



Educational Stability for Youth in Foster Care

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BEST FOR
ALL

We will set all students on a path to success.

ACADEMICS

ALL TENNESSEE STUDENTS WILL HAVE
ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION,
NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE

STUDENT READINESS

TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE
EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE ACADEMIC
AND NON-ACADEMIC NEEDS OF ALL
STUDENTS IN THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS

EDUCATORS

TENNESSEE WILL SET A NEW PATH FOR
THE EDUCATION PROFESSION AND BE
THE TOP STATE IN WHICH TO BECOME AND
REMAIN A TEACHER AND LEADER FOR ALL



Agenda

- Introductions
- Activity
- Collaboration
- Definition of Foster Care
- Why this Matters
- Identifying Students in Foster Care
- Best Interest Determination
- Transportation
- Enrollment



Opening Activity



Let's Meet Zach

- Zach, 15, was brought into foster care two days ago and is placed in a foster home an hour away from his school of origin.
 - What preliminary questions do you have?



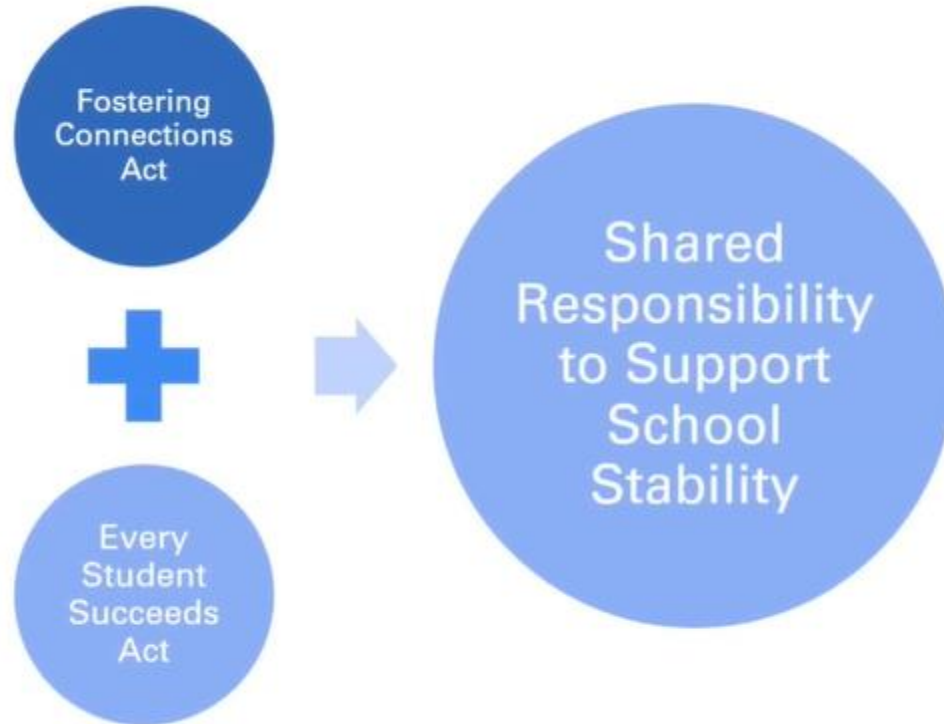
Collaboration is Key

Lots of Moving Parts

- Everyone plays an important role
- Misalignment can topple the entire structure



Collaboration is the Key to Success



ESSA Requirement

- Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must provide assurances that children in foster care enroll or remain in the school of origin unless there is a determination that it is not in their best interest to attend the school of origin.



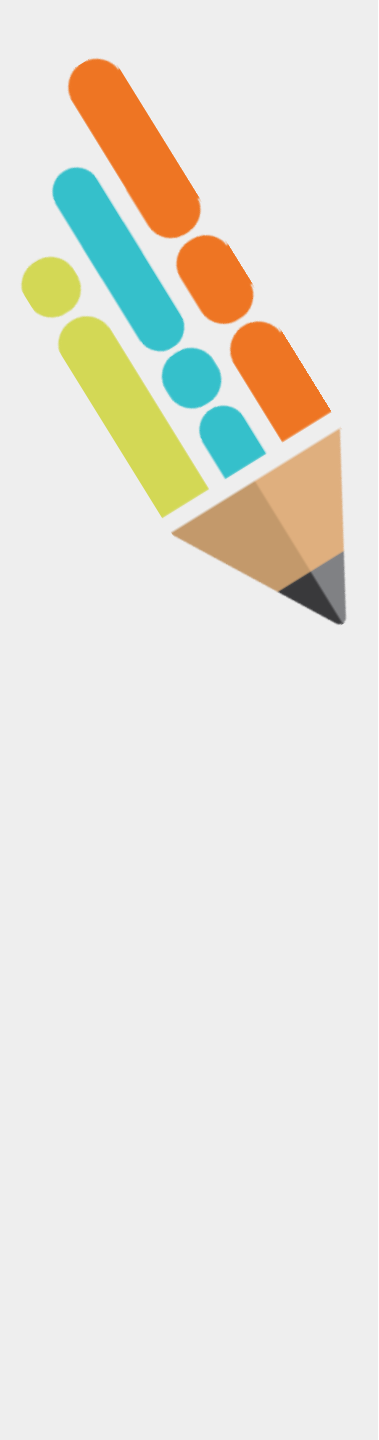
Collaborative Legislation

Fostering Connections (2008)	Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)
Coordination with LEAs	Collaboration with child welfare agencies
Presumption to remain in school of origin	Presumption to remain in school of origin
Best interest determination	Best interest determination
Immediate and appropriate enrollment	Immediate enrollment, even without documentation
Permissible use of federal Title funds to support transportation	Transportation must be arranged, provided and funded
	State and local Points of Contact



