



The Mockingbird Society

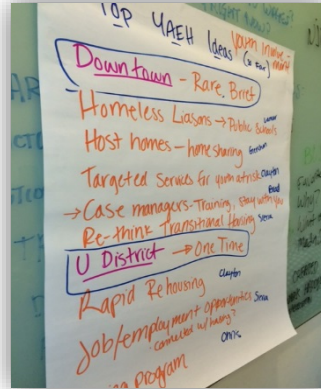
Improving foster care | Ending youth homelessness

Youth Leadership Summit Review & Final 2017 Policy Agenda

Sabian Hart, Olympia Chapter Leader – Mockingbird Youth Network
Liz Trautman, Public Policy & Advocacy Director

Annual Mockingbird Youth Advocacy Cycle

1. Identifying problems



2. Defining solutions



3. Refining recommendations



4. Advocating for change



Leadership Summit August 2, 2016



2017 Lead Policy Agenda

Legislative Priorities

Improve Normalcy and Access to Independence	Implement a pilot program to help foster youth with paperwork and fees necessary to obtain a driver's permit, license, and insurance
Recruit and Retain Foster Parents	Renew the budget proviso for Mockingbird Family Model constellations
End Youth Detention for Status Offenses	Build relationships and strengthen coalitions to eliminate use of the Valid Court Order Exception in Washington state, likely to be a multi-year effort

Non-Legislative Priorities

Prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections and Unwanted Pregnancies	Work with CA to ensure foster youth receive comprehensive, medically accurate information about sexual health and relationships
---	---

2017 Support Policy Agenda

Legislative Priorities

Provide Legal Representation	Grant legal counsel to all children and youth in foster care before their 72-hour shelter care hearings
Improve Educational Outcomes	Support education package bill that requires consolidation of unresolved or incomplete coursework due to foster care placement transfers and funding for Treehouse's Graduation Success Program
Prevent and End Homelessness in Schools	Support Homeless Student Stability Program budget request
Support At-Risk Youth and Families	Increase funding to improve and expand the Family Reconciliation Services program

2017 Support Policy Agenda

Legislative Priorities – Community Led Proposals for Reform

Enhance Data Collection to Improve Services for Youth	Allow youth under 18 to consent to providing their personally identifying information for the Homeless Management Information System
Re-envision a System of Care for Children and Youth	Support creation of a new Department of Children, Youth and Families, emphasizing services for adolescents and prioritizing prevention for all young people ages 0-21
Improve Statewide Homeless Youth Services	Advocate for implementation of the OHY Strategic Plan near-term action agenda



The Mockingbird Society

Improving foster care | Ending youth homelessness

Liz Trautman

Public Policy & Advocacy Director

206-407-2189

liz@mockingbirdsociety.org



The Protocol for Safe & Affirming Care

Nicholas Oakley, JD
eQuality Project Manager

Background



What does it mean to be LGBTQ+?

