

Foster Child Notification of Placement (Change) Form

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

Instructions

Purpose of Foster Child Notification of Placement (Change) Form

The purpose of the Foster Child Notification of Placement (Change) Form is for the county child welfare agency to provide information to notify the school principal and/or school superintendent that a child has entered the nonsecure custody of a county child welfare agency or that a change in a foster child's foster provider has occurred. Pages 1 and 2 are used for this purpose.

Page 3 is available for county child welfare agencies to provide notification within the agency regarding a change in status of a child in the nonsecure custody of the county child welfare agency.

Use of Foster Child Notification of Placement (Change) Form

Whenever a county child welfare agency files for custody of a child or places a child in a new foster home, the child should continue to attend his or her current school. Child welfare policy requires a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting be held prior to assuming non-secure custody or a Permanency Planning Action Team 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 or PPAT meeting, whenever possible. If the CFT/BID meeting does not occur prior to the child's new placement, a BID meeting must be scheduled within three days after the child's placement. The only exception to holding a BID meeting within three days is when the child's foster care placement is a) within the existing transportation system for the current school he or she attends and b) there is no intent to change the child's school assignment. In those cases, the BID Meeting must be held within 30 days of the child's placement.

Within a day of a foster child's placement the Foster Child Notification of Placement (Change) Form (pages 1 and 2) must be provided to the child's school. Either the county child welfare agency worker or the child's placement provider can deliver the form, along with a copy of the court order. The time and place for the BID is provided on this form (if not held prior to the child's placement decision).

If it is determined in the CFT/BID meeting that it is in the best interest of the child to attend a new school, the Foster Child Immediate Enrollment Form (DSS-5135) shall be provided to the new school selected. When a change of school is required, ESSA requires that a child in foster care 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.

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.

For a child that was not enrolled in public school prior to entering foster care or a foster care placement change, the Foster Care Immediate Enrollment Form (DSS-5135) will be used at the time of enrollment. Check the box for New Enrollment on Page 1.

Page 3 of the Foster Child Notification of Placement (Change) Form is for internal agency use only. Often an agency must notify other services within the agency of the change in a child's status. Page 1 and 3 are designed to be used together for this purpose.

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Best Interests Determination (BID) meeting & Documentation

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act ([P.L. 110-351](#)) Section 204 requires:

The child's case plan must include (1) assurances that the child's placement takes into account the appropriateness of the current education setting and the proximity to the school in which the child was enrolled at the time of the placement; (2) an assurance that the state agency has coordinated with appropriate local educational agencies to ensure that the child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement; and (3) if remaining in the school is not in the child's best interests, assurances by the state agency and the local educational agencies to provide immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school, with all of the educational records of the child provided to the school.

Fostering Connections and ESSA require that every child remain in his or her school of origin unless a determination is made that it is not in his or her best interest. The decision as to what is in the child's best interests shall take place at a Best Interest Determination Meeting ("BID meeting"). Scheduling of the BID meeting is the responsibility of the county child welfare social worker. The social worker should collaborate with the local education agency to schedule a BID Meeting prior the child(ren) entering nonsecure custody or a placement change as a part of a CFT meeting. The county child welfare agency shall also discuss with the child the purpose of the meeting, prepare the child for the meeting (unless it is determined that the child should not attend the meeting), and assist the child in the identification of a supportive adult who the child would like to attend the meeting.

When the BID does not occur prior to foster care placement or a placement change, it must occur within three school days of the local educational agency's receipt of the Notification of Placement Form. For counties that hold a Child Planning Conference or Day One Conference, the BID meeting could be held at the same time whenever possible.

In making the determination as to whether it is in the child's best interest to remain in his or her school of origin, the county child welfare agency and local education agency must consider the appropriateness of the current educational setting and proximity of placement. In addition, the county child welfare agency and local education agency should consider all factors relating to a child's best interest, including:

- Preferences of the child;
- Preferences of the child's parent(s) or education decision maker(s);
- The child's attachment to the school, including meaningful relationships with staff and peers;
- Placement of the child's sibling(s);
- Influence of the school climate on the child, including safety;
- The availability and quality of the services in the school to meet the child's educational and socioemotional needs;
- History of school transfers and how they have impacted the child;
- How the length of the commute would impact the child, based on the child's developmental stage;
- Whether the child is a student with a disability under the IDEA who is receiving special education and related services or a student with a disability under Section 504 who is receiving special education or related aids and services and, if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin; and
- Whether the child is an EL and is receiving language services, and, if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin, consistent with Title VI and the EEOA.

Transportation costs should NOT be considered when determining a child's best interest.

The following parties should be invited to attend the BID meeting:

- The Point of Contact for the county child welfare agency, and/or the social worker with the most information about child;
- The Point of Contact for the local education agency, and/or the representative from the school of origin who has the most knowledge about the child and who is best able to provide feedback on significant relationships the child may have formed with staff and peers and how changing schools would impact the child's

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academic, social, and emotional well-being. This could be a teacher, counselor, coach, another meaningful person in the child's life, or any or all of the above;

- If the child has an IEP or a Section 504 Plan, the relevant school staff members who could speak to the special needs of the child should also be invited to participate;
- If the child is an English Learner, a student identified as having limited English proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, or writing English, other relevant school staff may need to participate;
- The child, depending on age;
- Foster parents, when appropriate;
- Biological parents, guardians, or custodians when appropriate;
- Relatives of the child with perspective on which school the child should attend while in foster care; and
- The child's court appointed Guardian ad Litem, or a representative from the appropriate GAL program.

The outcome of the BID meeting should be:

- Selection of the school based on the child's best interests,
- Identification of the transportation method (if there is adequate information), and
- Clear tasks for follow up, as needed, including transportation funding, or new enrollment.

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. Exceptions may exist when a change in the school placement is necessary for emergency foster care placements or placement changes. A change in school placement should only occur before the BID meeting when it is detrimental to the child's best interests to remain in his or her school of origin and a school placement change is necessary before a BID meeting can be held and requires approval by the county child welfare agency director (or designee).

Educational Services Meeting & Documentation

When the outcome of the BID meeting is that a school change is necessary, even when there was a Best Interest Determination (BID) meeting, an Educational Services (ES) Meeting should be scheduled after enrollment in the 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 is the responsibility of the county child welfare agency. The county child welfare worker should collaborate with the LEA to schedule the ED Meeting within 30 days of the child's enrollment in a new school.

The BID Form (DSS-5137) shall be used to document the ES meeting. Check on the top of the form the box for Educational Services meeting. For an ES meeting the following questions in Section II do not need to be completed: 4, 12, 13, 14, and 15. Section III is also not completed for an ES meeting.

Additional Educational Stability Documentation

The Child Education Status Form together with the Best Interest Determination Form meet the requirements of the Fostering Connections and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that documentation be maintained in the child welfare case file for every child in the nonsecure custody of a county child welfare agency regarding educational stability. The Child Education Status form (DSS-5425) or Best Interest Determination form is to be completed for every case at a CFT, PPAT, BID, ES meeting or other review of a child's placement case. The Child Education Status Form or Best Interest Determination form shall be updated at a minimum of every 6 months and must be completed within 7 days of a CFT, PPAT, BID, or ES meeting. The form must be maintained in the child's county child welfare case file and provided to the child's placement provider.

Confidentiality

Agencies must protect individually identifiable information from unauthorized use or disclosure and to further protect such information from tampering, loss, alteration, or damage. The HIPAA Privacy Rule requires safeguards be in place to avoid unauthorized use or disclosure of individually identifiable health information. For this reason, page 3 must only be utilized within the agency.