

Checklist: Best Interest Determination

Student Name: _____ Current Grade: _____ Date of Meeting: _____

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are required to keep records of best interest determinations. All reviewed information should be notated and/or included within the record.

Number of school districts/schools the youth has attended: _____ Number of placement changes: _____

What type of placement:

- Home of Relative Fictive Kin Traditional Foster Home
 Congregate Care (Group Home or Residential)

STEP 1: Meeting Participants

DCFS/private agency representative _____ Agency _____
LEA point of contact _____ School District _____
LEA point of contact _____ School District _____
Others (name/position) _____

STEP 2: Identify School Options

Option 1: School district/building where student is currently attending (school of origin).

School District: _____ School Building: _____

Option 2: School district/building where student is living in foster care placement (district of residence).

School District: _____ School Building: _____

Option 3: School district/building of other options considered.

School District: _____ School Building: _____

STEP 3: Select Key Indicators for Best Interest Determination

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distance from new home placement | <input type="checkbox"/> School calendar year (semester vs. trimester) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DCFS placement decisions (case pending) | <input type="checkbox"/> Proximity to end of grading period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student, parent preference | <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of school support staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relationships with peers, teachers, and adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Extracurricular activities |

(Additional factors are listed below.)

Other considerations: _____

School Placement Decision: _____

Step 4: Transportation Plan

School of placement is responsible for arranging the transportation, billing, contracting for service provided, etc. when more than one school district is involved.

- Student will live in the district of origin and transportation will not be required.
- Student will live in the district of origin and transportation will be required (intra-district).
- Established route (different building, in district)
 - Specialized transportation (special program transportation)
- Student will not live in the district of origin and transportation will be required between contiguous districts.
- Student will not live in the district of origin and transportation will be required between non-contiguous districts/out of state.
- Other (please specify): _____

DCFS and ISBE established an intergovernmental agreement in 2018 to split costs of additional transportation incurred 50/50. This takes the stress off the district to fund transportation for our youth who no longer live in the district.

Remaining in the same school (school of origin) Considerations	Transferring to a new school Considerations
<input type="checkbox"/> Continuity of instruction <i>Student is best served due to circumstances that look to his or her past.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuity of instruction <i>Student is best served at a different school due to his or her history/future.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Age and grade placement of the student <i>Maintaining friends and contacts with peers is critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Age and grade placement of the student <i>Maintaining friends and contacts with peers is not critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation. The student has attended the school of origin for only a brief time. The student has destructive or dangerous relationships at their school of origin.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic strength <i>The child's academic performance is weak, and the child would fall further behind if he/she transferred to another school.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic strength <i>The child's academic performance is strong and at grade level, and the child would likely recover academically from a school transfer.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Social and emotional state <i>The child is suffering from the effects of mobility, has developed strong ties to the current school, and does not want to leave.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Social and emotional state <i>The child seems to be coping adequately with mobility, does not feel strong ties to the current school, and does not mind transferring.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Distance of the commute and its impact on the student's education and/or special needs <i>The advantages of remaining in the school of origin outweigh any potential disadvantages presented by the length of the commute.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Distance of the commute and its impact on the student's education and/or special needs <i>A shorter commute may help the student's concentration, attitude, or readiness for school.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal safety of the student <i>The school of origin has advantages for the safety of the student.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal safety of the student <i>The new school has advantages for the safety of the student.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Student's need for special instruction <i>The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met better at the school of origin.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Student's need for special instruction <i>The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be better met in the district of residence.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location <i>The student's current living situation is outside of the school of origin attendance zone, but his/her living situation or location continues to be uncertain. The student will benefit from the continuity offered by remaining at the school of origin.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location <i>The student's current living situation appears stable and unlikely to change suddenly. The student will benefit from developing relationships with school peers who live in his/her local community.</i>

Adapted from Best Practices: School Selection for Students in Out-of-Home Care issue brief developed by the Legal Center for Foster Care and the National Center for Homeless Education: Fall 2009.

Form completed by:

Name: _____ Position: _____ Date: _____

Cc: _____

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are required to keep records of best interest determinations. All reviewed information should be notated and/or included within the record.