

Education: The Education Continuum

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Historical Perspective

- # Dramatic population change
 - # 1997 – over 50,000 children in care
 - # Today – approximately 15,500
 - # Avg length of care – 4.5 years
 - # Lifetime Approach – ensure each child receives quality and complete plan for entire stay in state care and beyond
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Importance of Education/Life Long Planning

Chapin Hall findings:

- Old for Grade
 - School Mobility Issues
 - Over-Representation of youth in care in Special Education
 - Learning Disabilities vs. Academic Remediation
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Early Childhood Education

- # All children aged birth to 5 shall be enrolled in an early childhood education program
 - Public programs must be accessed first based on accessibility/eligibility:
 - Head Start
 - Pre-Kindergarten At-Risk
 - Early Childhood Special Education
- # School Readiness Team

Expanded Vocational and Career Planning

- # To ensure the DCFS youth are prepared for post-secondary school, employment or continuing education
 - # Caseworkers are responsible for completing the Annual High School Academic Plan (CFS 407 HS)
 - # Plan is to support academic achievement and encourage post-secondary planning
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Annual High School Academic Plan

- # The Department wants to ensure youth have developed an education/vocation plan geared towards self-sufficiency preparation
 - # The plan will then be used to encourage/support academic achievement and post-secondary planning.
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Initiatives to Improve Services

- # Foster care placement change from rotation basis to assignment based on location of child's home school district.

 - # Education protocol applied to monitoring of TLP/ILO contracts:
 - Benchmarks: attendance; enrollment; completion of annual academic plan
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NIU Center for Child Welfare and Education

- # 5,000 interventions per year: discipline issues, special education, suspensions, expulsions
 - # Support services for college students
 - # Project trains foster parents, staff, adoptive parents, community groups, and court personnel in education law, DCFS education policies
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Educational Access Project

- Educational advocacy for current & former wards
 - Each DCFS region has an educational advisor
 - Most POS agencies have an educational liaison
 - Child specific technical assistance for IEP/MDC, education programs and testing
 - School intervention, as necessary
 - Training on DCFS education policy and procedures.
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Education Partnerships

- # Research Based: Chapin Hall Study (www.chapinhall.uchicago.edu)
 - # Chicago Public Schools, Illinois State Board of Education, Orphanage Act
 - # Northern Illinois University: Education Advisors, and Private Agencies' Education Liaisons
 - # Alternative School Network, E-Learning
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