School Stability in Fostering Connections

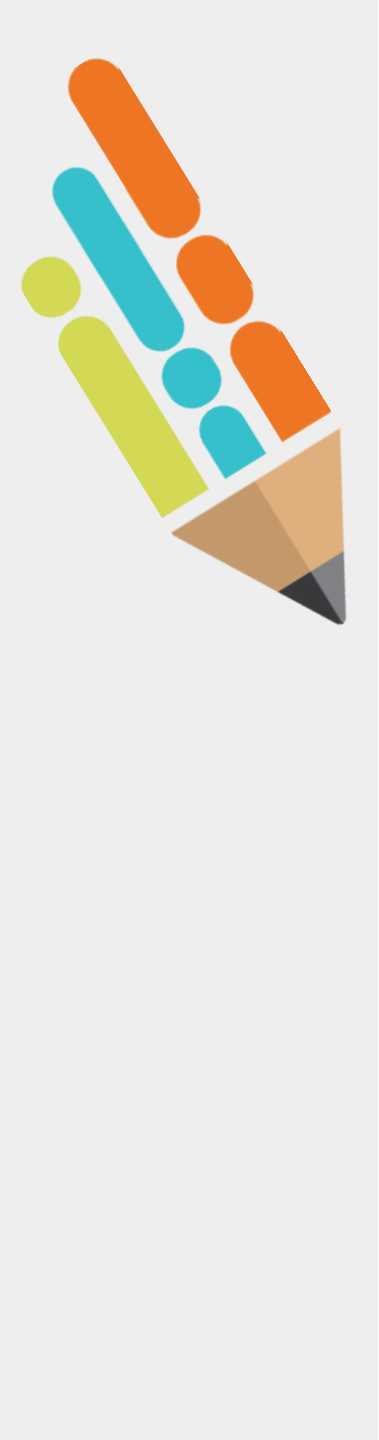
- Must include an Education Stability Plan as part of each child's case plan including assurances that:
 - Each placement takes into account the **appropriateness of the current education setting** and the **proximity to the school** in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement;
 - Child welfare agency has **coordinated with appropriate local education agencies...to ensure** that the child **remains enrolled in the school** in which the child was enrolled at the time of placement;
 - **If not in the best interest to remain**, child welfare agency must ensure **immediate and appropriate enrollment** in a new school and ensure **all of the education records** of the child are provided to the school.



What is Foster Care?

Who is a Child in Foster Care?

- The Title I foster care provisions apply to all children in foster care enrolled in public schools. Students in pre-K should be included as well if the LEA offers a preschool program.
- “Foster care” is defined as 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the Department of Children’s Services (DCS) has placement and care responsibility.
- This includes placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, childcare institutions, and pre-adoptive homes.



Remember Zach?

- You receive new information that Zach's siblings are in the newly zoned school.
 - How does this information impact the conversations that need to occur?
 - What additional information must be gathered?



Why this Matters



Children in Foster Care

- Children in foster care:
 - are a vulnerable population;
 - typically make more unscheduled school changes than their peers in a given school year; and
 - compared to their peers, experience:
 - **lower** high school graduation rates,
 - **lower** scores on academic assessments, and
 - **higher** rates of grade retention, chronic absenteeism, suspensions, and expulsions.





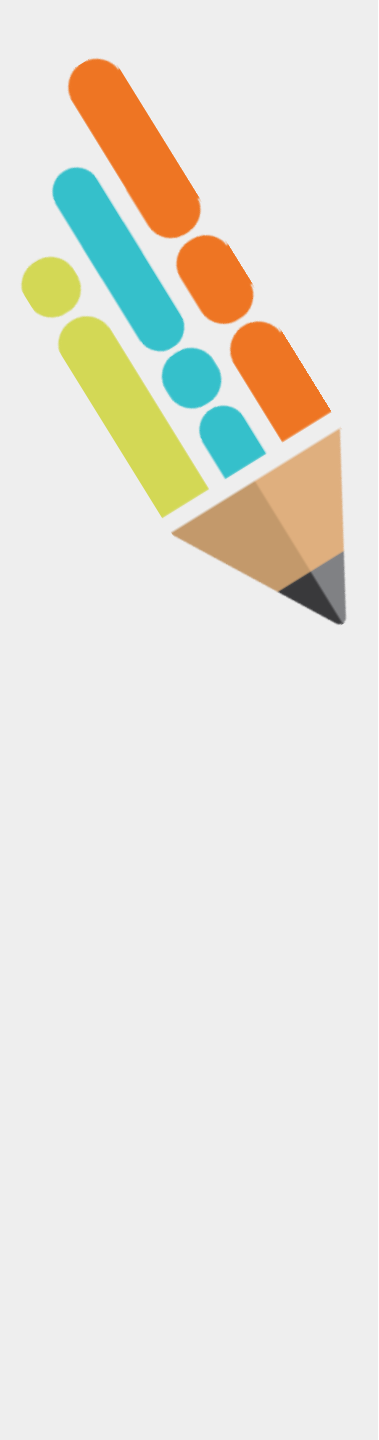
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In a national study of 1,087 foster care alumni, youth who had one fewer placement change per year were almost twice as likely to graduate from high school before leaving care.