Biological Sex

Male

Female

Gender

Man/Boy

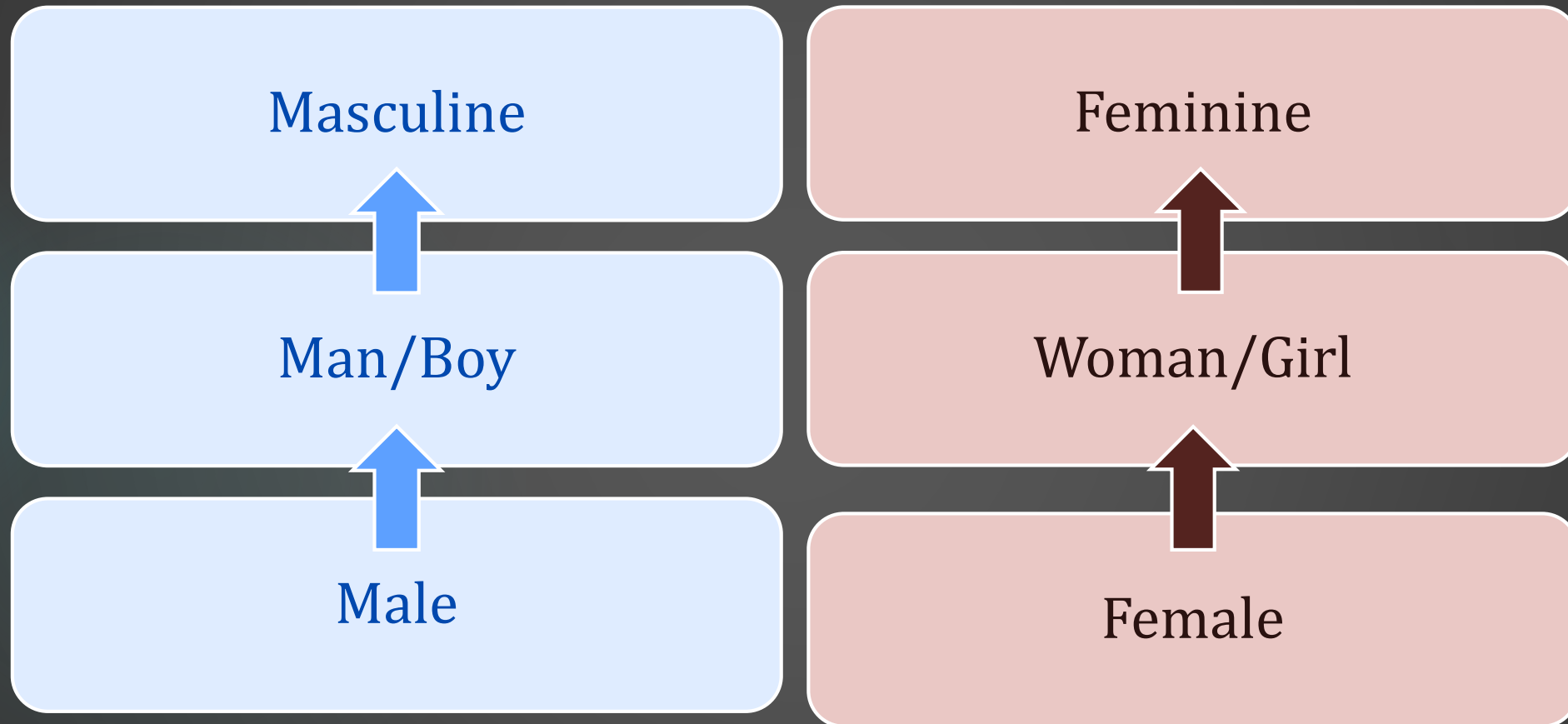
Woman/Girl

Male

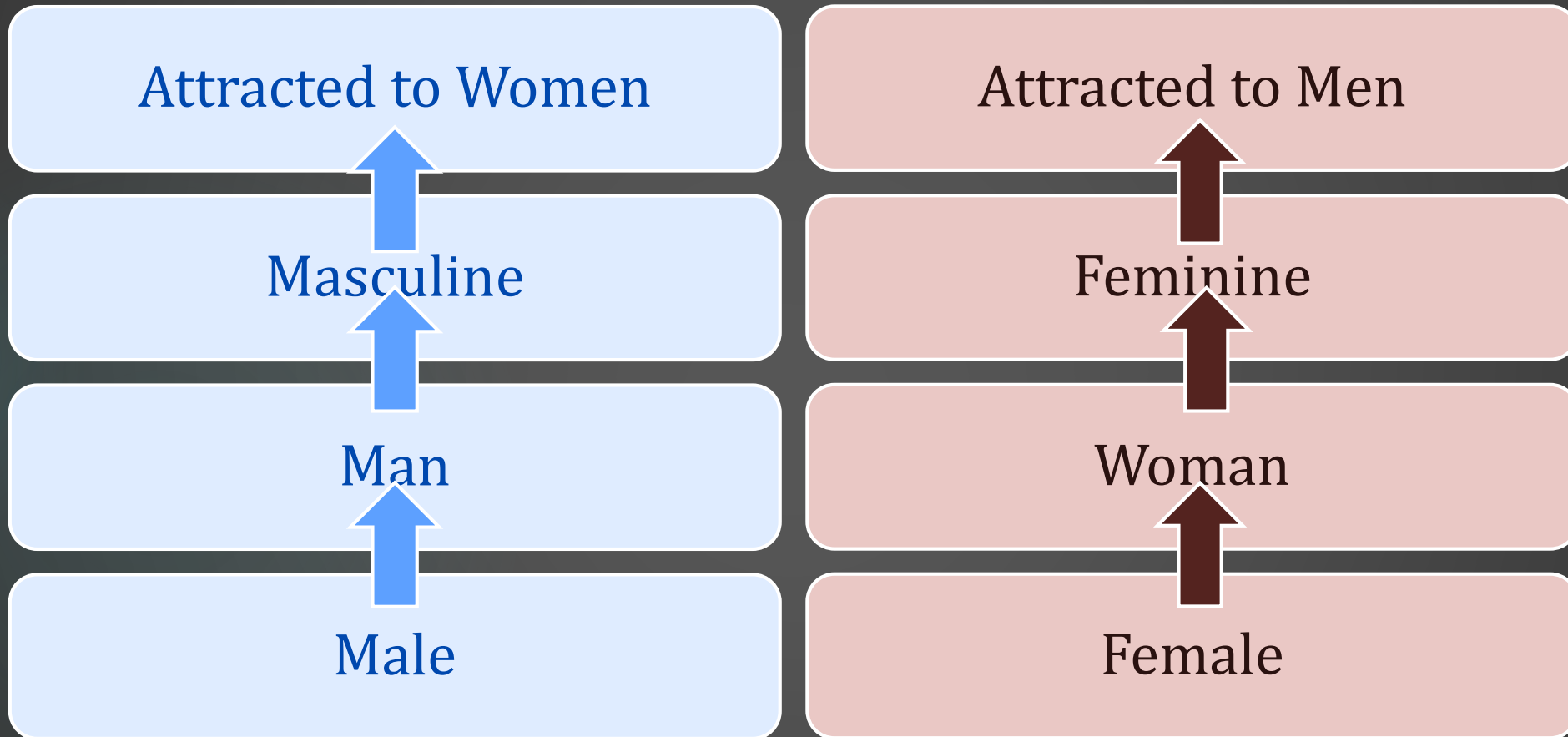
Female



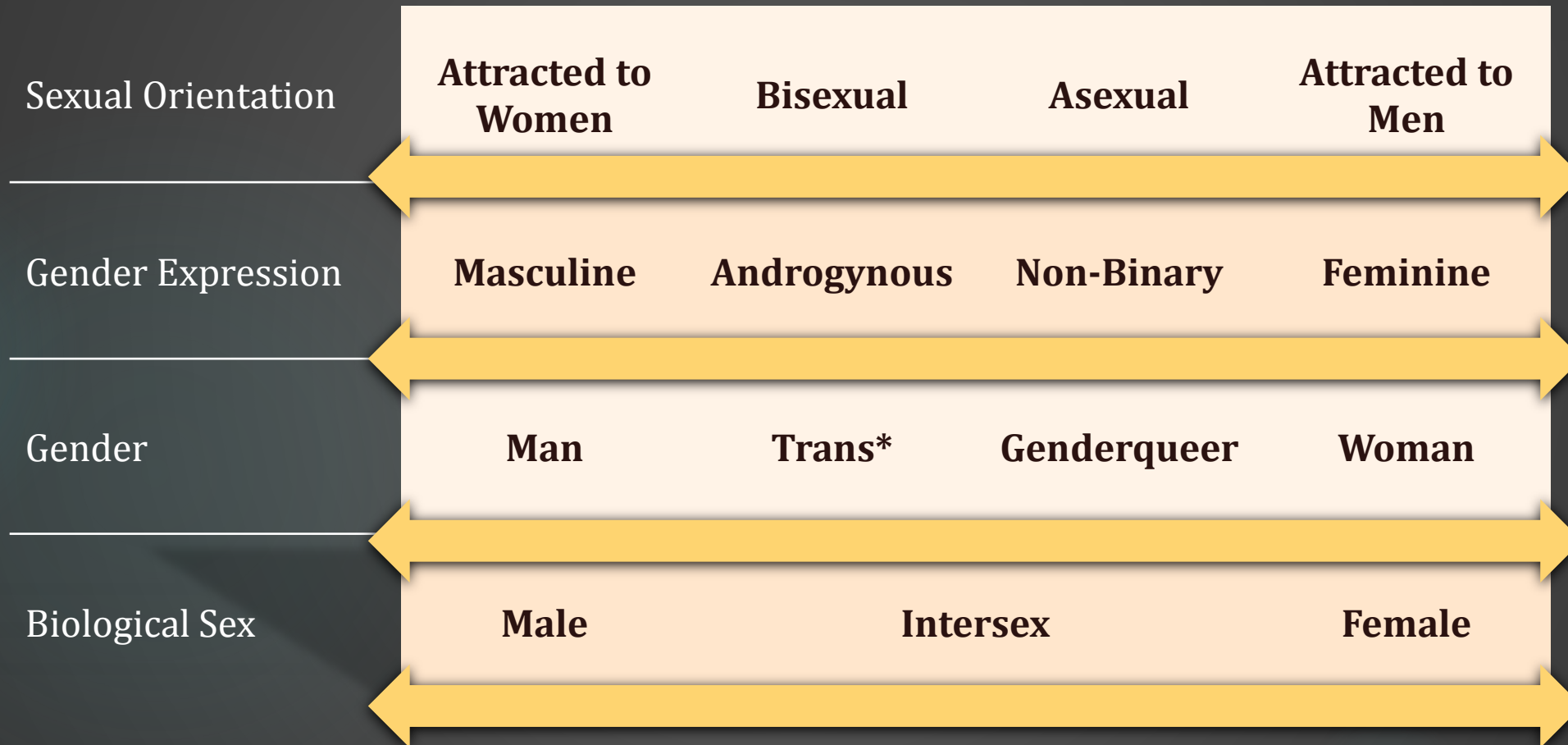
Gender Expression



Sexual Orientation



The SOGIE Spectrum

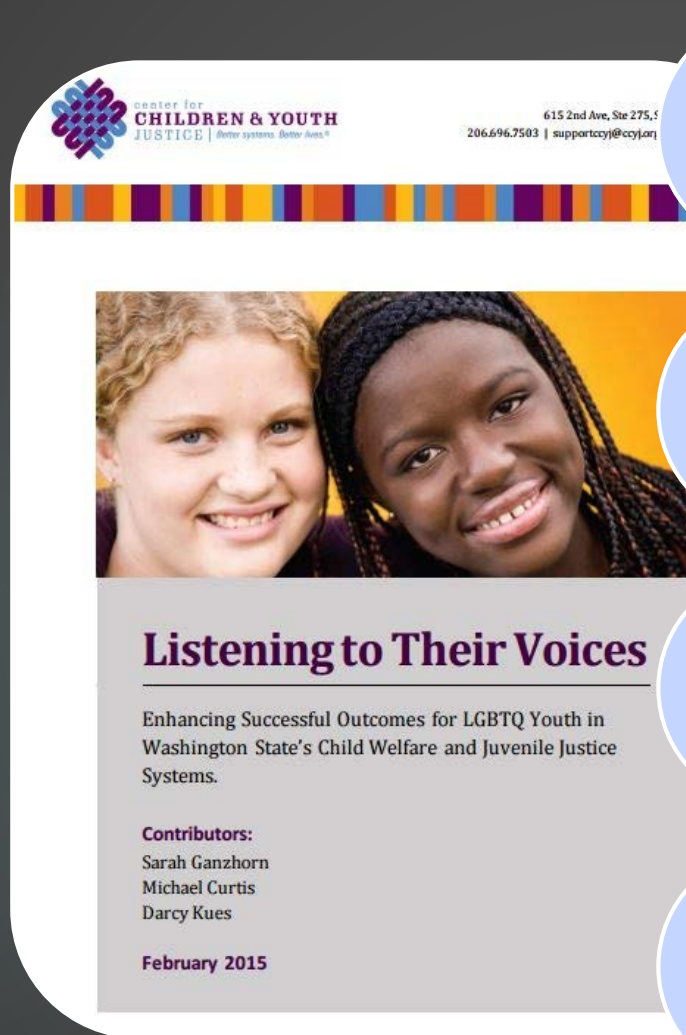


Adapted from <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/spectrum>

What does eQuality's research tell us?

Methodology

10



LGBTQ System
Alumni Focus
Groups & Surveys

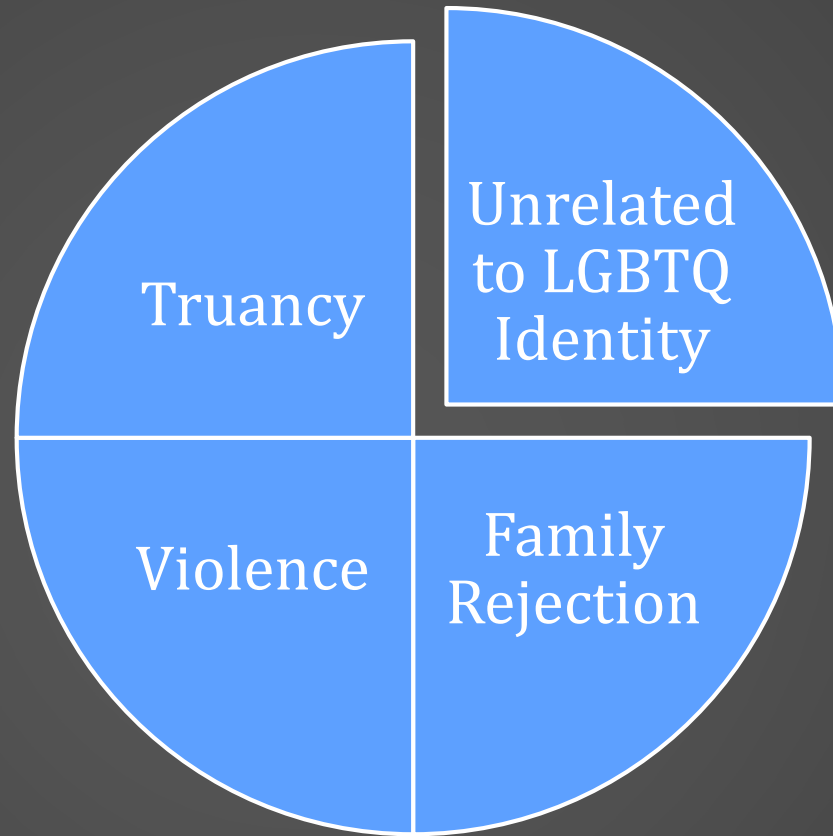
System
Professional
Surveys

Community-Based
Service Provider
Interviews

Law & Policy
Reviews

System Entry

11



System Experiences

12

Explosions



Erosions





Outcomes

“I started living on the streets because my home wasn’t safe. I kept getting kicked out. Foster care wasn’t great for me, so I would be back on the street... I had to survive so I started selling drugs and then I’d get arrested and go to juvie... I was 15 years old. I couldn’t get a job.”

--eQuality focus group participant

How did eQuality develop the Protocol?

4 Steps

1. Review of Model Policies and Practices
2. Survey of Washington Stakeholders
3. Regional Mini-Summits
4. Finalization



Step 1

Literature Review of Model Policies and Practices

28 Models

Notable Sources from Around the Nation:

- ▶ Child Welfare League of America
- ▶ Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative
- ▶ National Center For Lesbian Rights
- ▶ Lambda Legal
- ▶ Williams Institute
- ▶ Family Acceptance Project
- ▶ Equity Project



Map of Sources



Step 2

Stakeholder Survey



Survey Summary

The Questions:

1. Have you implemented this model?
2. Would statewide implementation of this model be beneficial to LGBTQ youth?
3. What are the potential barriers to implementation?

