WELCOME

Supporting Youth in Distance Learning

Presented by the

County of Los Angeles, Department of Children and Family Services
&
Children's Law Center of California

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

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Excellence in Advocacy

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TRAINING OBJECTIVES

- Prudent Parent Standard
- Educational Law
- Foster Youth Rights
- Workspace and Structure
- Basic Principles of Behavior
- Core Services and Support
- Technical Assistance
- Resources

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We are so happy to have you on the team to support our youth in being successful with their distance learning. Also, please know that anytime a youth is having a challenge at school that you are unable to successfully address directly with the school, you should ask the youth's social worker, probation officers or attorney for assistance.

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Section 1:

Regulations/Welfare and Institution Code to Assist Caregivers and Providers

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REASONABLE AND PRUDENT FAMILY STANDARD

Prudent Parent Standard empowers and encourages caregivers/providers to ensure that youth in foster care live a normal life—just like any child.

The standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interests of a child while at the same time encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the child, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care under the responsibility of the state to participate in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities.

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REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT

Welfare & Institution Code §362.05

A short-term residential therapeutic program or a group home administrator, a facility manager, or his or her responsible designee, and a caregiver, as defined in paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 362.04, shall use a *reasonable and prudent parent standard* in determining whether to give permission for a child residing in foster care to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities, including, but not limited to, access to computer technology and the Internet

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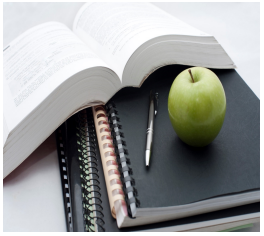
CALIFORNIA'S COMPULSORY EDUCATION LAWS

Requires everyone between the ages of 6 and 18 years of age to attend school, except 16 and 17 year-olds who have graduated from high school or passed the California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE) and obtained parental permission to leave.



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FOSTER YOUTH'S RIGHTS AB 175

- To live in a safe, healthy and comfortable home where they are treated with respect
- To be free from physical, sexual, emotional, or other abuse, corporal punishment, and exploitation
- To not be locked in any portion of their foster care placement, unless placed in a community treatment facility
- To have a placement that utilizes trauma-informed and evidence-based deescalation and intervention techniques, to have law enforcement intervention requested only when there is an imminent threat to the life or safety of a child or another person or as a last resort after other diversion and deescalation techniques have been utilized, and to not have law enforcement intervention used as a threat or in retaliation against the child
- To have storage space for private use
- To be free from unreasonable searches of personal belongings
- To visit and contact siblings, family members, and relatives privately, unless prohibited by court order, and to ask the court for visitation with the child's siblings
- To make, send, and receive confidential telephone calls and other electronic communications, and to send and receive unopened mail, unless prohibited by court order

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Section 2: Tips for Providing a Comfortable Learning Environment

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STRUCTURE AND CONSISTENCY

- Consistent bedtimes and wakeup times
- Sleep – Teens need 9-9.5 hours of sleep each night
- Morning Routine- Shower/Dress, Breakfast, Room Care, Socialization
- Physical Activity - Start the day with a walk or run, yoga, or exercise, Stretch and exercise throughout the day
- Untraditional School Day – some learning will be synchronous and some asynchronous. Due to additional breaks that may be needed throughout the school day, there may need to be extended hours in the evening or weekends

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WORKSPACE

- Backpacks or bins are helpful. Students can unpack their backpacks to help gear up for the start of the day, and close up at the end of the day
- Standing desks may benefit students
- Distant learning, not online learning - students will still need time for reading; paper, pencils, and a planner or calendar
- Workspace – Each student should have a dedicated, comfortable space where they can work with little distraction
- Remove distractions from the workspace, like phones and other devices

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Section 3:
Tips to Assist Youth with Behavioral Needs

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BASIC BEHAVIORAL PRINCIPLES

- Behavior is influenced by the immediate environment
- Specific behaviors are increased when followed by positive consequences
- While punishment can suppress behavior, it cannot help in the development of new behaviors and has a number of negative effects
- Therefore, reinforcement is the key to developing new behaviors and to helping students maintain these behaviors

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BEHAVIORISM AND ONLINE LEARNING

