test scores, and other relevant educational information.**

DFCS staff have access to SLDS information (through Georgia SHINES) for children and youth in foster care. This includes that GTID (Georgia Testing Identification Number) which is required to access each youth's student level educational access page.

SLDS information should be **used to assist in case planning and service delivery.**

Currently, SLDS information is **uploaded into the CPRS system** for children experiencing foster care.

Educational Setting



Educational Setting Assessment

1. Does the child have special education or remedial education needs that can be supported in the current/prospective educational setting?
2. Does the child need a gifted educational program, or require advanced placement classes? If so, is the current/prospective educational setting able to meet such needs?
3. What documentation (reports, evaluations, assessments, etc.) is available to determine the appropriateness of the educational setting?
4. What input has been obtained from the parent, caregiver, teacher, or other school representative to assess appropriateness of the educational setting?
5. What is the parent/caregiver's perspective/involvement regarding the child's educational needs?
6. What efforts have been made to coordinate with the school/Department of Education?
7. Has the school made recommendations for meeting the child's needs in the current setting or for transitioning the child to a more appropriate setting?

Best Interest Determinations



Best Interests Criteria: ACF Guidance

- the child's preference to change schools or remain in the same school;
- the safety of the child;
- the appropriateness of educational programs in the current school; and
- how each school serves or can serve the child's needs, including special education and other interests.

***Transportation should NOT be a Best Interest Factor**

Other factors not listed in the ACF guidance, but that can help guide the decision include:

- preferences of the child's parent or education decision maker;
- expected length of the child's current placement and the child's permanency plan;
- number of schools the child has attended over the past few years and this year, and how the school transfers have affected the child emotionally, academically, and physically;
- how anxious the child is about upcoming moves and about being in out-of-home care;
- how each school can respond to the child's academic strengths and needs;
- whether the timing of the school transfer would coincide with a logical juncture such as after testing, after an event that is significant to the child, or at the end of the school year;
- how changing schools would affect the student's ability to earn full academic credit, participate in sports or other extracurricular activities, proceed to the next grade, or graduate on time;
- how the length of the commute to the school of origin would impact the child;
- schools the child's siblings attend.

Best Interest Determination Questionnaire

When determining whether it is contrary to the child's best interest to remain in their home school during placement into foster care or placement changes, consider the following:

1. What historical and/or current information is available to make a best interest decision?
2. What was the recommendation from the EPAC Educational Stability Plan and/or Educational Stability Checklist regarding the assessed educational needs of the child and what educational setting is best to meet these needs?
3. Are there other needs (mental health, substance abuse, etc.) that cannot be met in the current setting and require a specialized placement setting?
4. Are there familial or community violence concerns that threaten the child's safety/wellbeing?

Best Interest Determination Questionnaire

5. Is this a planned placement decision based on securing permanency for the child, reunification with siblings, placement with a fit and willing relative or an out of state placement?
6. Has the decision to move the child included a school transitioning plan?
7. Have the [child,] parent, caregiver, school representative, Education Support Monitor, etc. provided input in the best interest determination?
8. Was the Education Support Monitor consulted prior to making a best interest determination at each change of placement?
9. Is there a clear procedure at the local level for resolving disputes regarding whether a school change is needed? Does the procedure address the following: written decisions, notice to parents, and what happens to the child pending resolution of the dispute?



Additional Education Partnerships

DFCS EPAC Unit

(Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation)



**DIVISION OF FAMILY
& CHILDREN SERVICES**



EPAC Services

EPAC provides statewide educational support services to youth in the custody of DFCS. Their services include:

Diagnostic Educational Assessments - Each youth receives a diagnostic educational assessment by a certified teacher or EPAC staff member that provides a comprehensive review of the math and reading performance.

Educational Consultation to Case Managers - Each youth is assigned regionally to an Education Support Monitor (ESM) who consults with the Case Manager to develop an Education Action Plan.

Tutorial Services - Youth who exhibit a need for academic remediation or support may receive additional tutoring services provided by an EPAC Education Specialist who is a certified teacher.

School System Partnership and Support to Youth – EPAC partners closely with the Georgia DOE and local school systems to ensure the appropriate academic services are provided to youth in foster care.

Educational Service Monitoring of Child Caring Institutions - Due to the vulnerability of youth residing in institutes and group homes, EPAC provides additional monitoring of academic support services for these institutions and their youth.