The Answers:

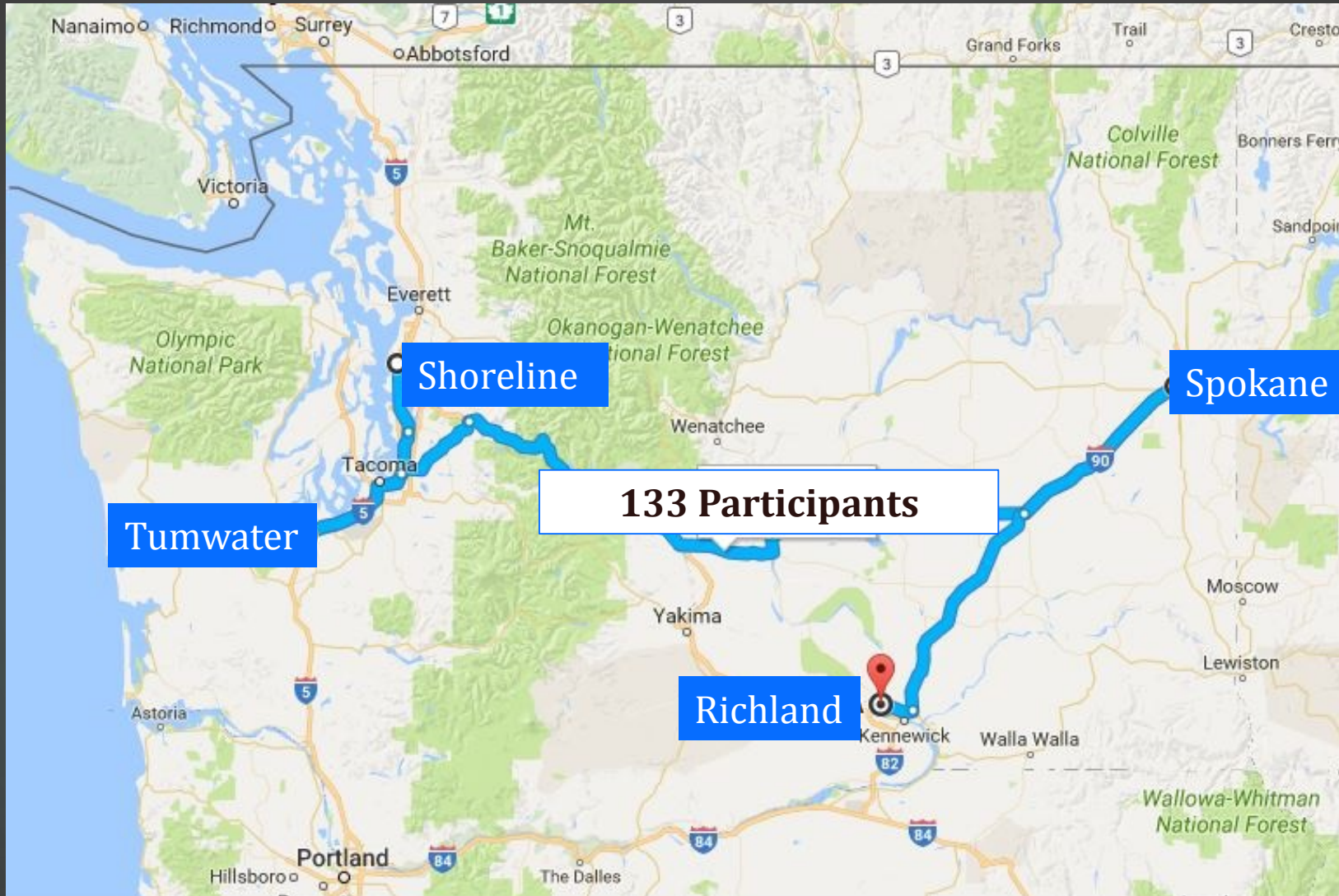
1. The average utilization rate is 36%.
2. Most system professionals believe that these policies and practices will benefit youth.
3. Barriers include high cost, lack of training, and value conflicts.

Understanding the Results

Survey Results Table						
Policy/Practice	Does your agency/court/organization have this policy/practice?				State-wide Implementation would make a positive impact.	What are potential barriers to implementation?
	Yes	No	Unknown	N/A	Mean Strongly Disagree 1 to Strongly Agree 5	Frequently Noted Barriers
1. Training	34%	40%	23%	3%	4.37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High cost • Value Conflicts • Training Issues- Availability and Transfer • Time Limitations

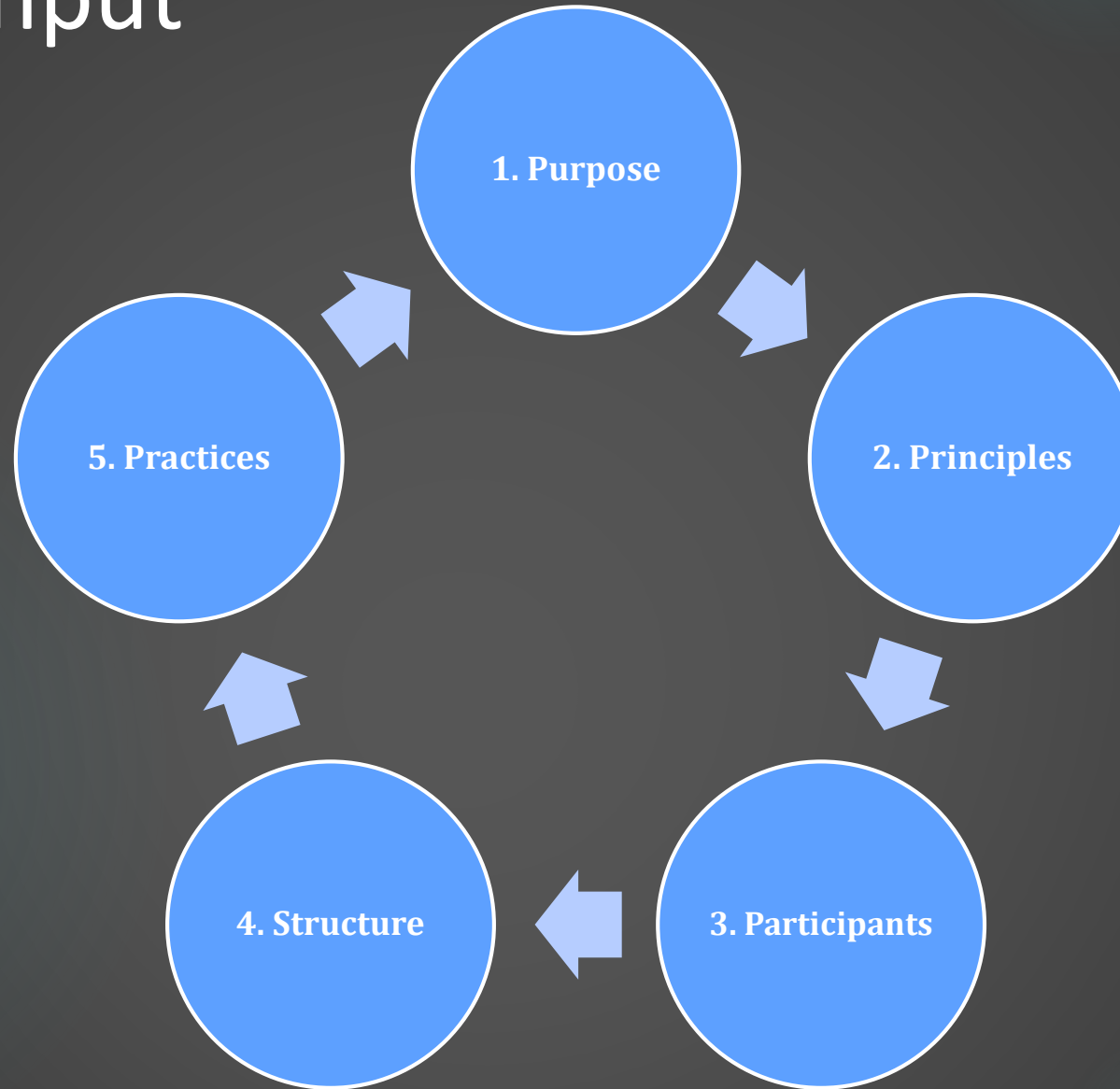
Regional Summits

Regional Mini-Summits



Obtaining Input

23



Step 4

Finalization

Finalization

- ▶ Statewide Summit
- ▶ Youth Meetings
- ▶ Written Feedback

Overview of the Protocol

A Snapshot

27

Rights of youth;

Training for professionals, volunteers, and caretakers;

Safe and affirming spaces for all;

Talking about sexual orientation and gender identity with youth;

Services for LGBTQ+ youth;

Housing for LGBTQ+ youth;

Healthcare for LGBTQ+ youth;

Responding to families of LGBTQ+ youth;

Data collection on LGBTQ+ youth; and

Accountability for professionals, volunteers, and caretakers.

Purpose

Vision

Principles

Foundation

Purpose

To uphold the rights of *all* youth in Washington's child welfare and juvenile justice systems to safety, health, and well-being. Professionals, volunteer, and caretakers will not be able to uphold the rights of all youth unless and until they address the unique needs of LGBTQ+ youth. At the same time, non-LGBTQ youth benefit when we address the unique needs of LGBTQ youth.

Vision

Professionals, contracted providers, caretakers, and volunteers in Washington's child welfare and juvenile justice systems will support each and every youth in the development of the youth's gender identity and sexual orientation and recognize that that support is critical to the youth's safety, health, and well-being.

