

# Back to School

## Information for DCYF Social Workers

**Due to COVID-19, many districts are offering a choice between in-person attendance, remote learning, or a combination of the two. DCYF is allowing caregivers to choose the school option that best fits their family needs and centers the student's best interest.**

**Educational Stability:** Students in foster care have a right to remain in their [school of origin](#), even when placed outside the district. If school of origin is NOT in best interest, the student is entitled to [immediate enrollment](#). **Priority is keeping students connected to the school they've been attending.**

**A [Best Interest Determination](#) must be completed prior to changing school placement.**

**School Notification Form:** the [School Notification Form](#) must be provided to the district Foster Care Liaison when a child changes placement. [Foster Care Liaison contact information is found here.](#)

**Transportation:** work with the district [Foster Care Liaison](#) to set this up when the child is placed out-of-district. Transportation billing instructions found [here](#).

### Additional Info:

- **Immunizations:** Starting August 1, 2020, school immunization rules are changing. Specifically, immunization records turned in to schools are required to be medically verified; Tdap vaccine will be required for 7th grade entry instead of 6th grade; and the definition of conditional status has been clarified. For more information, see [OSPI's Immunization Bulletin](#).
- **The Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO):** [OEO](#) supports students and families to address concerns (including IEPs), find solutions and resolve conflict with K-12 public schools. Call toll free 1-866-297-2597 or email at [oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov](mailto:oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov).
- **Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT):** [P-EBT](#) is a new and temporary food benefit to help families buy groceries because schools were closed. Each child who was enrolled in K-12 school, and qualified for free or reduced-price meals before the school closures in March, is eligible for up to \$399 in benefits. (Students in foster care are categorically eligible for free school meals.)

*Example: Family has 3 foster children.  $3 \times 399 = \$1,197$  total benefits*

If a caregiver was denied benefits, there may have been an error. Encourage caregivers to reapply if their school-age foster children were in their home during school closures and were denied benefits.

**P-EBT Application must be completed by August 31<sup>st</sup>** or the beginning of the new school year (whichever is later). Two ways to apply:

1. **Online:** [www.WashingtonConnection.org](http://www.WashingtonConnection.org) (on the application, choose 'Pandemic EBT—Emergency School Meals Program' box in the Food Assistance section) OR
2. **Call:** 877-501-2233 (DSHS Customer Service Contact Center—Language translation available)



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