

Glossary

Foster Care

Additional costs incurred in providing transportation: Costs that reflect the difference between what the district would otherwise spend to transport a student to his or her assigned school and the cost of transporting a student in foster care to his or her school of origin. The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and ISBE established an intergovernmental agreement in 2018 to split costs of additional transportation incurred 50/50.

Best interest determination: Child-centered criteria will be used to determine which educational setting is best for a youth. Decisions shall be made on a case-by-case basis. The cost for transportation shall not be considered

Caregiver: Out-of-home placement options for youths, including licensed foster homes, relatives, group care providers, or other court-ordered suitable parties. All placement options result from state dependency court actions.

Child Welfare Agency (CWA): A state agency that retains the legal custody of children who are in alternative care. DCFS is the CWA in Illinois.

Educational decision maker: A youth's placement provider unless noted otherwise.

Educational surrogate parent: An individual who has been appointed to represent the educational interests of a child with disabilities.

Family support team: Composed of the parent(s), legal counsel for the parent(s), placement provider, DCFS, guardian, volunteer advocate for the child, and/or other individuals as appropriate or needed.

Foster care: Substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians for 24 hours or more and for whom the DCFS has placement and care responsibility. This includes children in foster family homes, shelters, relative foster homes, group homes, preadoptive homes, and residential facilities.

Foster care liaison: The superintendent (or designee) designates a district foster care liaison to work with the district's Title I coordinator to provide supports for students in foster care. The liaison serves as the district's point of contact with appropriate state, local, and/or tribal child welfare agencies to receive notifications and share information regarding the status and progress of students in foster care.

Immediate enrollment: Attending and fully participating in school. A child's educational needs, including, for example, special education or English Learner (EL) services, if appropriate, are being met. (See ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(E).)

Legal guardian: A person appointed by the court of law who has the duty and authority to act in the best interests of a minor, subject to residual parental rights and responsibilities, to make important decisions in matters having a permanent effect of the life and development of the minor and to be concerned with his or her general welfare. The DCFS guardianship administrator is the legal guardian of youth in DCFS care.

Local Education Agency (LEA): School districts and public charter schools.

Parent: Legal, putative, and/or biological parent to the child.

School of origin: The school of origin is the school in which a youth is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care. An SEA and its LEAs must ensure that a child in foster care enrolls or remains in his or her school of origin unless a determination is made that it is not in the youth's best interest. [ESEA § 1111(g)(1)(E)(i)] If a youth's foster care placement changes, the school of origin would then be considered the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of the placement change.

School of residence: School that a student would normally attend based on the student's place of residence.

State Educational Agency (SEA): The state agency with primary responsibility for elementary and secondary education in a state. The Illinois State Board of Education is the SEA in Illinois.

Youth in care: A child for whom the DCFS is legally responsible through temporary protective custody, custody, or guardianship via court order, or children whose parent(s) have signed an adoptive surrender or voluntary placement assignment. The term "youth" or "youth or child in foster care" is the preferred title for a child within the system.