Principles

1. Youth have a right to self-determination.
2. LGBTQ+ youth exist.
3. LGBTQ+ youth are individuals.
4. Youth are the priority.
5. Meeting the unique needs of LGBTQ+ youth is a matter of health and safety.
6. Understanding LGBTQ+ youth is a core competency for every professional, volunteer, and caretaker.
7. Professionals, volunteers, and caretakers bear the burden.
8. LGBTQ+ youth are entitled to equitable services and resources.
9. Youth are the experts on their own lives.
10. Our approach matters.
11. Making assumptions is harmful.
12. Collaboration is the key to success.

10 Components of Safe & Affirming Care

32



1. Rights of Youth

To ensure basic, fundamental protections for youth.

2. Training for Professionals, Volunteers, & Caretakers

To ensure: All professionals, volunteers, and caregivers have the foundational knowledge necessary to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of youth as it relates to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; and each agency, court, and organization has at least one professional has a high level of knowledge with regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression and can support other professionals, volunteers, and caregivers with these issues when they arise.

3. Safe & Affirming Spaces for All

To increase the comfort and sense of safety among youth and ensure all youth know—through verbal and non-verbal indicators—that they can talk about their sexual orientation and gender identity, gender identity, and gender expression and can support other professionals, volunteers, and caregivers with these issues when they arise.

4. Talking About Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity with Youth

To determine, at an appropriate time and place, how a youth identifies with regard to their sexual orientation and gender identity so as to be able to provide the youth with appropriate services and housing.

5. Services for LGBTQ+ Youth

37

To ensure that system professionals provide services that meet the unique needs of LGBTQ+ youth and ensure contracted or partner providers do the same.

6. Housing for LGBTQ+ Youth

To ensure professionals, volunteers, and caretakers meet the unique housing needs of LGBTQ+ youth. While the principles and policies contained in “Services” applies to housing, there are also principles and policies that are unique to housing.

7. Healthcare for LGBTQ+ Youth

To ensure professionals, volunteers, and caretakers meet the unique healthcare needs of LGBTQ+ youth, especially transgender youth. While the principles and policies contained in “Services” applies to healthcare, there are also principles and policies that are unique to healthcare.

8. Responding to Families

40

To assess families' attitudes and beliefs towards LGBTQ+ people and the impact of any negative attitudes or beliefs, and to provide families with accurate, free, and accessible information and reconciliation services if warranted.

9. Data Collection on LGBTQ+ Youth

To collect information on the number of LGBTQ+ system-involved youth, their demographics (particularly racial and ethnic identities), the circumstances surrounding their entry into the system, involvement in other systems, experiences while in the system, and outcomes after exiting the system, particularly homelessness.

10. Accountability for Professionals, Volunteers, & Caretakers

To ensure professionals, volunteers, and caretakers provide safe and affirming care to LGBTQ+ youth and that they use data to continue to improve their systems for LGBTQ+ and all youth.

Questions & Discussion

Thank you!

44

- ▶ Please contact Nicholas Oakley at 206-696-7503 ext. 25 for any follow-up or to submit feedback.



Getting Them Ready

K-12 SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE



Who is Eligible?

Foster Care means:

- DSHS/CA (or a licensed or certified child placing agency) has placement and care responsibility for a child/youth.
 - Twenty-four hours-per-day, temporary, substitute care away parents or guardians
 - Includes any out-of-home care (including a relative or suitable other), *so long as the child is under the placement and care responsibility of DSHS/CA.*



How are Students Identified?

Students in foster care will be identified using the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) through a data sharing agreement between OSPI and DSHS.

DSHS/CA is required to notify LEAs each time a student enters care, changes placement, or returns home.



State Laws

WA STATE LAWS REGARDING STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE



OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

12/8/2016

Enrollment and Attendance – LEAs

RCW 28A.225.330(7) - Enrolling students from other districts

Prevents school districts from **denying** or **delaying** the enrollment of dependent youth, and requires school districts to retrieve school records (educational history) within **two business days**

RCW 28A.225.023 - Unexpected or excessive absences—Support for school work.

Requires districts to *monitor* the unexpected or excessive absences of dependent youth, *proactively support* the youth's school work so the student does not fall behind, **and** *avoid* suspension or expulsion based on truancy



Records and Graduation – LEAs

RCW 28A.150.510 - Transmittal of education records to DSHS

Requires the prompt/timely transmission of student records to DSHS for appropriate case planning and maximizing the student's academic achievement

RCW 28A.320.192 - On-time grade level progression and graduation.

Requires school districts to facilitate the on-time graduation of student in foster care by having the following procedures in place:

- Waiving specific courses if similar coursework has been completed in another district,
- Providing an alternative means to complete required coursework,
- **Consolidating unresolved coursework and providing opportunities for credit accrual**, or
- Facilitating the graduation from the sending district where graduation requirements were met



Placement – DSHS/CA

RCW 74.13.550 - Child placement—Policy of educational continuity

Requires that, whenever practical and in the best interest of the child, children placed into foster care shall remain enrolled in the schools they were attending at the time they entered foster care.

RCW 74.13.631(1)(e) - School-aged youth in out-of-home

The department **shall** provide youth residing in out-of-home care the opportunity to remain enrolled in the school he or she was attending prior to out-of-home placement, unless:

- (1) The safety of the youth is jeopardized, or
- (2) A relative or other suitable person placement approved by the department is secured for the youth, or
- (3) It is determined not to be in the youth's best interest to remain enrolled in the school he or she was attending prior to out-of-home placement.



School Placement Options – Part 2

(2) Unless otherwise directed **by the court**, the educational responsibilities of the department for school-aged youth residing in out-of-home care **are** the following:

- a) To collaboratively discuss and document school placement options and plan necessary school transfers during the family team decision-making meeting;*
- b) To notify the receiving school and the school of origin that a youth residing in foster care is transferring schools;*
- c) To request and secure missing academic records or medical records required for school enrollment within ten business days;*
- d) To document the request and receipt of academic records in the individual service and safety plan;*
- e) To pay any unpaid fees or fines due by the youth to the school or school district;*
- f) To notify all legal parties when a school disruption occurs; and*
- g) To document factors that contributed to any school disruptions.*



Federal Provisions

KEYS TO COLLABORATION



Fostering Connections Act (2008)

1. Requires each child receiving a Title IV-E foster care, adoption, or guardianship payment to be a full-time student (unless he or she is incapable of attending school due to a documented medical condition)
2. Requires that a case plan include a plan for ensuring educational stability
3. The Educational Stability Plan Must Include:
 - An assurance that each placement takes into account the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child was enrolled at the time of placement; and
 - An assurance that the child welfare agency has coordinated with the LEA(s) to ensure the child can remain in that school, or
 - If remaining in that school is not in the child's best interest, an assurance that the child will be enrolled immediately in a new school and relevant academic and other records are obtained.



Case Worker Duties

A child/youth in foster care has the right to: attend school, remain in their school of origin when possible and in their best interest (RCW 74.13.550) and to be enrolled immediately in the new school if there is a school change.

- Collaborate with school, child, and caregiver when determining best interest of the child when making school placement decisions. <http://www.k12.wa.us/FosterCare/FAQ.aspx>
- Communicate with schools when children enter or exit care or experience placement changes using the [School Notification Form \(DSHS 27-093\)](#)
- Collaborate with school and caregiver to identify transportation options (existing bus routes, available caregivers, volunteers, family, friends or neighbors)

For more information:

- [4302A Education Policy and Procedures](#) .
- [Your Rights, Your Life: A Resource for Youth in Foster Care](#)



Uninterrupted Scholars Act (2013)

- USA creates a new exception under FERPA that makes it easier for schools to release a child's education records to child welfare agencies
 - USA eliminates the requirement that education agencies notify parents before education records are released pursuant to a court order to any individual, when the parent is a party to the case where that order was issued.
- The new amendment permits schools to release education records to “an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency, or tribal organization” who has the right to access a student's case plan, and when the agency or organization is “legally responsible” for the child's “care and protection.”



ESEA & Foster Care

PRIMARY PROVISIONS



OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

12/8/2016

ESEA (2015) – *As amended by ESSA*

- *Awaiting foster care placement* is deleted from the definition of “homeless children and youths” ESSA, Section 9105(b)(1).
- SEAs designate a point of contact for child welfare agencies, who may not be the McKinney-Vento State Coordinator.
- LEAs that receive Title I, Part A funds must designate a point of contact for the local child welfare agency, if the local child welfare agency notifies the LEA, in writing, that it has designated a point of contact for the LEA.
- State plans must describe collaboration with the state child welfare agency to ensure foster youth can remain in their school of origin, if in their best interest, or enroll immediately in a new school.
- State report cards must disaggregate graduation, discipline, and academic achievement



Implementation

December 10, 2016



OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

12/8/2016

15

SEA Foster Care Point of Contact

Foster Care Education Program Supervisor

- Monitoring LEAs
- Coordinating with the State CWA to issue state guidelines
- Establishing uniform criteria around best interest determination and guidelines for transportation procedures
- Facilitating data sharing with State and tribal CWAs
- Provide professional development opportunities for LEA POCs



ESSA: Foster Care Liaisons (POC)

- 284 out of 295 school districts receive Title I, Part A funds
- Each school district that receives Title I, Part A funds must designate a Foster Care Liaison
- Liaisons were identified in the LEA's Title I, Part A application for the 2016-2017 SY
- In Washington State, we are asking for 100% school district participation
- McKinney Vento requires that liaisons be “able to carry out” the duties described in the law.
- USDE Guidance:

“BOTH SEA & LEA POCs should have the sufficient capacity and resources to guide the implementation of the ESSA provisions.”