- Certain "natural reinforcers" may be absent from the online learning environment
- Most milieu settings may already have a behavioral system in place, but it may not be optimized for helping clients complete educational tasks
- They may not be individualized to each client
- They may not have a reinforcement schedule which is frequent enough to encourage engagement in activities the client may find aversive
- Frequent school changes, inadequate supports, learning difficulties, and mental health challenges can all contribute to education being an aversive situation for clients

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INDIVIDUALIZED BEHAVIORAL PROGRAMS

- Reinforcers are not "universal" in that different individuals find different things to be reinforcing
- To be properly called reinforcement, the "reward" must be seen as such by the client and increase the desired behavior
- One of the easiest ways to individualize a behavioral system is to provide "secondary reinforcers" (e.g. tokens, tickets, "cash") which can then be used to "purchase" items from a "store" or "menu"
- Reinforcers may be tangible items (e.g. an itunes download), activities (e.g. 10 extra minutes on a video game), or relational (e.g. extra time with preferred staff). But all reinforcement should include verbal praise and acknowledgement

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REINFORCEMENT SCHEDULES

- A "reinforcement schedule" includes the frequency of reinforcement
- A "continuous reinforcement schedule" works best for developing new behaviors. Continuous reinforcement is defined as reinforcing every instance of the desired behavior (e.g. logging into the online learning environment, completing an academic task)
- An "intermittent reinforcement schedule" is best for maintaining behaviors already established. An intermittent reinforcement schedule is defined as one in which behavior is not reinforced for every instance of behavior, but is applied intermittently
- Variable intermittent reinforcement is when there is not a set pattern to reinforcement, but reinforcement still occurs. It can still be frequent reinforcement, just not continuous

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APPLYING REINFORCEMENT

Individual steps toward completion should be reinforced
- Example: Completed task is logging into virtual learning environment
  - Individual steps include sitting down at the computer, turning on the computer, and logging into the online learning environment Each complex task can be broken down into smaller components

In order for a behavioral system to be effective, clients must be reinforced
- "Catch them" being good
- Break the task down into smaller and smaller components until the client is able to successfully complete a step in the task

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DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUALIZED BEHAVIORAL PLAN

- Clearly define in behavioral terms, what it is you want the student to accomplish
- Clearly communicate these clearly defined behavioral expectations to the client
- Collaborate with the client on establishing what the client considers to be reinforcing
- Make sure that that reinforcers are readily available
- Develop a reinforcement schedule. The more difficulty the client has in completing the task, the more frequent the reinforcement needs to be

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FINAL THOUGHTS

A behavior program can only be considered successful if it helps the client be successful
Re-frame your role to that of "success coach"
Have fun in collaborating with the client in determining the best behavioral program for their individual needs

Don't get discouraged. There will be bumps and adjustments that need to be made as you implement these systems. Keep working at it until the client is successful in meeting their educational goals

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Section 4:
Core Services and Supports

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CORE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

In efforts to provide support to the Contract Providers in their service delivery to meet the requirements per the State Interim Licensing Standards (ILS) and the County Contract to offer Core Services and Supports to placed children to include educational and physical, and behavioral supports, including extracurricular activities and social supports, the County of Los Angeles Department and Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation Child Welfare (PCW) offer technical assistance.

Reference: ILS: Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 7.5, Sections 87067, 87068.2, 87072, 87078, 87078.1 and 87079.
County Contract, SECTION 15, SUBSECTION 15.3

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR PROVIDERS

The DCFS Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD), Quality Assurance Section (QAS), has Technical Assistance Specialists (TAS) that provide technical assistance, support and trainings for the Providers.

The OHCMD QAS TAS are assigned to each FFA, STRTP and GH to build relationships, maintain monthly contact as well as conduct trainings that promotes quality service provision to include educational support and resources to address the needs of the placed children and Special Incident Reporting per the state and contract mandate.

PCW and Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) also have teams that provide technical assistance for Providers.

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DCFS OUT-OF-HOME CARE MANAGEMENT DIVISION QUALITY ASSURANCE SECTION

The TAS may also solicit presenters for other requested or necessary training topics upon request by the Provider or if there is a demonstrated need.

The QAS TAS also acts as a liaison between Provider and DCFS Regional Staff in efforts to support the relationships and promote teaming to meet the needs of the placed children.

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SPECIAL INCIDENT REPORTING IN I-TRACK SYSTEM

CCLD and the County departments require the Contract Providers to submit all Special Incident Reports (SIRs) via the I-Track System in accordance with the guidelines and time frames in the Contract Exhibit A-5, Special Incident Reporting Guide. For Probation children, the Contract Provider shall also report incidents by telephone to the Placement Administrative Services Officer of the Day and the I-Track System.