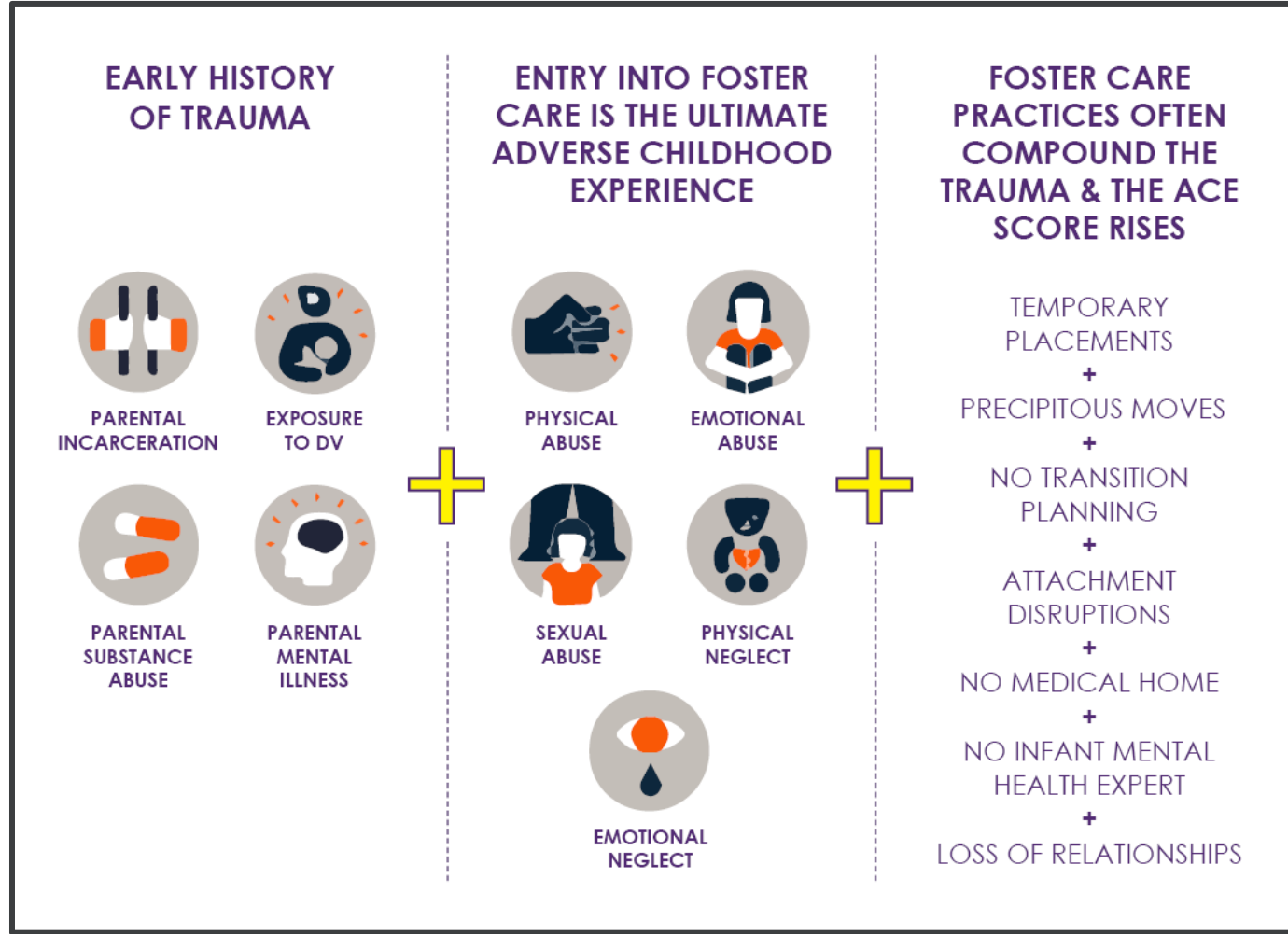
- Legal Center for Foster Care and Education

Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data

- The Annie Casey E. Foundation works with public systems to improve outcomes for children involved in with child welfare systems.
 - KIDS COUNT is a collection of state-by-state data on child abuse and neglect.
- In 2021, **65%** of Tennessee children in foster care had experienced **1-3** placements.
- In 2021, **22%** of Tennessee children in foster care had experienced **4-7** placements.
- In 2021, **13%** of Tennessee children in foster care had experienced **8** or more placements.