Foster Care Liaison Duties

- Coordinate with the Foster Care Education Program Supervisor at OSPI
- Serve as the primary contact person for DSHS/CA and case workers
- Facilitate the transfer of records and immediate enrollment
- Facilitate data sharing with child welfare agencies, consistent with FERPA and CA protocols
- Develop and coordinate local transportation procedures
- Manage best-interest determinations and disputes
- Ensure that children in foster care are enrolled in, and regularly attending, school



School of Origin

- The school of origin is the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care.
- An SEA and its LEAs must ensure that a child in foster care enrolls or remains in his or her school of origin unless a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest. (ESEA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(i)).
- If a child's foster care placement changes, the school of origin would then be considered the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of the placement change.



Immediate Enrollment

- Immediate = “Without delay.”
- Enrollment = Enrolled in, attending, and participating fully in school activities
 - Appropriate classroom placement
 - Transportation, if required
 - Extra-curricular activities (academic and non-academic)
 - Categorical eligibility for Title I and free meals
- Enrollment must not be denied or delayed because documents normally required for enrollment have not been provided. (See ESEA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)).
 - The enrolling school must immediately contact a child’s school of origin to obtain the relevant records and documentation (ESEA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(iii)), and the school of origin should immediately transfer those records.



Best-Interest Decision-Making

- LEAs should work with local child welfare agencies to develop a clear protocol on how to make best interest determinations
- Decisions should be made using child-centered criteria
 - Transportation is **only** considered in the context of the impact it has on the child/youth – there is no district line , county line, state line, or mileage limit
- An LEA must ensure that a child remains in his or her school of origin while disputes are being resolved to minimize disruptions and reduce the number of moves between schools (See ESEA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(i))

WA state has a “Best Practices in School Selection for Children and Youth in Foster Care” document to guide discussions regarding best-interest



Transportation

- An LEA receiving Title I, Part A funds must collaborate with Children’s Administration or other supervising agencies to ensure that transportation for children in foster care is provided, arranged, and funded. (ESEA Section 1112(c)(5)(B))
- Procedures must ensure that:
 1. Children in foster care needing transportation to their schools of origin will promptly receive that transportation in a cost effective manner.
 2. If there are additional costs incurred in providing transportation to the school of origin, the school district will provide such transportation if:
 - a) The local child welfare agency agrees to reimburse the LEA for the cost of such transportation;
 - b) The LEA agrees to pay for the cost; or
 - c) The LEA and local child welfare agency agree to share the cost (ESEA 1112(c)(5)(B))



WA State Pupil Transportation

- Implementation practices/policies reflect our unique approach to pupil transportation
 - Revised WAC 392-141-310 and WAC 392-141-320 to allow Program 99 billing
 - Narrowed the definition of “additional costs” to only include **uncovered** costs
 - Reflects the difference between what an LEA can charge to transport a student to his or her assigned school and the total costs of that transportation
- 140 School districts are fully funded
 - Regardless of the mode of transportation, distance, etc. these districts are paid 100% of the costs for transporting students in foster care if they bill under Special Program 99.
- 155 districts are below 100%
 - If a district is funded at 80%, they can bill under Program 99 and get paid 80% of foster care transportation costs. That means that 20% of the costs would be “additional”

Washington State has developed a dually vetted dispute resolution process in the event that Children’s Administration and the LEA cannot come to agreement.

*Districts **must** provide transportation while disputes are being resolved.*



Title I, Part A

- **Categorical eligibility**
 - All children and youth in foster care are categorically eligible for Title I, Part A services, whether or not they live in a Title I, Part A school attendance area, attend a Title I school, or meet the academic standards required of other children for eligibility
- **Funding Limitations**
 - Title I, Part A states that funds cannot supplant other state or local funds.
 - The homeless set-aside must remain intact and cannot be reduced or repurposed to serve children in foster care



Resources



Resources

The screenshot shows the OSPI website for the Foster Care Education Program. The header includes the State of Washington logo, OSPI logo, and navigation links: Home, Certification, Offices & Programs, Learning & Teaching, Assessment, Finance & iGrants, and Research & Reports. The main content area is titled "Foster Care" and features a sidebar with links: Foster Care Education Program, State and Federal Requirements, Foster Care Liaisons/DSHS Contacts, Postsecondary Education, and Frequently Asked Questions. The main text describes the program's goal of improving educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care. It includes sections for State and Federal Requirements, Foster Care Liaisons/DSHS Contacts, Postsecondary Education, and Frequently Asked Questions. A "Sign up for email/text alerts" button is highlighted with a red arrow. A "What's New" box on the right contains a "Now Available!" announcement and a "Questions?" section with contact information.

State of Washington
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

OSPI

Home | Certification | Offices & Programs | Learning & Teaching | Assessment | Finance & iGrants | Research & Reports

Foster Care

Foster Care Education Program

State and Federal Requirements

Foster Care Liaisons/DSHS Contacts

Postsecondary Education

Frequently Asked Questions

For more information:

Jess Lewis
Program Supervisor
Foster Care Education
360-725-6050
Jess.Lewis@k12.wa.us

Sign up for email/text alerts

Foster Care Education Program
Improving the Educational Outcomes of Children and Youth in Foster Care

Schools, child welfare agencies, communities, and families must work together to provide the equitable opportunities, specialized services, and useful supports that are essential for students in foster care to be successful in school and in life.

The Foster Care Program at OSPI supports students in foster care by encouraging innovative practices that reduce educational disruptions, strengthen school stability, and improve academic performance.

As part of the Student Support division, the Foster Care Education Program partners with educators, foster parents, social workers, state agencies, and advocates as they work to support the whole child through evidence-based, best-practices and collaboration.

[State and Federal Requirements](#)
Find state and federal laws that support students in foster care along with guidance to help with implementation and advocacy.

[Foster Care Liaisons/DSHS Contacts](#)
Find contact information by county, DSHS region, and school district for liaisons and Children's Administration staff who can help resolve issues and provide support.

[Postsecondary Education](#)
Find information about helping students in foster care with financial aid and other post-secondary resources.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)
Find answers to the most frequently asked questions about Foster Care Education in Washington State.

What's New

Now Available!
[Foster Care Liaisons/DSHS Contacts](#)

Questions?

fostercare@k12.wa.us
360-725-6050



GovDelivery



OSPI | Foster Care Education

ESSA requires school districts to designate a Foster Care Liaison

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized by the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA, 2015), contains key protections for students in foster care to promote school stability and success. ESSA requires state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs) to collaborate with child welfare partners in an effort to improve the educational outcomes of children and youth in care.



Liaisons

The screenshot shows the OSPI website header with the State of Washington logo and navigation links. The main content area is titled "Foster Care" and includes a sidebar with navigation options like "Foster Care Education Program", "State and Federal Requirements", and "Foster Care Liaisons/DSHS Contacts". The main content features a "Contacts" section with a list of links and a table of Foster Care Liaisons/DSHS Contacts. A note indicates the list is being updated, and a button prompts users to "Update your Liaison Contact Information".

Contacts

- [Foster Care Liaisons/DSHS Contacts](#)
- [Regional Contacts](#)
- [State Contact](#)

Update your Liaison Contact Information

Foster Care Liaisons/DSHS Contacts

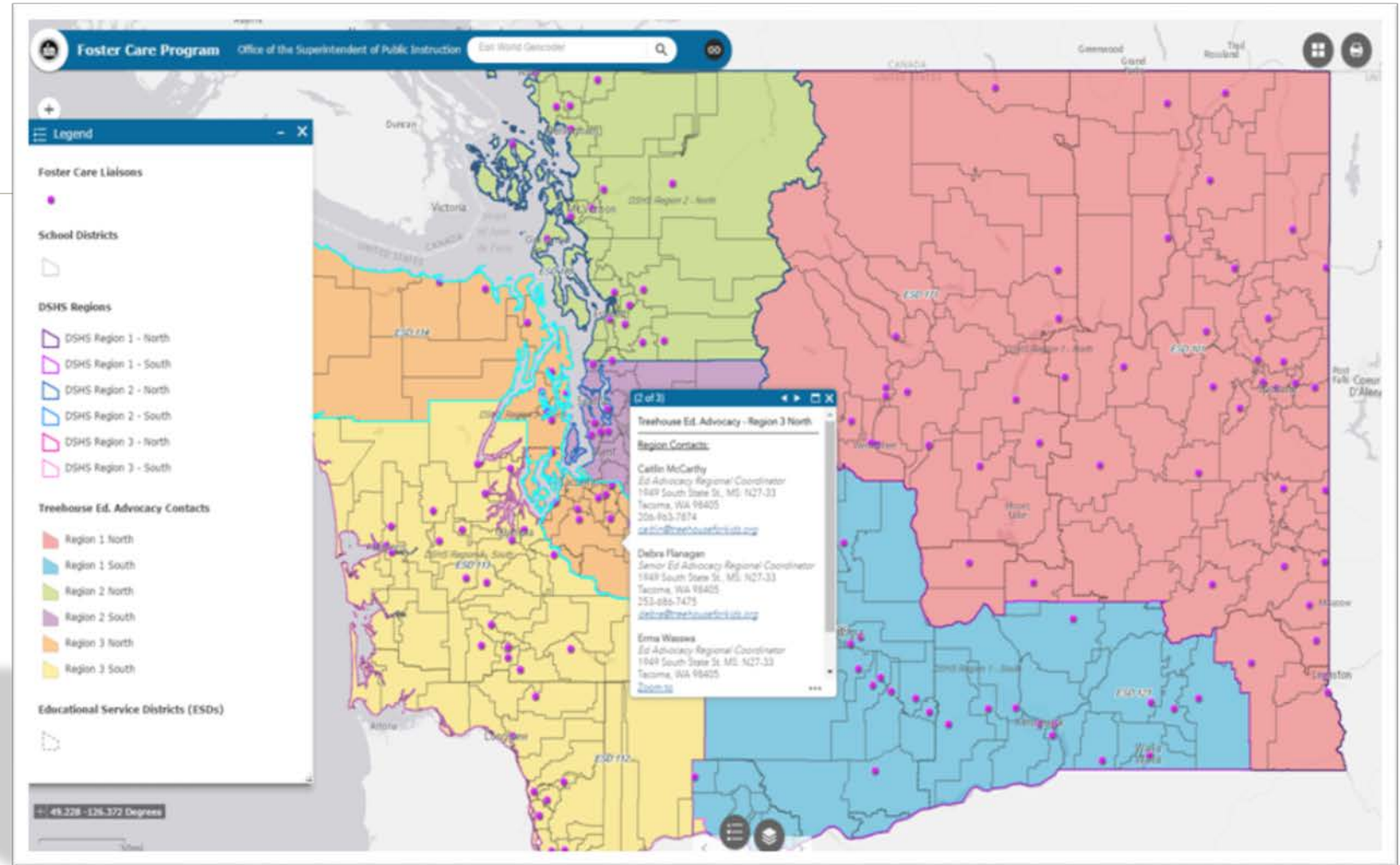
* Click on column headings to sort.

