



# Checklist for the Start of the School Year

Content excerpts from San Francisco CASA, [www.sfcasa.org](http://www.sfcasa.org)

As the start of the school year approaches, there are several ways you can do your best to help your foster youth start the year smoothly.

## BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

**Supplies:** Check with your youth and their caregivers that they have the school supplies they need. If the school provides a list, get a copy of it and make sure the youth has a copy as well.

**Identify Self to School:** Contact the Foster Youth Liaison at the school and provide them with a copy of your CASA court order and Educational Rights Holder order, if applicable. Provide the school with your contact information.

**Enrollment:** Contact school administration to make sure the youth is fully enrolled for the year and that both the youth and the academic staff have the information they need to start off the year properly.

**Teachers and staff:** Reach out to teachers and any relevant counselors or staff to introduce yourself. These are relationships you can (and should) maintain all year.

**Transportation:** Check and confirm that the youth has a way to get to school and that they know how to use it.

**Extracurricular activities:** Support your youth in their education beyond the classroom. Look into opportunities provided by the school and offered nearby that develop their strengths and interests. See below for a handful of Bay Area resources to get you started.



**Scheduling:** Your youth's schedule will change as they start school again. Connect with them and their caregiver about scheduling check-ins and visits that fit with their new routine.

## ONCE SCHOOL STARTS

**School visit:** See if your youth will show you around their school. This is a great way to start conversations, meet teachers in person, and gain a better understanding of what their academic experience will look like throughout the coming year.

**Academic tracking:** Meet with the student's counselor early in the year to make sure your youth is on track towards graduation. Keep an eye on grades and credits throughout the year, and follow up with the counselor if questions arise. If your young person's school uses an online system for monitoring grades and assignments, work with the school to receive an account to monitor your youth's education.

### CASA Advocacy:

- Include information about your youth's educational situation in court reports.
- Determine who holds educational rights for your youth and inform the court when there is a need for an *educational representative* (see Section 3: Holding Educational Rights). This could be a youth's biological family member, foster parent, CASA, or other designated individual.
- Monitor your youth's school attendance and records.
- Ask your student how he or she likes school and about the quality of his or her education. Document any concerns and discuss them with the teacher, social worker, or academic service provider.
- If your youth changes foster homes, advocate that they remain in the same school, if in their best interest. In case of a school change, facilitate enrollment and transfer of records.
- Advocate to teachers for the opportunity to make up work missed for court appearances, medical appointments, or other conflicts.

- Learn about age-appropriate developmental milestones and help identify potential areas of delay.
- If concerns are identified, request an evaluation for special education services.
- If your youth is eligible for special education services, attend IEP meetings and monitor progress towards IEP goals.
- Recommend tutoring or other academic help for youth that need extra support and are not eligible for special education.
- Identify your youth's strengths and recommend academic or extracurricular activities that support them.
- Advocate for the maintenance of existing activities.
- Stay up-to-date on services and resources available for youth entering into and aging out of the foster or school system.