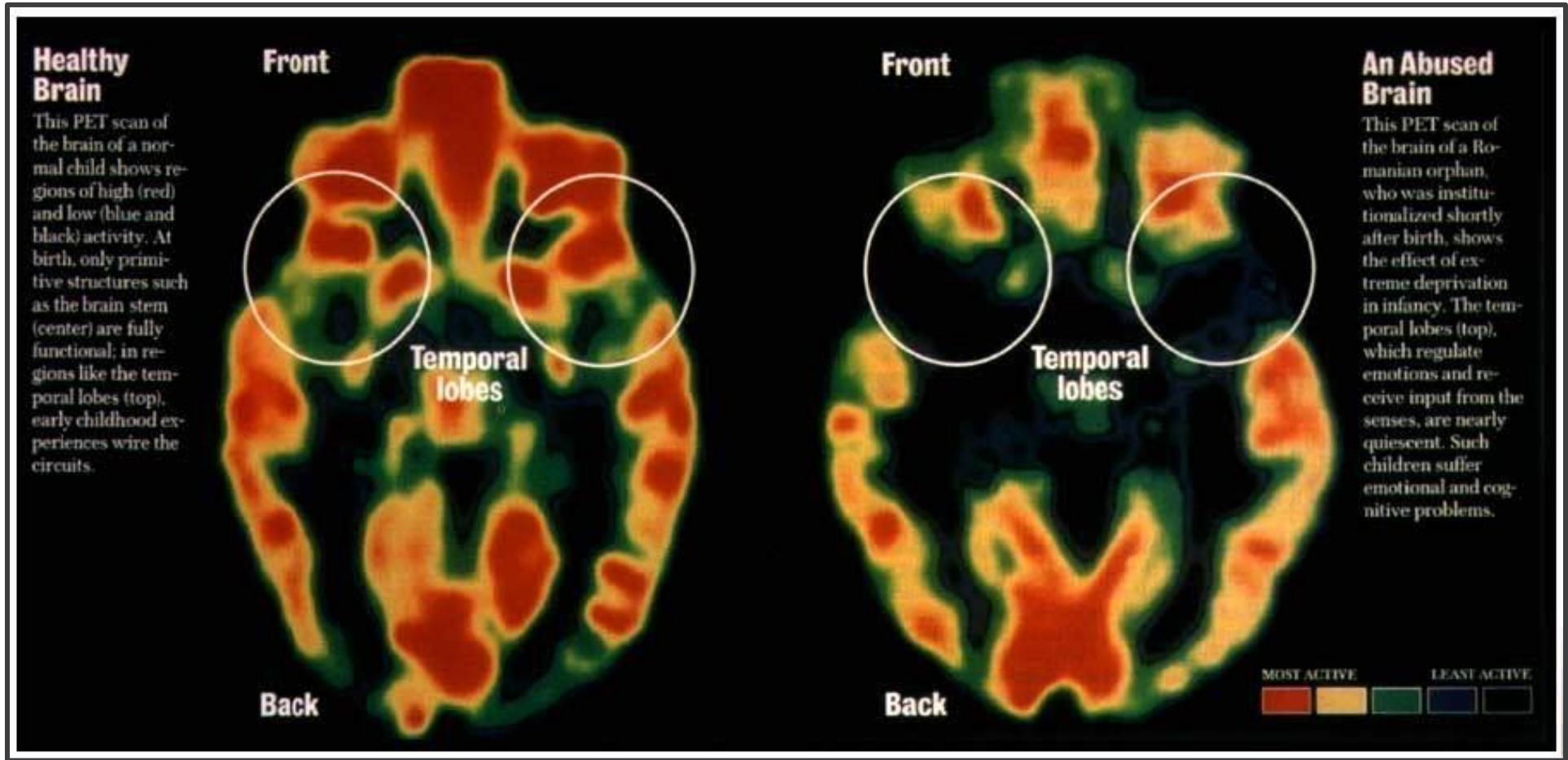
Foster Care is the Ultimate ACE



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation



How ACEs Impact the Brain



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation



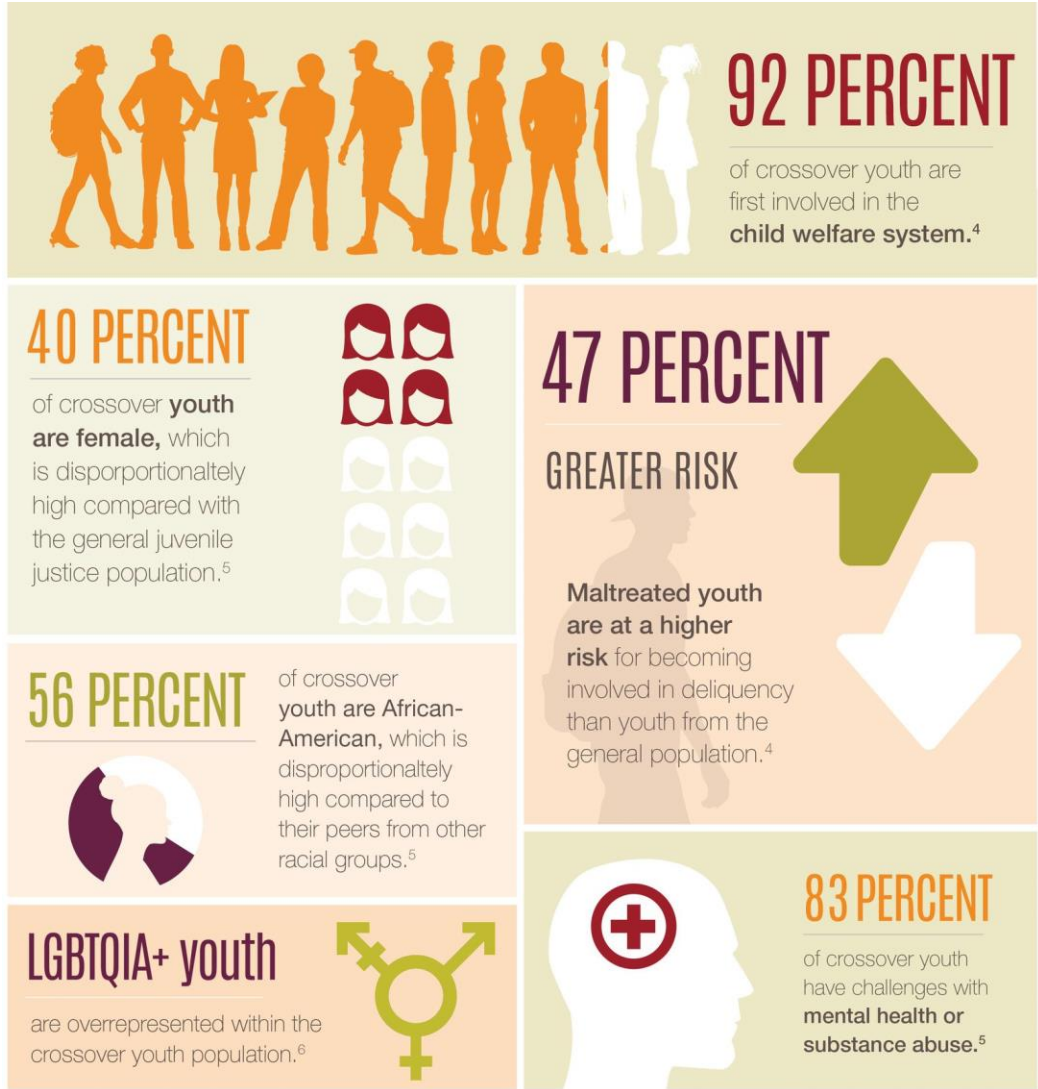


Crossover Youth

- Youth involved in both the child welfare system and juvenile justice systems
- Dually-involved, dually-adjudicated, dual system youth require a specialized focus
- Higher risks for mental health and educational challenges
- Higher risk of recidivism, poor placement stability and poor permanency outcomes