NOTE: This list is in the process of being updated as more districts identify Foster Care Liaisons.

*DSHS Region	*County	*School District	*Liaison/Title	Phone	email
Region 3 (North/South)	Grays Harbor	Aberdeen School District	Marnie Ranheim Counselor	360-538-7807	mrnheim@asd5.org
Region 3 (North/South)	Lewis	Adna School District	Renee Quinn Counselor	360-748-8552	quinnr@adnaschools.org
Region 1 (North)	Lincoln	Almira School District	Shauna Schmerer Superintendent	509-639-2414	sschmerer@achsd.org
Region 2 (North/South)	Skagit	Anacortes School District	Connie Martin Executive Director of Special Services	360-293-1216	cmartin@asd103.org
Region 1 (North)	Asotin	Asotin-Anatone	John Heley Director of Student	509-243-3102	jheley@aasd_wednet.edu



The Map



FAQ

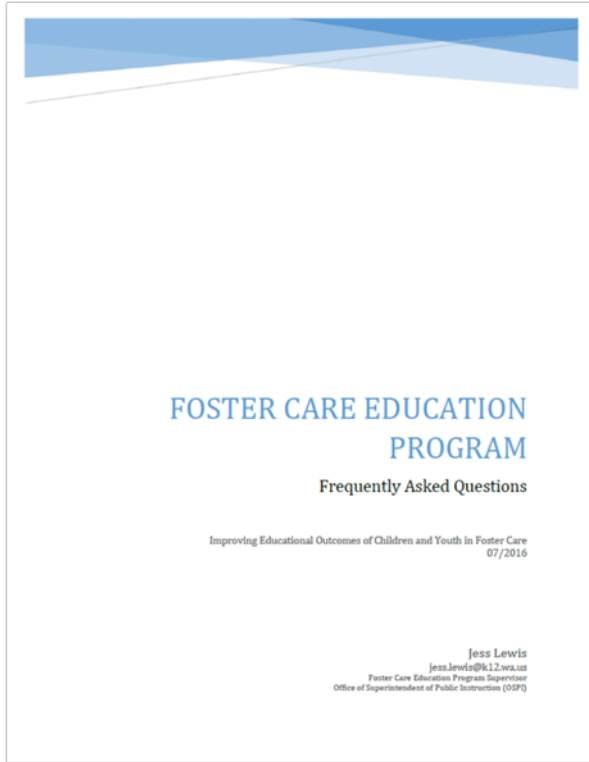


Table of Contents

<i>Purpose</i>	4
1. Who can I contact for help regarding the education of students in foster care?	4
<i>State Laws</i>	5
2. Which students are eligible for services?	5
3. How will students in foster care be identified?	5
4. Should students in foster care remain in their school of origin?	5
5. Are there guidelines around enrollment and transfers for students in care?	5
6. Can students in foster care have access to free lunch?	6
7. Can a district withhold records and transcripts due to unpaid fines and fees?	6
8. Does a child or youth in foster care get absences excused if they have to participate in court-ordered activities or other services?	6
9. How must districts approach unexpected or excessive absences for children and youth in foster care?	7
10. What should schools do to facilitate grade progression and/or on-time graduation for students in foster care?	7
<i>Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)</i>	7
11. Will my district be required to designate a Foster Care Liaison?	7
12. What will be the duties of the Foster Care Liaison?	8
<i>Educational Stability</i>	9
13. To which children do the new Title I, Part A requirements to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care apply?	9
14. By when must OSPI and school districts meet the Title I, Part A educational stability requirements?	9
15. What are the responsibilities of a school district in ensuring the educational stability of children in foster care?	9
<i>School of Origin</i>	10
16. What responsibilities does a child welfare agency have in ensuring the educational stability of children in foster care?	9
17. What is a school of origin?	10
18. What is the duration of time that a child is protected under the school of origin provision? What happens once a child exits foster care?	10
<i>Best Interest Determination</i>	11
19. What factors should be considered in determining whether remaining in a child's school of origin is in his or her best interest?	11



School Selection

**Best Practices: School Selection
for Children and Youth in Foster Care**

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction: Foster Care Education Program

Introduction
In December 2015, Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), and created new protections for children in foster care. These provisions, which take effect on December 10, 2016, complement those in the Fostering Connections Act of 2008 and require SEAs and LEAs to work with child welfare agencies to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care.

Making Best-Interest Decisions
Children in out-of-home care tend to have many adults involved in their lives, and it may be unclear who has the authority to make general education decisions for them.

Usually, birth parents or caregivers are the decision makers, even if a child has been removed from the home, but courts in Washington State may appoint an educational decision maker who is neither the parent or the caregiver. General educational decision-making rights may be given to foster parents, caseworkers, relatives, or other advocates. In these cases, for children in out-of-home care, the educational decision maker will assume the rights of the parents under the Title I, Part A provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act, including the right to select the school in the child's best interest and pursue any disputes with the school district.

The school must be informed of who has decision-making authority for each student; the responsibility of informing the school typically lies with the student's child welfare caseworker.

In order for parents or other educational decision-makers to make informed decisions about selecting the school that is in a child's best interest, they need to have as much practical information as possible.

Every LEA has a local foster care liaison, who must ensure each eligible child receives his or her rights under ESSA, including the right to attend the school of origin. The local liaison and school or district staff can play an instrumental role in assisting with choosing the school that is in a student's best interest. For children in foster care, schools should identify Children's Administration staff to assist with the school selection provisions of the Fostering Connections Act.

Steps to Best-Interest Decision-Making
LEAs should work with local child welfare agencies to develop a clear protocol on how to make best interest determinations. This process should include making every effort to gather meaningful input from relevant parties, in addition to required child welfare and school representatives, in deciding what school placement is in a child's best interest. The following

Adapted from the Best Practices: School Selection for Students in Out-of-Home Care Issue Brief developed by the Legal Center for Foster Care and The National Center for Homeless Education, Fall 2009

School Selection: A Checklist for Decision Making

School of Origin Considerations		Local Attendance Area School Considerations	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Continuity of instruction <i>Student is best served due to circumstances that look to his or her past.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Continuity of instruction <i>Student is best served due to circumstances that look to his or her future.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Age and grade placement of the student <i>Maintaining friends and contacts with peers is critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age and grade placement of the student <i>Maintaining friends and contacts with peers in the school of origin is not particularly critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic strength <i>The child's academic performance is weak, and the child would fall further behind if he/she transferred to another school.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic strength <i>The child's academic performance is strong and at grade level, and the child would likely recover academically from a school transfer.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social and emotional state <i>The child is suffering from the effects of mobility, has developed strong ties to the current school, and does not want to leave.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social and emotional state <i>The child seems to be coping adequately with mobility, does not feel strong ties to the current school, and does not mind transferring.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Distance of the commute and its impact on the student's education and/or special needs <i>The advantages of remaining in the school of origin outweigh any potential disadvantages presented by the length of the commute.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Distance of the commute and its impact on the student's education and/or special needs <i>A shorter commute may help the student's concentration, attitude, or readiness for school.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal safety of the student <i>The school of origin has advantages for the safety of the student.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal safety of the student <i>The local attendance area school has advantages for the safety of the student.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student's need for special instruction <i>The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met better at the school of origin.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student's need for special instruction <i>The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met better at the local attendance area school.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location <i>The student's current living situation is outside of the school-of-origin attendance zone, but his/her living situation or location continues to be uncertain. The student will benefit from the continuity offered by remaining in the school of origin.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location <i>The student's current living situation appears stable and unlikely to change suddenly; the student will benefit from developing relationships with school peers who live in his local community.</i>