EPAC Partnership Opportunities

- **Contact your child's regional EPAC Education Support Monitor (ESM)** within 2 weeks of CASA's appointment. Introduce yourself, provide a list of any identified child-specific educational needs, and discuss regional education supports that are available.
- **Request copies** of the child-specific Diagnostic Educational Assessment, Education Action Plan (EAP) and Educational Stability Plan (ESP) as soon as it's available from the DFCS Case Manager or EPAC ESM.
- **Identify any cognitive, emotional, or physical needs** that are preventing the child from fully accessing appropriate educational services and resources. Be sure to communicate these needs with the DFCS Case Manager and ESM immediately.
- **Contact the child's ESM** immediately during when educational services and supports are needed. ESMs provide advocacy on the child's behalf to ensure quality services and academic monitoring especially during multiple foster care placements when the need for coordination of their school academic records and supports (i.e. IEPs) is critical.
- **Share monthly updates** from each child's school with the DFCS Case Manager and ESM to ensure the educational services being provided are appropriate and all team members are monitoring each child's academic performance, attendance, and conduct.

EPAC Partnership Opportunities

- **Notify the DFCS Case Manager and ESM immediately** if any court or treatment-related appointments are interfering with a child's academic progress and/or accruing unexcused school absences.
- **Review the child's education records and update the DFCS Case Manager and ESM of specific challenges and successes** being experienced by the child.
- At the time of any placement change, **offer assistance during the school transfer process** with coordinating that a copy of the child's education records have be provided to the foster parent or caregiver with whom the child is placed.
- **Provide input** to the DFCS Case Manager and ESM **for Best Interest Determinations (BID)** during placement changes.
- **Ensure** that the DFCS Case Manager and ESM have been provided with advance notice of an IEP/504 meeting.
- **Notify the DFCS Case Manager and ESM immediately** regarding issues affecting a child's educational well-being or any situation that could result in a disruption of a child's educational setting, including placement disruption. Other examples may include below standard scores for standardized testing, if child has experienced more than one placement change within a school year, accrues more than 5 unexcused absences while in care, is suspended for more 3 days, is placed in a group home setting, commits in major school offence resulting in tribunal/expulsion, etc.)

DFCS Regional Map



School District Foster Care Points of Contact

Foster Care Point of Contact Role

The LEA (local school district) Foster Care Points of Contact will ensure that:

- With the assistance of LEA personnel, implement procedures to ensure children experiencing foster care receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.
- Ensure LEA school counselors assist and advise youth experiencing foster care to improve college preparation and readiness.
- Inform high school youth experiencing foster care regarding their independent status on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Foster Care Points of Contact listing is available:

Georgia CASA Intranet under Volunteer Training Resources, Education Advocacy section.



School Supports

Student Support Team (SST)

- Multi-disciplinary, objective team
- Focus on academic, social/emotional health, and behavioral interventions
- Data collection
- Promotes regular reviews of child progress and supports
- Local-level oversight and implementation
- Requests/referrals can be made by anyone, including YOU!

Child Find

Child Find is part of the IDEA / federal special education law.

The purpose of the law is to serve the education needs of kids with disabilities.

Each state and its public schools must have policies and procedures for finding these kids. They must also develop practical methods to identify which kids qualify for special education and related services.

All public K–12 schools have evaluation systems. Also, all states have **early intervention programs** to serve infants and toddlers who haven't started school.

504 Plans

The "504" refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which specifies that no one with a disability can be excluded from participating in federally funded programs or activities, including elementary, secondary or post-secondary schooling.

- Legally guarantees access to FAPE.
- "Disability" in this context refers to a "**physical or mental impairment** which substantially **limits one or more major life activities**." This can include physical impairments; illnesses or injuries; communicable diseases; chronic conditions like asthma, allergies, diabetes, and learning problems.
- No adverse academic requirement.
- A 504 plan specifies the modifications and accommodations that will be needed for these students to have an opportunity to perform at the same level as their peers, and might include such things as **wheelchair ramps, blood sugar monitoring, an extra set of textbooks, a peanut-free lunch environment, home instruction, or a tape recorder or keyboard for taking notes.**

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

An IEP is a written plan designed to meet the unique educational needs of a child who may have a disability, as defined by federal regulations.

- Developed, reviewed, and revised at a **meeting of a team** that includes school officials and parents.
- Must be **tailored to the individual student's** needs as identified by the IEP evaluation process
- Should describe how the student **learns**, how the student best **demonstrates that learning**, and how teachers and service providers will **help the student learn more effectively**.
- **Consideration** should be given to the student's ability to access general curriculum, how the disability affects the student's learning, developing goals and objectives that correspond to the needs of the student, and ultimately choosing a placement in the least restrictive environment possible for the student.
- **Must be reviewed on an annual basis** and updated over the student's primary educational years (i.e., up to the point of high school graduation, or prior to the 22nd birthday) for as long as the child is eligible.