If the agency cannot obtain complete information regarding the incident within the required reporting timeframes, an addendum to the SIR should be submitted to include the additional information as soon as possible not to exceed seven (7) business days of becoming aware of the incident. More than one addendum may be submitted for a SIR.

If the I-Track web-based system is off-line, the FFA/STRTP/GH staff shall email the report per the directives in the Contract Exhibit. When I-Track is available, resubmit the report via I-Track noting the date of the previously emailed transmission.

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INCIDENT TRACKING SYSTEM (ITRACK)

iTrack also provides the agencies the ability to automatically send Cross Reports via Email to the assigned DCFS OHCMD, QAS TAS, to the assigned DCFS Children's Social Worker (CSW) or Probation Officer as well as the CCLD.

This system utilizes data available in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) to pre-populate vendor and placement related information in online forms to improve data integrity and reduce data entry and data redundancy.

DCFS, PCW and CCLD review the SIRs to determine if all required information is included, if there are pending child safety related issues that need to be addressed, whether they were submitted timely and if all appropriate parties are cross reported. If you have questions or need assistance you may contact them for assistance.

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EXAMPLES OF INCIDENTS WHILE DISTANT LEARNING, WHAT TO REPORT IT?

1) Placed child is marked absent due to failure to adhere to school distant learning participation requirements?
   YES - DCFS/PCW/CCLD

2) Placed child is suspended from school?
   YES - DCFS/PCW
   NO-CCLD (Only for illegal actions or behaviors that result in Law Enforcement and arrests)

3) Placed child exhibits a pattern (3 or more consecutive days) of refusing or not attending school?
   YES - DCFS/PCW/CCLD

Note: If absences are daily and/or extensive an emergency Child and Family Team (CFT) should be held.

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STATE GUIDANCE DURING THE PANDEMIC

What should facilities do for youth education-wise now that school is out schools are closed for in-person learning?

- **A:** Licensees are encouraged to stay in touch with a youth's school district and read all announcements on the school district's website, as many districts have launched "distance learning," which includes educational lessons online and work that can be completed at home. Your local school district will also have information on the school meal program, internet access, and other educational resources during the emergency. Staff should ensure that, where available, youth are participating in distance learning, and should review assignments from the school and assist youth in establishing a reasonable pace for completing the work. Creating a distance learning schedule and routine for completing schoolwork that involves scheduling breaks and free time is recommended.

https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/CCLD/PINs/2020/CRP/PIN_20-08-CRP.pdf

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STATE AND OTHER GUIDANCE DURING THE PANDEMIC CONTINUED

Education Resources

- Information and resources regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) and California's response
- The California Department of Education (CDE) is monitoring the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and working closely with agency partners
- Help for Students in Crisis
  Resources curated by the CDE for addressing mental health and wellness while school sites are closed, including the following:
- Child Trends
  Resources for Supporting Children's Emotional Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Please Pass the Love
  A program hosting several regularly scheduled online social and educational gatherings (through Facebook Live, Zoom, and Slack) for children and youth in K-12th grade
- GritX
  A website developed by the Regents of the University of California with mental health exercises, self-interviewing prompts, self-care guidance, and coping skill development for high school-aged youth and transition-aged youth
- County Foster Youth Library Card program
  County Foster Youth Library Card program. The program gives the library card directly to the youth, with no financial obligation or responsibility to the caregiver.

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SPECIALIZED SUPPORT AND SERVICES ON CAMPUS DURING COVID19

If a school is closed for in-person instruction, it is permissible for a small set of students to receive in-person targeted, specialized support and services on campus?