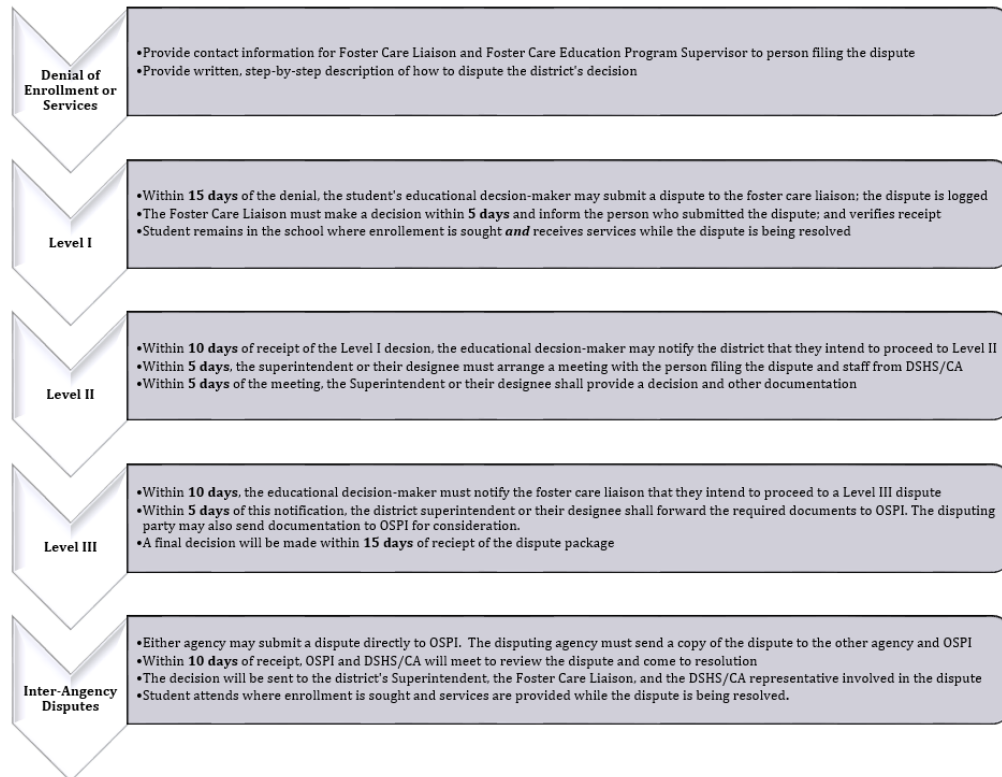
Adapted from the Best Practices: School Selection for Students in Out-of-Home Care Issue Brief developed by the Legal Center for Foster Care and The National Center for Homeless Education, Fall 2009



OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

12/8/2016

Dispute Process



OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

12/8/2016

Foster Care Education Program: Dispute Resolution Process

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction: Foster Care Education Program

DEFINITIONS

Caregiver: In Washington state, the term "caregiver" applies to potential out-of-home placement options that include: licensed foster homes, relatives, group care providers, or court ordered suitable others. *Please note: these placement options must be the result of a state dependency action as established by the court for this dispute process to apply.*

DSHS/CA: Department of Social and Health Services/Children's Administration is the public child welfare agency for the state of Washington.

Educational Decision-Maker: The *Caregiver Authorization form* always lists the caregiver and social worker as day to day decision makers for children and youth in foster care. There may, however, be additional decision-makers appointed by the court and identified on the *Health and Education Authorization Court Order* if it is someone other than, or in addition to, the caregiver and case worker. This could be the birth parent, education liaison, or another appropriate adult.

Foster Care: Twenty-four hours per day temporary, substitute care for the child placed away from the child's parents or guardians, and for whom DSHS or a licensed or certified child placing agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes any out-of-home care (including a relative or suitable person), so long as the child is under the placement and care responsibility of DSHS, and placed in out-of-home care by DSHS.

Other Supervising Agency: means an agency licensed by the state under RCW 74.15.090, or licensed by a federally recognized Indian tribe located in this state under RCW 74.15.190, that has entered into a performance-based contract with the department to provide case management for the delivery and documentation of child welfare services as defined in RCW 74.13.020.

School of Origin: The school of origin is the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care. If a child's foster care placement changes, the school of origin would then be considered the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of the placement change.

Best Interest Decision Making: Using child-centered criteria for determining which educational setting is best for a particular child or youth. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis. The cost of transportation should not be considered.

July 2016

Page 1

Questions?

Jess Lewis
Program Supervisor, Foster Care Education
360.725.6050
fostercare@k12.wa.us
<http://www.k12.wa.us/FosterCare>





2016 Youth Leadership Summit Report

One united voice for change



The Mockingbird Society
Improving foster care | Ending youth homelessness

WELCOME FROM MOCKINGBIRD'S LEADERSHIP



We stand on common ground

Dear Friends and Allies,

In 2005, the Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care began to lay the foundation for meaningful youth engagement by hosting the first ever Foster Youth and Alumni Leadership Summit. I am thrilled to report that in 2016 we continued to build on this legacy and expanded the event to include a broader range of voices and perspectives.

This year, the Supreme Court Commission co-hosted the re-named Youth Leadership Summit in partnership with the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs Advisory Committee. And for the first time, young people in our Mockingbird Youth Network (MYN) who have been in foster care were joined at the Summit by their peers from our Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness (YAEH) program.

We are grateful that the Supreme Court Commission and the Advisory Committee have recognized and responded to the critical common ground on which foster and homeless youth often stand.

MYN and YAEH chapter members from across the state worked diligently throughout the year to engage in thoughtful discussions, research and refine their proposals, and practice their presentations. But this is only part of what is happening in our local Chapters. In addition to their hard work, I have also been privileged to witness the development of community, personal transformations, and the impact that meaningful youth engagement has had on individual young people.

Chapter members support one another beyond the development of their policy and practice issues. They come together to create positive change in the world, to make meaning out of their common experiences, and to share their triumphs and struggles. This is true not only with individual Chapters but cross our statewide network. Nowhere was this more evident this year than at the Summit, demonstrated by the attention and encouragement MYN and YAEH participants gave to one another as each Chapter presented. There is power in youth engagement that runs deeper than any one event can convey.

This work would not be possible without the support and guidance provided by our wonderful allies. We are fortunate to have so many community partners who are willing to serve as expert advisors to our youth leaders throughout the issue development process. On behalf of Mockingbird staff and Youth Programs participants, we appreciate the time, thoughtful input, creative collaboration, and advice you offered leading up to the Summit, and throughout the year.

Thank you also to our Summit sponsors, the Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care, the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs Advisory Committee, our staff and board, and the many guests who attended the Youth Leadership Summit. But most of all, I am grateful to the young people for standing up, sharing their stories, and proposing solutions to some of the most persistent barriers they face.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Annie Blackledge", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Annie Blackledge
Executive Director

Special thanks to Casey Family Programs and Children's Administration for supporting the printing and design of this report.



YOUTH ADVOCACY

By Kim Hines

Amending injustice
Providing advocacy
Fighting for change, for equality.
Putting a face to the issues, providing
clarity
Proof of a shared reality...
The Mockingbird Society
Empowering youth to alter perceptions,
to tell their story.
To be the best they can be,
To demand justice, to fight for equality.
Neglecting self-fulfilling prophecies.
We determine who we're gonna be.
You and me
Creating change, endless possibility
Nothing is fixed, transform reality.



**NOBODY CAN ADVOCATE
FOR WHAT YOU NEED
BETTER THAN YOU**

By Tyler Donhardt

“You will inspire many young people who come behind you to stand up—and speak up—in the future.”

I first came into contact with Mockingbird two years ago while volunteering for the University District Library in Seattle. I had just moved to the area from Indiana, so I've pretty much been around Mockingbird for as long as I have been in Seattle. I was intrigued when I met Mockingbird staff at the library. We talked about a lot of issues in the world, and I could tell they were passionate and opinionated.

Shortly after that, I stopped volunteering at the library because I started participating in a program called YearUp that took me out of that whole sphere—or at least, I thought it had.

I met Roel in YearUp. He always talked about the leadership and public speaking experience he gained in some group he was in. He was pretty on point, and was a leader in YearUp too, especially around issues that tied into foster care. I was actually really impressed. It wouldn't be until a year later that I found out Roel was an alumni of Mockingbird.

After YearUp ended, I applied for the Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness Chapter Leader position at Mockingbird. At my first event, I ended up seeing Roel, and I guess it all kind of came together for me. Mockingbird had given me a really good opportunity—and I was taking a step toward being something that I found really cool and impressive in the community. I was getting the chance to start exercising the same kind of leadership I saw Roel display with YearUp.

Now I feel confident and prepared speaking to large groups. I'm not sure I would have been able to do that a year or two ago. But being with Mockingbird has given me the opportunity to grind through many speaking events, and to develop the comfort level I am at now.

As Summit participants, you have all been focused on writing your presentations for the last six months. You have put in the time and effort at chapter meetings, during research sessions, and in consultation with experts in the community. You

have practiced your speaking parts in trainings and during the Systems Reform Workshop. You've been grinding, and you've been developing your skills as advocates and public speakers. You were always experts on your own experiences in foster care, or with systems that serve homeless youth. And now you have honed your ability to deliver a policy presentation. This is what I want you to know: There is nobody who can advocate for what you need better than you.

As I have grown with Mockingbird, there have been some big milestones along the way. The first was when I was hired as a Chapter Leader; the second was when I was promoted to Network Representative; and the third was this past February when I helped represent our agency at a national conference on youth homelessness in Oakland. When I look back at these milestones, I am surprised by how far I have come—how many more opportunities I have now than I did before. And I believe that for you, presenting your ideas before your community and decision-makers will represent a milestone in your growth as well. It will also be a milestone for our state as we bring youth who have experienced homelessness together to advocate with foster youth, in solidarity with one another.

In closing, I want you to know that you are not alone. You are a part of something bigger than what you can see represented at the Summit. Generations of young leaders, like Roel and many others, have come before you to advocate for what is smart and what is right. And you will inspire many young people who come behind you to stand up—and speak up—in the future. It will not be easy to build a world class foster care system, or to end youth homelessness. But I do believe that if there is any chance of accomplishing these goals, it is because of us.

MOCKINGBIRD YOUTH PROGRAMS' ANNUAL ADVOCACY CYCLE

The Mockingbird Youth Network (MYN) is a powerful statewide coalition of young people affected by foster care. The MYN brings together young people who have experienced the child welfare system first-hand and want to share their stories so tomorrow's foster youth will not have to face the same challenges.

Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness (YAEH) gives young people who have experienced homelessness a chance to speak up, tell their stories, and advocate for programs and services they think will improve the lives of young people who do not have a stable home.