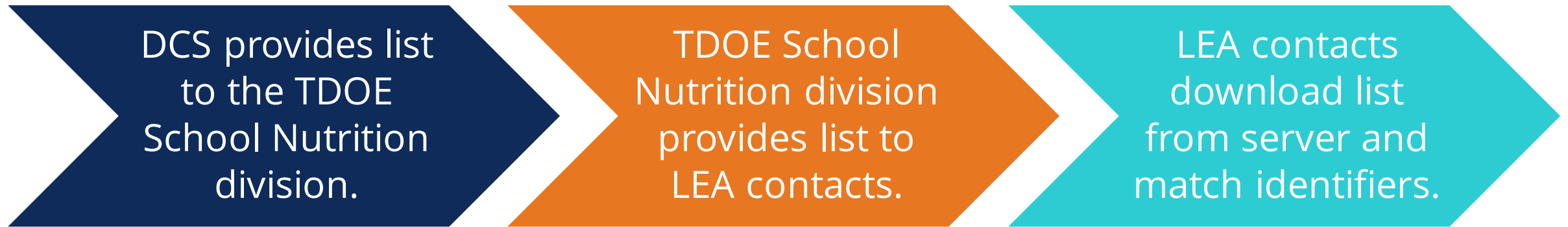
Crossover Youth



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation

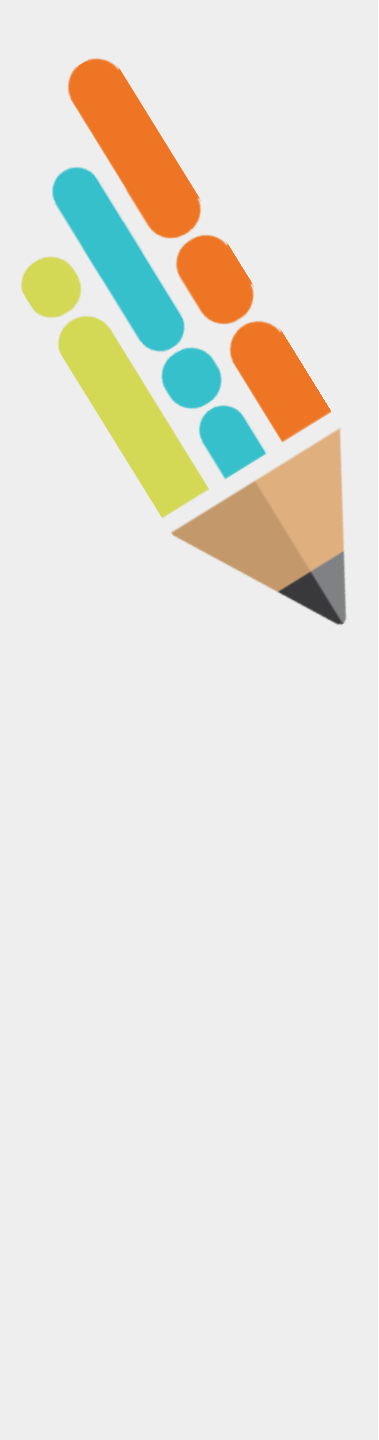
Identifying Students in Foster Care

Procedures for Identifying Students in Foster Care



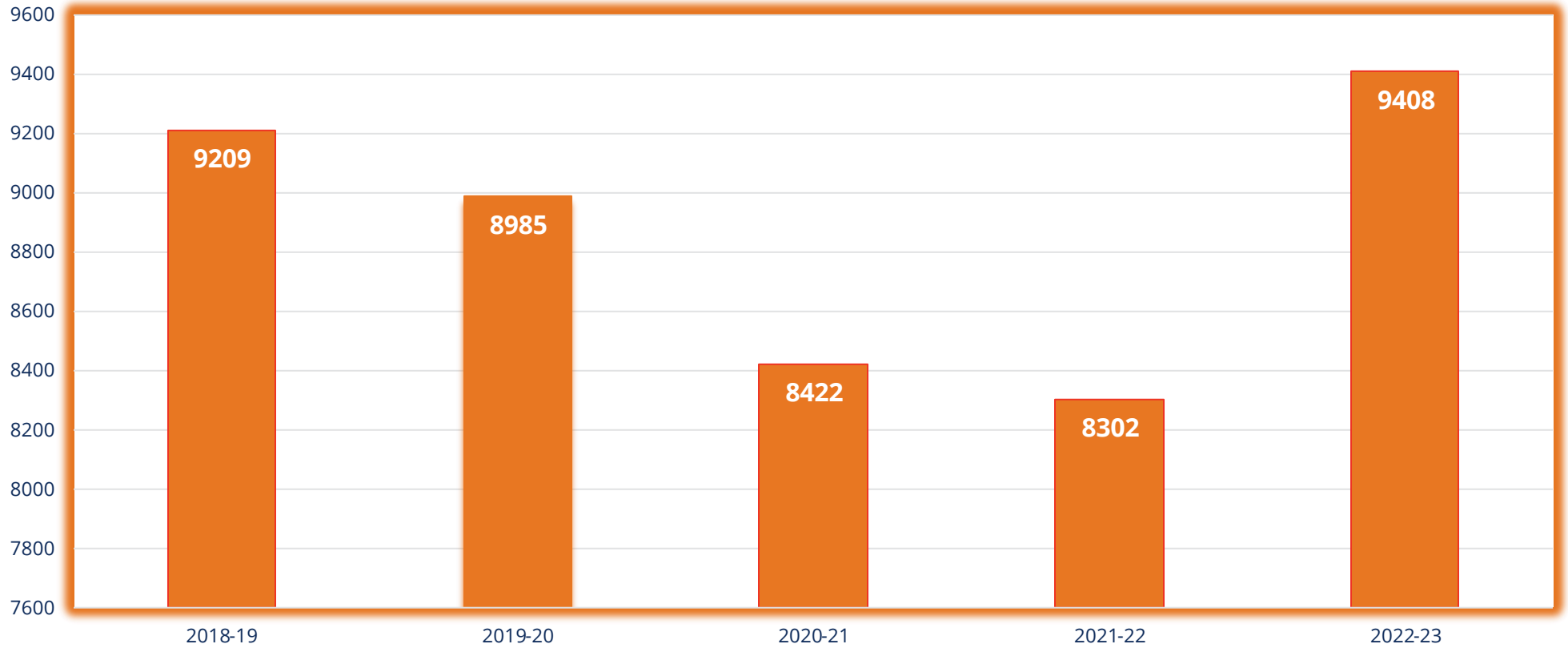
DCS Education Specialists

- Students should also be identified at the time of enrollment by the DCS Education Specialist or DCS caseworker if a student needs a best interest determination (BID) meeting.
- This notification allows for real time communication between DCS and the LEA to ensure that BID meetings happen in a timely manner.
- The Education Specialists are regional and have specific LEA assignments, but caseworkers may be employed by DCS or a contracted agency such as Youth Villages.



Foster Care in Tennessee

Students in Foster Care Coded as FOS01





Additional Foster Care Data

- Data from 24CFA foster care section
 - Total number of BID meetings reported: 1978
 - Total number of students remaining in school of origin: 332
- Total foster care transportation set asides: \$202,161.18



The Intersection of McKinney Vento

- It is possible for a student to hold dual status as both foster care and homeless.
- In 2022-23, there were **550** cases, including 248 in which students were identified as foster care and homeless in the same enrollment.
- There were **187** instances in which students were identified as homeless in an enrollment that preceded the foster care enrollment.
- There were **115** enrollments in which the homeless identification occurred in an enrollment that followed the foster care enrollment.



