



Caregivers Educational Responsibilities and Consents for School Activities

Educational Responsibilities of Caregivers

In accordance with **DCFS Educational Procedures 314.30** and **Foster Parent Law (20 ILCS 505/7.2)**, foster parents and other caregivers have a responsibility to advocate on behalf of children and youth in their care.

Foster parents and other caregivers are partners with caseworkers in making educational decisions for youth placed in their care; therefore, they should communicate regularly with caseworkers concerning educational concerns and achievements. Foster parents can expect caseworkers to assist them in carrying out their educational responsibilities. Educational progress should be discussed at every required monthly caseworker meeting, and a plan to resolve educational issues should be developed as needed. **(For additional assistance in resolving educational problems, contact the regional education advisor).**

With regard to educational services, responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Enrolling the child in school when placement in their home requires the youth to attend a new school;
- assisting with homework as needed;
- attending parent/teacher conferences;
- picking up report cards;
- encouraging participation in extra-curricular activities;
- locating and enrolling the child in an early childhood education program, when age-appropriate;
- collaborating with the caseworker during any transitions between schools;
- attending Truancy Adjudication Hearings as scheduled, in conjunction with the assigned caseworker;
- reasonable efforts to ensure that the children attend school the entire time school is in session; and
- maintaining confidentiality of the child's records in accordance with DCFS Procedures 431 and generally sharing only information that relates directly to the child's educational needs.

Special Education Responsibilities of Foster Parents and Educational Surrogate Parents

Foster Parents and Educational Surrogate Parents have the right and responsibility to advocate for youth in care who are eligible for special education. Federal and state law require foster parents to represent children under the age of 18 years for the identification, evaluation and provision of special education services. Unless the Court has appointed someone else as the Educational Surrogate, ISBE appointed Educational Surrogate Parents represent youth in care in residential facilities.



The major responsibilities of a foster parent or Educational Surrogate Parent in supporting students in special education include:

- Understanding the child and his/her educational/developmental needs, including the child's strengths, interests and abilities;
- Informing caseworkers of educational/developmental needs, interventions, disciplinary incidents, progress reports, etc. in a timely manner;
- Requesting evaluations and signing consents for evaluations, the initial educational placement and educational reevaluation;
- Attending/participating in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) for early intervention;
- Negotiating for appropriate special education or early intervention services on behalf of the child, including reasonable accommodations, if necessary to benefit the child's education or developmental services;
- Monitoring disciplinary actions;
- Requesting complaint investigations, mediation, and/or impartial due process hearings;
- Participating in due process hearings related to the child's special education or Early Intervention needs; and
- Informing caseworkers when legal advice, related to the child's special education or Early Intervention needs is necessary.

Consents for School Related Activities

Caregivers are authorized and encouraged to sign consents for general school related activities that include:

- Field trips within Illinois;
- Routine social events (picnics, school parties, etc.);
- School enrollment;
- Attendance at sporting and cultural events;
- Extra-curricular activities;
- Athletic Participation (using reasonable parenting standards which considers the child's age and whether the activity is developmentally appropriate for that child); and
- Cultural events.

Special education related consents include:

- Case study evaluations, reevaluations and services;
- IEPs or IFSP;
- Release of educational records, and
- educational placements and due process hearing and mediation.



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Center for Child Welfare and Education

Educational Access Project for DCFS

DCFS Guardian Consent

DCFS Guardian consent is required for the following activities:

- Media coverage/events;
- Slide show productions;
- Photographs;
- Voice reproductions;
- Research projects;
- Field Trips outside of Illinois;
- Liability releases;
- Medical examinations or care; and
- Physical restraints (for more information, refer to Part 384, Behavior Treatment in Residential Child Care Facilities).