

# Foster Child Immediate Enrollment Form

For children in the nonsecure custody of a NC County Child Welfare Agency

## Instructions

### Purpose

When a county child welfare agency places a child in foster care or in a new foster home, the child should continue to attend his or her current school and the child welfare social worker or placement provider should notify the school with the Foster Child Notification of Placement (Change) Form (DSS-5133). Policy requires a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting be held prior to assuming non-secure custody or a Permanency Planning Action Team (PPAT) meeting be held prior to making a foster care placement change. The Best Interest Determination (BID) Meeting regarding the child's school placement shall be a part of the CFT/PPAT meeting, if possible. If the determination in that meeting is that it is in the best interest of the child to attend a new school, then the Foster Child Immediate Enrollment Form is used and delivered to the new school by the child welfare social worker or placement provider.

RARE exceptions may exist when a change in the school placement is necessary for emergency foster care placements or placement changes and there is inadequate time to schedule a CFT/PPAT/BID. A change in school placement even when an emergency foster care placement (change) occurs, should only be considered before the BID meeting when it is detrimental to the child's best interests to remain in his or her school of origin and must be approved by the CWA director (or designee). The child should continue to attend the current school (referred to as the school of origin) until a BID can be scheduled and the Foster Child Notification of Placement (Change) Form is delivered to the current school and the BID meeting is scheduled. Only in an emergency situation, approved by the county director (or designee) should the change schools and the Foster Child Immediate Enrollment Form would be used in this situation.

Immediate enrollment means that a child in foster care should be enrolled in a new school as soon as possible in order to prevent educational discontinuity, in most cases by the next school day. In addition, enrollment must not be denied or delayed because documents normally required for enrollment have not been provided.

The Foster Care Immediate Enrollment Form will also be used at the time of enrollment for a child that was not enrolled in public school prior to entering foster care or a foster care placement change (i.e., a pre-school aged child). An Educational Services (ES) meeting is not required for this child but may be considered if the child has any special needs.

### Use of the Foster Care Immediate Enrollment Form

When a child requires enrollment in a new school, the county child welfare social worker or the foster care placement provider shall deliver the Foster Care Enrollment Form to the new school within 1 school day of the foster care placement or foster care placement change.

The receiving school must immediately contact the child's school of origin to obtain the relevant records and documentation, and the school of origin should immediately transfer those records. In addition to ensuring immediate enrollment, local educational agencies and county child welfare agencies should ensure that children in foster care are regularly attending and fully participating in school and that all of their educational needs are met.

### Educational Services Meeting

The Immediate Enrollment Form also serves to communicate the need for an Educational Services meeting. Even when there was a Best Interest Determination (BID) meeting, an Educational Services (ES) Meeting should be scheduled when a child is enrolled in a new school. The purpose of the ES meeting is to ensure the child has all required educational services and to discuss the child's school transition. Scheduling of an ES meeting after enrollment in a new school is the responsibility of the county child welfare agency. The county child welfare agency worker should collaborate with the LEA to schedule the ED Meeting within 30 days of the child's enrollment in a new school.

To ensure that the best decision is made about a child's school selection, the following staff or representatives with the following information should attend or be represented:

- Teachers, IEP team members, school social workers or counselors (Child's academic performance and school behavioral history), School Transportation representative,
- Placement provider (current and previous with knowledge of provider's resources and capabilities),
- Child, birth parent and GAL (or representation of their desires and/or recommendations), and
- County child welfare placement worker.

The BID form (DSS-5137) used to document a BID meeting is also used to document an ES meeting.