Dual Status: Foster Care and Homeless

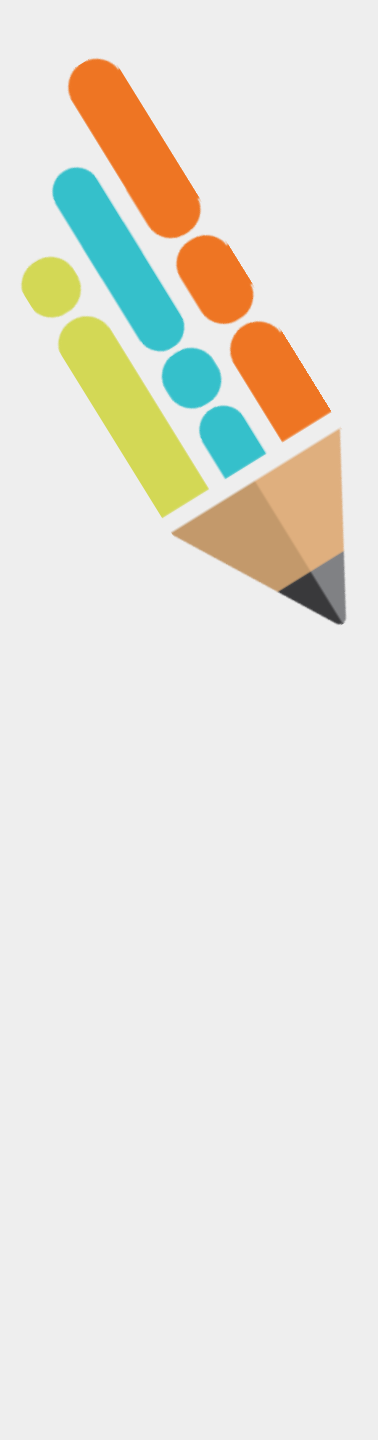


Dual Status 2022-23: Foster Care (FOS01) and Homeless (H)						
	Dual Status	Type of Homeless Residence				Unaccomp
	Foster Care (FOS01) & Homeless (H)	Shelter & Transitional Housing	Doubled Up	Unsheltered	Hotel /Motel	Homeless Unaccomp Youth
Foster and Homeless in Same Enrollment	248	52	161	22	13	46
Foster Care in Enrollment and Homeless in Prior Enrollment	187	41	114	17	15	32
Foster Care in Enrollment and Homeless in Later Enrollment	115	29	69	11	6	19
Foster Care and Homeless Total (in Same, Prior, or Later Enrollment)	550	122	344	50	34	97



Dual Status: Foster Care and Runaway

- In 2022-23, there were **55** instances, including 17 in which students were identified as foster care and runaway in the same enrollment.
- There were **27** instances in which the runaway identification occurred in an enrollment that preceded the foster care enrollment.
- There were **11** instances in which the runaway enrollment occurred after the foster care enrollment.
- Of the 55 enrollments, **DCS** was the LEA for 43 of the foster care enrollments and 17 of the runaway enrollments.

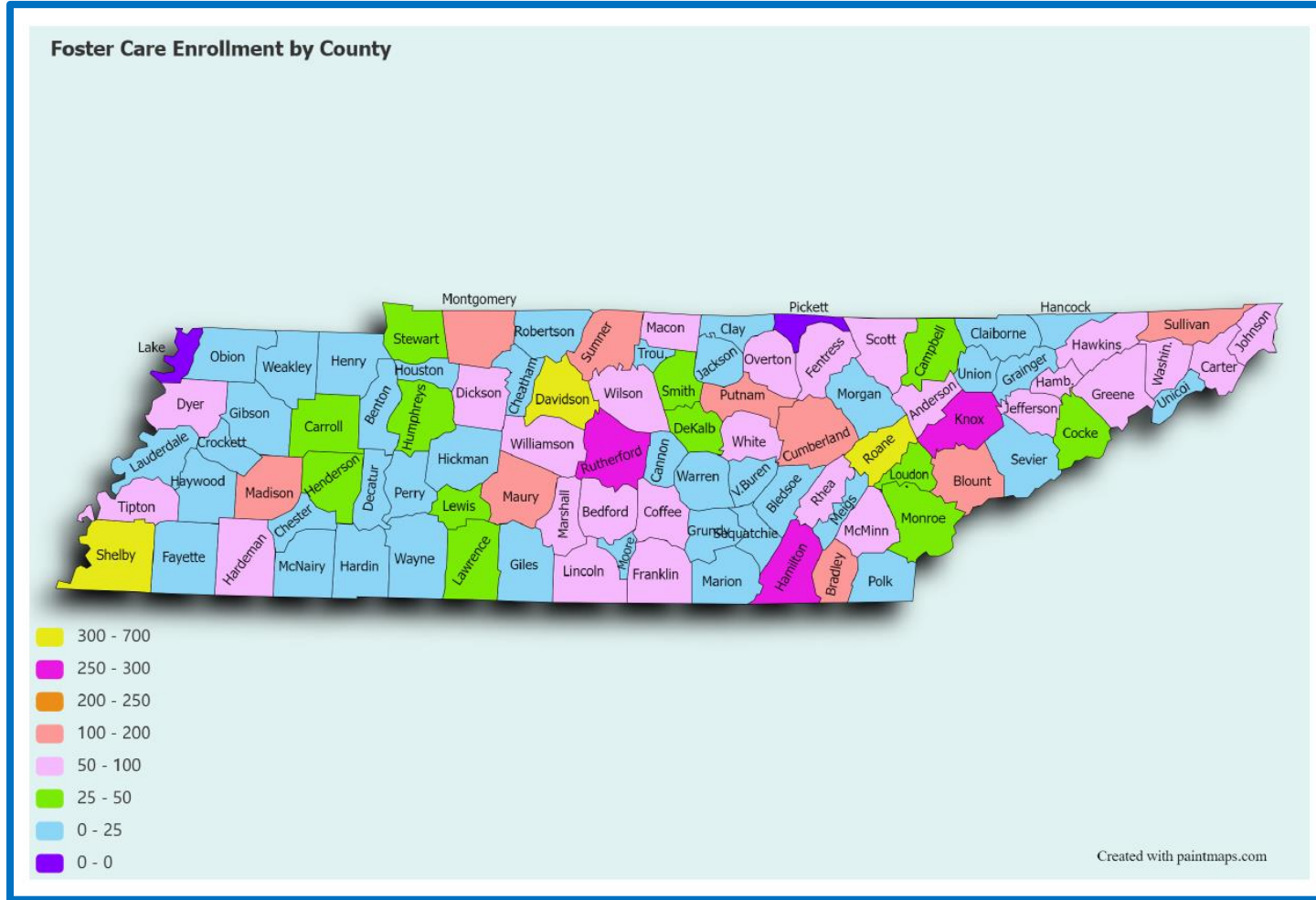


Dual Status: Foster Care and Runaway

Dual Status 2022-23: Foster Care (FOS01) and Runaway (U)	
	Dual Status
	Foster Care (FOS01) & Runaway (U)
Foster and Runaway in Same Enrollment	17
Foster Care in Enrollment and Runaway in Prior Enrollment	27
Foster Care in Enrollment and Runaway in Later Enrollment	11
Foster Care and Runaway Total (in Same, Prior, or Later Enrollment)	55



Foster Care Enrollment by County



Best Interest Determination

Best Interest Determination Meetings

- Youth in foster care are enrolled or remain in their school of origin, unless a determination is made that it is not in their best interest.
- The best interest determination (BID) is based on multiple factors including, but not limited to, the consideration of:
 - the appropriateness of the current educational setting,
 - the length of the commute
 - the preferences of the child, parents or education decision makers,
 - the placement of siblings, and
 - the availability of required services.