Yes. In-person targeted, specialized support and services in stable cohorts is permissible when the school is able to satisfy all of the conditions detailed in the Cohorting Guidance, including:

- Limiting cohort size
- Restricting cohort mixing
- Maintaining proper physical distancing, masking, cleaning and other safety measures

How do I request this specialized support? Go to https://kids-alliance.org for sample letter to the District/School

Reference: CDPH FAQ Update (September 4, 2020)

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ONE ON ONE SUPPORT

- If a placed child has an identified need for a 1:1 during school hours in their IEP, the School District is still obligated to provide the supportive services during the Pandemic. You can make a request per the process noted above and in the CDPH FAQ dated September 4, 2020 by using the same request letter for that 1:1 to be in the home. The Alliance for Children's Rights can assist in this process.
- To address the educational needs of the placed children your agency, ensure collaboration in teaming efforts to secure additional treatment services to include Crisis Stabilization and Therapeutic Behavioral Services as needed to meet the individual educational needs. This should be addressed in the Child and Family Team (CFT) and noted in the Educational plan of the Needs And Services plan.
- Note: A DCFS Contracted Behavioral Aide (1:1) can be approved to provide support to include Distance Learning on a limited basis if the support is warranted to stabilize a new placement and school transition.

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TUTORING AND LEARNING CENTERS

LA County Office of Education Tutoring Program
https://www.lacoe.edu/Student-Services/Foster-Youth-Services/Tutoring

Schools on Wheels schoolsonwheels.org
https://schoolonwheels.org/volunteer-resources/

Parks and Recs Alternative Learning Centers that started August 31st:
https://www.laparks.org/alternativelearningcenters / 213-202-2700

Kahn Academy
http://www.Kahnacademy.org/

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ACCESS TO DEVICES DURING DISTANCE LEARNING

Learning Devices: Providers should acquire the necessary devices to support successful Distance Learning from their School/School District or the DCFS CSW for any students (K-12+) who does not have access to technology.

All foster youth ages 5 and up can receive a free phone with an unlimited data plan that can serve as a hotspot (iFoster will need to obtain caregiver consent for any child 5-12 before proceeding);

High school students ages 14 and older (*including those transitioning into college in the Fall) can request a Laptop/Chromebook;

K-8 students ages 5- 12, can request a tablet;

iFoster is providing devices for youth who are 13 years of age or older and in an open case (this includes HOP, Pre-Dispo and voluntary cases). If the device is requested and the case closes prior to the device being received, it can still be provided to the youth as long as they were 13 at the time of the request.
The devices will be sent to the CSWs who in turn will contact the FFA/STRTP/GH when it is received.

*Youth enrolled in post-secondary education such as trade schools, community colleges and or 4 year universities (incoming freshman included) should complete the attached request form and send it directly to: phones@ifoster.org.

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MORE IT RESOURCES

- Education Companies Offering Free Subscriptions Due to School Closings https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/135609/list-of-education-companies-offering-free-subscriptions
- John Burton Advocates (JBAY)/Free Laptops for college students and supports serita@ifoster.org https://www.jbaforyouth.org/covid-19-resources/
- LAUSD Student Resources https://achieve.lausd.net/Page/15747
- Alliance for Children's Rights https://kids-alliance.org/covid19/

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) TIPS

Contact your Internet provider to increase the strength of your internet connection to support multiple users and devices for an extensive amount of time

Upgrade your Internet to allow internet connections both inside and outside the common structures. Embrace new ways and different environments to support Distance Learning

Request all IT Devices from the School District/School first. You are the best Advocate!

Request Trainings for you/caregivers/staff on how to use the systems they are using to implement Distance Learning (e.g. Google Meets, Class Dojo, Reminder, Turnitin.com etc…)

Train staff/caregivers on support and monitoring children/youth during Distance Learning

Ensure access to an onsite IT staff during peak hours to address IT issues immediately

Request the School/District for an IT contact to report and/or address IT issues

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EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER PLANNING ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES FOR TEENS/NMDS

- California Community Colleges *http://www.cccmypath.org*
- California Career Zone *https://www.cacareerzone.org*
- Career Cruising *https://public.careercruising.com/en/*
- California College Pathways *http://www.student.cacollegepathways.org*
- John Burton Advocates for Youth *http://www.jbaforyouth.org/fy-ed-planning-guide/*

Financial Aid Application Resources:

- John Burton Advocates for Youth *http://www.jbaforyouth.org/ca-fy-financial-aid-guide/*
- California College Pathways *http://www.student.cacollegepathways.org/financial-aid/*
- For those with significant changes due to COVID19 https://studentaid.gov/

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WHAT KIDS WANT TO KNOW

What Kids Want To Know About Coronavirus: An Original Comic : Goats and Soda : NPR
https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus

Coronavirus - BrainPOP
https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/

Sesame Street https://SesameStreet.org/caring : provide comfort, manage anxiety, and foster learning at home

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