The requirements for development and implementation of an IEP are found at 34 CFR §§300.320 through 300.324.

Assistive Technology Needs





Gifted Student Supports & Services



Gifted Student Designation

In Georgia, a gifted education student is defined as one who **demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies)**, exhibits an exceptionally **high degree of motivation**, and/or **excels in specific academic fields**, and who needs **special instruction and/or special ancillary services** to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her ability(ies).

Many gifted education decisions and procedures are left to the **discretion of local school systems** so that they may address the unique needs of their communities.

Children are **referred for the Gifted Program** either **automatically** due to test scores at specified levels set by the local school board of education **OR** they can be referred **by anyone** with knowledge of the student's academic abilities, including YOU!

If a child is categorized by a school district as gifted, the **gifted designation transfers with the child and must be honored by the new school until re-evaluation is completed.**

Transportation Needs



Transportation Needs

Transportation should not be a barrier to obtaining educational stability for children in foster care. Ensuring educational stability for children in care requires partnership and creative collaboration between DFCS staff, school officials, caregivers, and advocates.

CASA and DFCS Case Manager should enlist the assistance of the school and caregivers to provide for the child's transportation needs.

Our advocacy is often in the asking. ~ Ask the school social worker, the school principal, local school system foster care point of contact, or other local school system officials what needs to happen to keep the child in the home school and what options are available for transportation.



Supportive Laws & Regulations

Supportive Laws & Regulations

- Title IV-E of the Social Security Act Sections 471(a)(30) and 475(5)(D)
- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351)
- Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010
- Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-95)
- Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care
- **NEW LEGISLATION!!** HB855 (effective 7/1/2021)



Georgia CASA Resources & More



Education Advocacy & Special Education Advocacy Quick Reference Guides

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.

Current Supports: GA CASA Internet

TO ACCESS: www.gacasa.org, “Learn More” tab, “Volunteer Resources” dropdown selection, scroll down for Volunteer Resources

Recorded Webinars

General Education Advocacy
Special Education Advocacy

Checklists, Tips and Forms

[Educational Advocacy Checklist](#)

[Judicial Checklist: NCJFCJ Resource](#)

[Educational Stability Checklist](#)

[Georgia CASA Quick Reference Guide: Education Advocacy](#)

[Georgia CASA Quick Reference Guide: Special Education Advocacy](#)

References

[Educational Stability & Transportation Funds](#)

[DFCS Educational Programming, Assessment, and Consultation](#)

[Services \(EPAC\)](#)

[Team Child Manual](#)

[Georgia Department of Education](#)

[National Working Group on Foster Care and Education](#)

[Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Students from Foster Care](#)

[The Legal Center for Foster Care and Education](#)

[GA/RYSSE Education](#)

[EMBARK Georgia](#)

Education-Related Legislation

- **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act:**
[Summary](#)
- **Chafee Educational Training and Voucher (ETV) Program:**
[ETV in Georgia](#)
[ETV in Georgia Webinar](#)
- **IDEA:**
[IDEA 2004](#)
- **Every Student Succeeds Act:**
[ESSA Implementation Toolkit](#)
[Georgia’s State Plan for ESSA Implementation](#)
[FAQs about ESSA Transition](#)

Education Advocacy Section

- Basic Education Advocacy Training:
Facilitator and Volunteer Materials
- Parent Portal Information Materials
- Surrogate Parent Training Materials
- Georgia CASA Quick Reference Guides
 - Education Advocacy
 - Special Education Advocacy

Current Supports: GA CASA Intranet

A Closer Look at the IEPs
Accommodations vs. Modification
Acronym Alphabet Soup
Contact Guidance with School Personnel
Education Advocacy Checklist
EPAC – DFCS Educational Stability Field Practice Guide
Education Support Monitor (ESM) Contact List
Interview Guide with School Personnel
Key Federal Statutes Affecting the Education and Civil Rights of Children
Laws Supporting Youth in Education
LRE Continuum
PowerPoint Presentation
Request for 504 Meeting Template
Request for SST Implementation
RTI Pyramid
Sample 504 Plan (ADHD)
Sample 504 Plan (Blank)
Sample IEP
SLDS Parent Portal Summary
Special Education Advocacy Checklist

“Lessons with Leslie” Video Series

Series of 8/10-minute recorded, bite-sized learnings

Topics:

- Student Support Teams/Multi-Tiered System of Supports
- 504/IEP Eligibility
- IEP Meetings: Pre-Meeting, During the Meeting, Post-Meeting
- Understanding Disciplinary Actions
- Tribunals: Pre-Tribunal, During Tribunal, Post-Tribunal
- Navigating School Record Requests
- Successful Graduation Strategies
- School Enrollment & School of Origin
- PBIS Opportunities and Benefits
- LRE/Classroom Placement