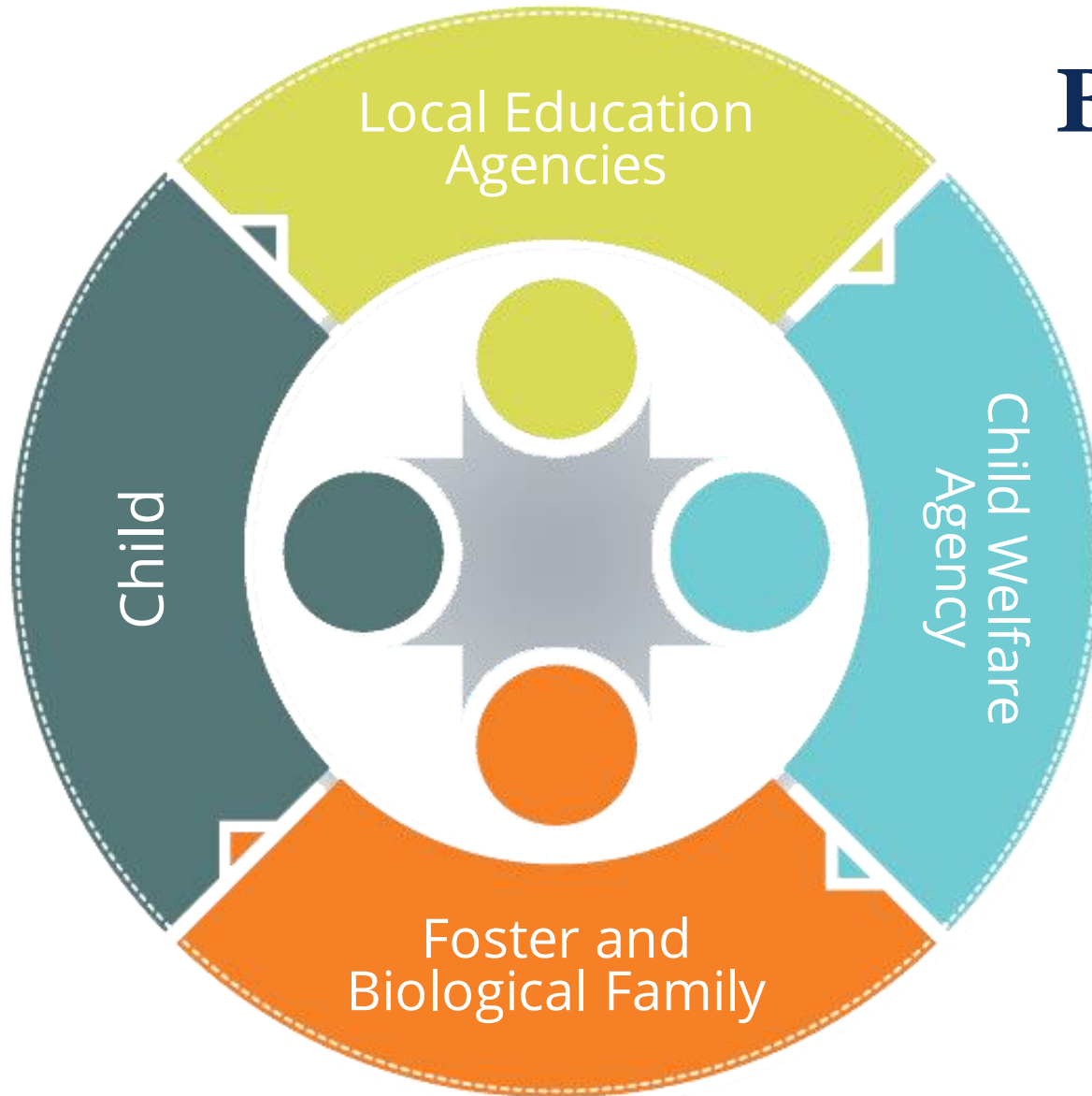


Best Interest Determination Meetings

- BID meetings are the heart of the school stability process.
- Conducting a quality and thoughtful BID can avoid future disputes that may arise.
- Requires all systems and individuals involved to focus on a specific child and think outside of their own individual interests and perspectives.



BID Meetings



- Gather meaningful input from:
 - School counselors, teachers, coaches
 - Child’s parents, child, child advocate, guardian ad litem, foster parent, mental health providers

Remember Zach?

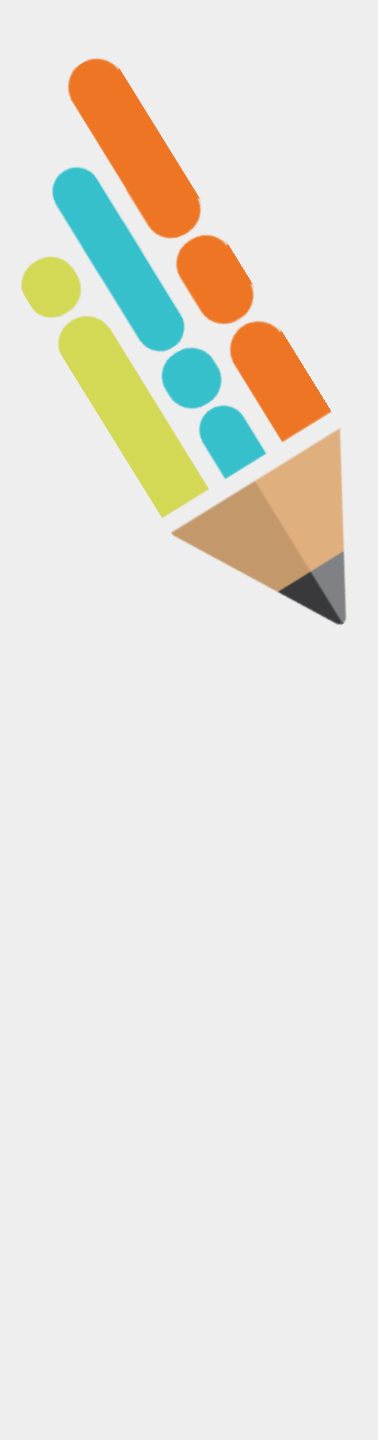
- What if we meet Zach when he is in kindergarten?
 - How does this information impact the conversations or eventual decisions?
 - What additional information must be gathered?



