



Family Enrichment Center

## Foster Children and Education FACT Sheet

A large proportion of children in foster care are in educational crisis. Although data are limited, especially state specific data, research makes it clear that serious issues must be addressed to ensure the educational success of foster children. Information for this FACT SHEET was taken from a FACT SHEET provided by Casey Family Programs. The complete FACT SHEET along with references can be obtained on the Casey web site at [www.caseyfamilyservices.org](http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org).

### Stability

- A study of 479 alumni of foster care found that 65% experienced seven or more school changes from elementary through high school.
- In an ongoing three-state study of youth aging out of foster care over a third reported having had 5 or more school changes.
- In a Casey National Alumni Study, youth who had one fewer placement change per year were almost twice as likely to graduate from high school before leaving care.
- In a study of students in Chicago Public Schools it was found that students that changed schools 4 or more times had lost approximately one year of educational growth by sixth grade.
- In a New York study 42% of the children in foster care did not begin school immediately upon entering foster care because of lost or misplaced records.

### Academic Outcomes

- A Washington State study found that children and youth in foster care attending public schools scored 16 to 20 percentile points below youth who were not in foster care in statewide standardized tests.
- Chapin Hall's research on Chicago Public School children indicates that foster children lag at least half a school year behind demographically similar students in the same school.
- Numerous studies indicate that anywhere between one-quarter and nearly half (23%-47%) of children and youth in foster care in the United States receive special education services. The national average of all school-aged children and youth served in special education each year is 12%.
- 60% of caseworkers/social workers surveyed indicated they were not aware of existing laws when referring children to special education.
- In a Midwest study, approximately 58% of youth in foster care had a high school degree at age 19, compared to 87% of their same age peers in a comparable national sample. Nearly one-quarter did not have a diploma by age 21, compared to only 11% of the national sample.
- A national study of young adults who had been discharged from foster care found that only 54% had completed high school.
- A study on long-term outcomes for children in foster care on a national level found that youth in foster care are more than twice as likely (37% vs. 16%) to have dropped out of high school than non-foster youth.

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