Current Supports: CPRS Updated Court Report Template

CASA Report - - Education and Child Care Section

- Education Setting
- Number of Education Setting Changes
- Current Academic/Developmental Progress
- Educational Supports and Services
- Recommendations to Ensure Educational Success

Court Process Reporting System
 Committee on Justice for Children / Administrative Office of the Courts

Plan Search
Reports
CASA Logs
Court Calendars
My CPRS

User: lori.pupp
Logout

Court Plans

Family Preservation

CASA Reports

GAL Reports

Report Information

Records/Research

Child's Wishes

Removal/Safety

Placement

Kin Connections

Visitation

Permanency

Case Plan

Education/Child Care

Health

Culture

Assessment/Analysis

CASA Report V2: Education and Child Care

QRGs
1) Best Interests of the Child (BIC) ▼
BIC Factors

Child's Name	Type of Education Setting	Total Number of Education Settings Attended Since Entering Custody
Mariah Redd	Daycare ▼	Enter the number of educational institution

Current Academic/Developmental Progress

For each child, provide the name of the current child care/educational facility attended and whether a change in schools occurred, the current grade level and whether it's appropriate for the child's age, the child's current academic/developmental performance/progress, a record of attendance, and any behavioral concerns.

(Maximum characters: 4000)
You have 4000 characters left.

Educational Supports and Services

Describe efforts to ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is provided to the child, whether there is a current IEP or 504 Plan, and an update on the monitoring progress. Include whether the child's current school/classroom setting is appropriate and if any additional supports/services are needed to meet developmental milestones.

(Maximum characters: 4000)
You have 4000 characters left.

Recommendations to Ensure Educational Success

Provide recommendations as to what supports and services are needed. (BIC Factor(s): 5,10,11,14,16) See QRG(s): 26, 27

(Maximum characters: 4000)
You have 4000 characters left.

Save Screen
Cancel
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Supportive Roles

Who does what?

Parent/Caregiver/Surrogate – provides authorization

- Ideally biological or adoptive parent; may be committed foster parent, relative caregiver, legal guardian, or surrogate parent/educational surrogate
- Provides ongoing child-focused information and authorization for additional supports and services to address identified needs.

DFCS – provides information

- Disseminates information to school or parent/caregiver

CASA – provides support

- Non-confidential information sharing about the child
- Acts as facilitator
- Drives the process monitoring, facilitation, and reporting to the court



Education Advocacy Action Plan

Action Plan for Education Advocacy

- Create list of educational providers.
- Request child's educational records.
- Review all prior assessments, evaluations, and data collection
- Request access to current Parent Portal access and historical SLDS data.
- Request a meeting with school counselor and teacher.
- Develop a list of questions to ask of school personnel and providers before connecting.
- Gather information about available extracurricular activities, the child's interest in participating, and assist with facilitating involvement
- Prepare to provide the court with detailed, education-related information and recommendations.

Older Youth Specific Strategies

Ensure that high school students are aware of post-secondary education options and assistance available to make the transition.

Ensure a child's education records are provided to the child, at no cost, at the time the child leaves foster care, if the child is leaving foster care by reason of having attained the age of majority under State law.

Request meeting with school district graduation coach to assess the youth's credit attainment, any need for credit recovery, and assist with facilitating the youth's participation, if needed.

Education Advocacy Action Plan: Questions to Ask



Asking the Right Questions

Ask questions: 5 W's + H + E (Who, What, Why, Where, When, How, and to Explain)

Listen. Do not interrupt. Paraphrase their points. Asking clarifying questions. - “Let me make sure I understand. I think I heard you say.....”

Within partnerships: Express appreciation for their expertise and information. Acknowledge their competence. Defer to them as experts.

Source: Wrightslaw “From Emotions to Advocacy” 2nd Edition

Questions to Ask

- Can you tell me a little bit about the child's class participation?
- How does he/she do in small groups? How does he/she do in the whole group?
- How well does the child work on independent tasks?
- How much prompting does the child need to initiate or complete work?
- Can you tell me how the child does during free time i.e., recess?
- How does the child do during specials? What is his/her favorite "special"?
- What is the child's greatest strength in school?
- What do you see as an obstacle for the child?
- How does the child compare to his/her peers in the class emotionally?
- What supports does the child seem to need to have a meaningful day?
- What concerns do you have for the child?
- We want to make sure that the child has success between home and school.
- What can we set up to make sure that communication and progress monitoring is ongoing and that concerns are documented if/when they arise?



Thank You!