

Transitioning to a New School

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Changing schools due to a placement update, educational needs, or expulsion is a difficult transition for any foster youth. If your foster youth is moving to a new foster home, they may also need to move to a new school. When possible, your youth's support team will try to keep them in the same school, but sometimes it is in their best interest to switch. You can play a vital role in helping their transition be smooth and positive.

Your youth is entitled to certain rights that will make the transition process much easier for everyone involved. The right to immediate enrollment and support of existing IEPs are outlined in a piece of legislation called AB 490. Learn more about AB 490 by clicking the links below:

- [AB490 FAQ and Answers Sheet](#)
- [AB 490 Fact Sheet](#)

If your youth has an IEP or special education needs, they are entitled to have their special needs met from the moment they transition to the new school.

No matter how involved you are with the process, please familiarize yourself with these tips and be sure to communicate regularly with your youth's caretakers and social worker throughout the transition process.

- Reach out to the school administration several weeks in advance of the move to ensure that they have the **documents they need** from the previous school. If they do not, follow up with each until the transfer has happened.
- Reach out to any teachers your youth may have to **introduce yourself** and provide any relevant educational information.
- **Arrange a visit** for your youth before their first day if possible so that they can see their classroom and meet their teachers and any other support staff. This way, when they start school, they know where they are going and will see a familiar face.



- Make sure your youth is clear about what their **new routine** will look like. Work with their caregivers to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- Record **important contact info**, including names, phone numbers, and email addresses of teachers, the principal, and school nurse.
- Become familiar with the school calendar and find out **how they communicate** important information (e.g. via phone, over email, newsletters, slips in students' backpacks). Sign up for any relevant email lists.
- Look into school **extracurricular activities**, including sports teams, academic clubs, and arts programs. Talk to your youth about what they are interested in trying.
- Talk to your youth about **staying in touch with their friends** from their other school. Ask them who they want to keep in touch with and how they plan to do so. Work with their caregivers and social worker to help support these connections.
- It is normal to be concerned about the transition, but let your youth know that you have confidence in them. Listen to and address your youth's concerns, but **stay optimistic** about the change and your youth's ability to adjust.

Resources:

- [Tips for Transitioning to a New School](#): A resource for parents about new school emotions and anxiety, but equally important for CASAs and caregivers.
- [Autism and Special Needs: 7 Tips for Transitioning to a New School](#): Resources on the experience of transitioning to a new school for a youth with autism or other special needs.
- [AB490 FAQ and Answers Sheet](#)
- [AB 490 Fact Sheet](#)