Transportation

Transportation: ESSA Requirements

- LEAs must provide assurances that they will collaborate with DCS to develop and implement clear, written procedures for how transportation will be provided, arranged and funded for the duration of the child's time in foster care.
- Children in foster care needing transportation to their school of origin must promptly receive that transportation in a cost-effective manner and in accordance with section 475(4)(A) of the Social Security Act.



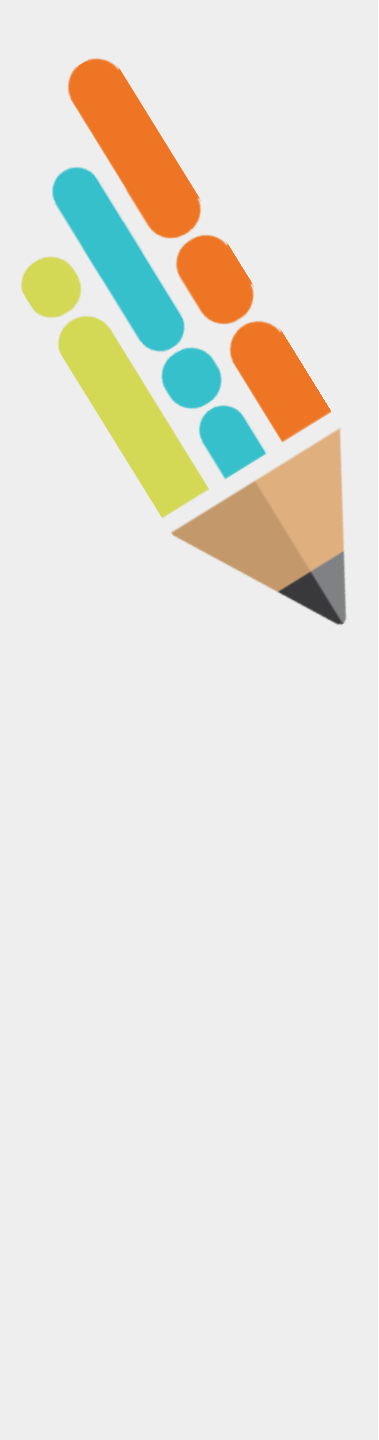
Transportation: ESSA Requirements

- If there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation to the school of origin, the LEA will provide such transportation if:
 - the local child welfare agency agrees to reimburse the LEA for the cost of such transportation;
 - the LEA agrees to pay for the cost; or
 - the LEA and local child welfare agency agree to share the cost [ESEA § 112(c)(5)(B)].



Transportation: DCS

- The child welfare agency must ensure that the educational stability plan of each child in foster care includes an assurance that the child welfare agency has coordinated with the appropriate LEA(s) to ensure the child can remain in the school of origin, or if remaining in that school is not in the child's best interest, an assurance that the child will be enrolled immediately in a new school.



Enrollment





Immediate Enrollment

- Barriers to enrollment must be eliminated.
- LEAs must ensure that a child in foster care is immediately enrolled in his or her new school even if the student does not have required documentation.
- The enrolling school must immediately contact the child's school of origin to obtain all relevant records.
- The school of origin must immediately transfer the records.





Public Chapter 477

- Public Chapter 477 limits the ability of DCS to provide immunizations.
- “...enrollment must not be denied or delayed because documents normally required for enrollment have not been provided” [ESEA § 1111(g)(1)(E)].





Questions?





Thank You!

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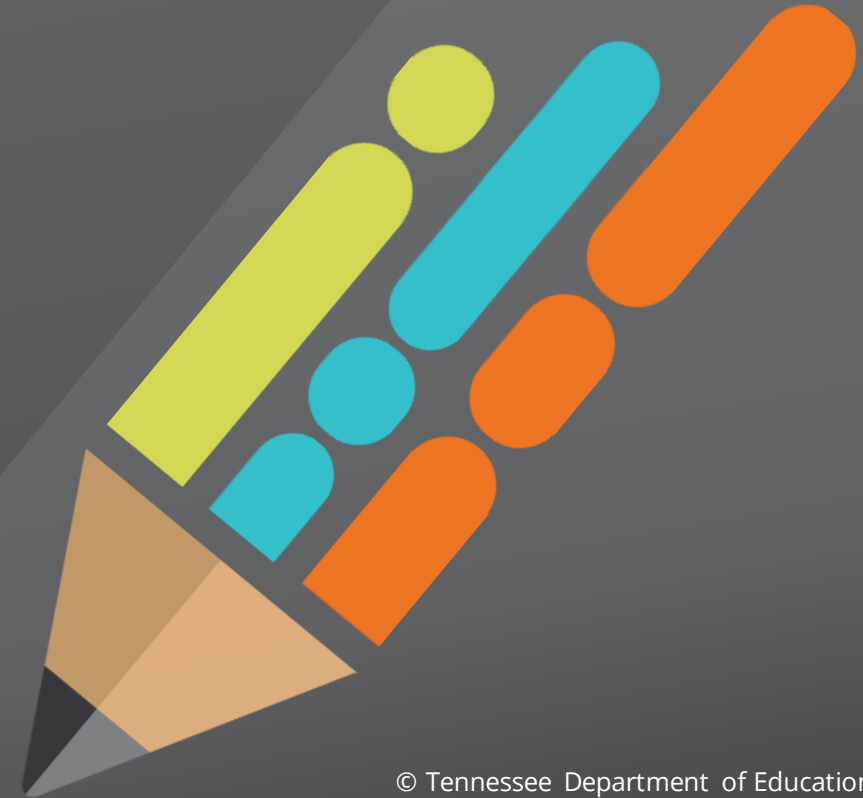


Tuesday-Thursday

Please Share Your Feedback:

You may access the PD by navigating here:

https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/2023fpi_pd_survey



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