Annual Advocacy Cycle: MYN and YAEH participants begin the annual advocacy cycle each spring by identifying problems or barriers they have experienced while in foster care or during times of housing instability and homelessness. Then they conduct research and consult community experts to define solutions to those problems. Each MYN and YAEH chapter presents their proposal at Mockingbird's annual Youth Leadership Summit. After the Summit, youth work with leaders in their communities to build support for their proposals, while Mockingbird's Public Policy team identifies opportunities to advance this agenda via legislation, budget requests, or policy reform. Finally, youth engage in direct advocacy during Washington state's legislative session by making calls, sending emails, providing public testimony before legislative committees, and meeting directly with policymakers and their staff.

Results: This cycle of year-round youth-led advocacy has resulted in over two dozen pieces of signed legislation, and many more rule changes and practice reforms within the child welfare and youth homelessness systems.



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Thank you to our Policy Advisors for their time and expert guidance!

 The Systems Reform Workshop offers youth an opportunity to practice the proposals that they will present to the Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care and the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs Advisory Committee. The youth practice in front of panels of policy advisors, which include child welfare and youth homelessness experts, state agency staff, Mockingbird staff and alumni, and other community partners who provide the youth with insightful feedback.



Systems Reform Workshop Policy Advisors

Alicia LeVezu – *University of Washington Children and Youth Advocacy Clinic*

Annie Blackledge – *The Mockingbird Society*

Beth Van Fossan – *University of Washington School of Social Work*

Cacey Hanauer – *YMCA of Greater Seattle Young Adult Services*

Cindy Bricker – *Administrative Office of the Courts*

Cole Ketcherside – *Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs*

Danielle Prince – *The Mockingbird Society*

George Yeannakis – *TeamChild*

Hickory Gateless – *Center for Children and Youth Justice*

Jeff Lindstrom – *YMCA of Greater Seattle Young Adult Services*

Jess Lewis – *Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction*

Julie Brown – *YMCA of Greater Seattle Young Adult Services*

Kate Baber – *Washington Low Income Housing Alliance*

Katie Kaiser – *College Success Foundation*

Kelly Warner-King – *University of Washington Court Improvement Training Academy*

Laurie Lippold – *Partners for Our Children*

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Thank you to our Policy Advisors for their time and expert guidance!



“I love seeing where the presentations start, and how polished, confident, and empowered the young people are when they present to the commissions. This is the highlight of my summer!”

– Katie Kaiser, College Success Foundation

Systems Reform Workshop Policy Advisors (continued)

Leo Fernandez – *Alumnus of Mockingbird Youth Programs*
Lisa Matchette – *The Mockingbird Society Board of Directors*
Liz Trautman – *YouthCare*
Maggie Schmeelk – *The Mockingbird Society*
Mary Van Cleve – *Columbia Legal Services*
Mireya Beltre – *Children's Administration*
Nick Holcomb – *Alumnus of Mockingbird Youth Programs*
Pam Crone – *Contract Lobbyist for The Mockingbird Society*
Patrick Dowd – *Washington State Office of the Family & Children's Ombuds*

Peggy Lewis – *Children's Administration*
Roel Williams – *Alumnus of Mockingbird Youth Programs*
Sam Martin – *Treehouse, Alumnus of Mockingbird Youth Programs*
Samantha Wiese – *All Home Youth and Young Adult Initiative*
Sara Rylaarsdam – *YouthNet*
Taku Mineshita – *Children's Administration*
Toni Sebastian – *Children's Administration*
Trai Williams – *YouthCare, Alumna of Mockingbird Youth Programs*
Tyler Donhardt – *The Mockingbird Society*

CHAPTER VOICE

Youth-Inspired Solutions



Provide Legal Representation for All Children and Youth in Foster Care

YAKIMA CHAPTER

The Yakima Chapter wants all children and youth in foster care to be provided legal counsel before their 72-hour shelter care hearings. Attorneys can ensure that young people are aware of their rights, make legal terms more understandable, and allow their voices to be heard in court. In a recent study, experts in King County found that 22 percent of youth represented by an attorney at the 72-hour hearing were never found dependent, and 48 percent never spent a night in foster care. Currently, not all youth are assigned attorneys in Washington state. Whether or not they are represented by an attorney often depends on the county where they reside. This justice by geography is fundamentally unfair. By providing attorneys for all young people before shelter care hearings, we can increase their rates of permanency, and therefore create better outcome.

“We ask for you to do what is morally and legally just: give all youth in care a well-trained attorney who will let our voices be heard and fight for our rights.”

– Jade Tillequots, Yakima MYN Chapter Leader



Eliminate Youth Detention for Status Offenses and Expand Family Reconciliation Services

TACOMA CHAPTER

The Tacoma Chapter wants to eliminate use of the Valid Court Order Exception in Washington state that allows juvenile detention for status offenses. In addition, the Chapter is advocating for funding to restore and expand the Family Reconciliation Services program to prevent juvenile detention and provide families with supportive alternatives. Status offenses only apply to youth under 18, and punish young people for actions like running away or breaking curfew. Washington detains youth for status offenses more than any other state in the country. Studies have found that juvenile detention usually increases the severity of problem behaviors and can increase the chances that the youth will be detained or incarcerated in the future. Juvenile detention can also worsen mental illness and put youth at greater risk for self-harm. By prioritizing early intervention and reconciliation, and eliminating the practice of detaining minors for status offenses, the state could save money and ensure better outcomes for at-risk youth and their families.

“Even if this not a problem in your district, youth in other districts are still suffering.”

– Emily Freeman, Tacoma MYN Chapter Member

CHAPTER VOICE

Youth-Inspired Solutions



“Going to school is hard enough when you have everything you need. Now, imagine going to school when you have no place to call home.”

– Sierra Phillips, YAEH Chapter Leader

Expand Educational Supports for Students Experiencing Homelessness

YOUTH ADVOCATES ENDING HOMELESSNESS CHAPTER

The Youth Advocates Ending Homelessness (YAEH) Chapter wants to improve high school graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness or housing instability by ensuring there is a trained point person in every school that can build relationships with young people, help identify homeless students, connect them with services, and create individualized support plans for their educational success. Furthermore, the Chapter proposes the state guarantee supplemental instruction and services to these students under the definition of basic education. Experts estimate there are nearly 5,800 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability in Washington’s schools. These youth are more likely to fare worse on standardized tests, are disproportionately individuals of color, and are 240 percent more likely to drop out of school. Only 30 out of 295 school districts in Washington receive federal McKinney-Vento funding intended to meet the needs of homeless students, which YAEH members believe is insufficient. By providing funding for a point person in every school and prioritizing the needs of homeless students alongside other vulnerable student populations, the state can better provide youth the supports and tools they need to graduate at an equal rate with their stably housed peers.

Appearing for the first time at Summit: YAEH!

The Mockingbird Society and our community partners who sponsor and support the Youth Leadership Summit chose to include the YAEH chapter in this year’s program. We see this as a reflection of Mockingbird’s mission and dual focus on improving foster care and ending youth homelessness. We recognize that youth who experience these systems all need our support. As advocates, we want to work together in a coordinated, combined effort to address the underlying problems that stand in the way of every child having a safe, stable home.

The Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care and the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs have committed to inviting both the MYN and YAEH chapters to present alongside each other at all future Youth Leadership Summits.

CHAPTER VOICE

Youth-Inspired Solutions



Allowing Partial Credits for Unresolved Coursework Due to Foster Care Placement Transfers

SEATTLE CHAPTER

The Seattle Chapter wants to improve high school graduation rates for youth in foster care by awarding partial credit for unresolved coursework. Experts estimate that every time a young person in care changes placements, they lose six months of academic progress. Given that each youth in foster care goes through an average of three placement changes, on average they fall eighteen months behind their peers in school. Only fifty percent of foster youth graduate high school. Youth who drop out of high school are more likely to be unemployed, live in poverty, and have poor health outcomes. They are also three times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested. By awarding partial credit to students when they transfer to a new school mid-term, foster youth can lose less ground due to placement changes and improve their chances to be on a path to success in school and life.

“Foster youth are graduating high school at a much lower rate than their peers due to instability, social stigma, and lack of school and home support. Being in the child welfare system should not determine a young person’s path to graduation.”

– Johnathan Hemphill, Seattle MYN Chapter Member



Increase Access to Driver’s Permits and Licenses for Foster Youth

OLYMPIA CHAPTER

The Olympia Chapter wants to implement a statewide program that will make it easier for foster youth to obtain driver’s licenses and permits. Having the ability to drive expands the opportunities for foster youth to pursue employment and education. This is especially true in rural areas and smaller towns or cities where there may be limited public transportation. For foster youth, being able to drive also promotes a sense of normalcy, and allows them to participate in a wider range of activities. Currently, the costs and administrative processes related to obtaining a driver’s license and insurance present barriers for youth in care. A Florida study of youth in foster care found that only three percent youth in foster care under age 18 had driver’s licenses, compared to 54 percent of their peers who were not in care. By implementing a program that would reduce the paperwork burden and pay all of the fees associated with driver’s education, licensing, and insurance for foster youth, our state could help ensure they are on the road to successful independence.

“We believe that increasing the number of foster youth with driver’s licenses would achieve a measurable impact [...] and result in young adults being more financially independent and prepared for our futures. Please give our youth the keys to independence!”

– Sabian Hart, Olympia MYN Chapter Leader

CHAPTER VOICE

Youth-Inspired Solutions



Provide Comprehensive Sexual Education for Youth in Foster Care

SPOKANE CHAPTER

The Spokane Chapter wants foster youth to have access to comprehensive sex education to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Youth in foster care engage in sexual activity at higher rates than their counterparts from intact families. They also become pregnant and experience STIs more often than their peers who are not in care. The Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence does not currently offer any specific training for foster parents or social workers about how to discuss sexual health with youth, and not all community-based service providers offer sex education programs. By training foster parents and state social workers, and providing sexual education curriculum to Independent Living Program service providers, foster youth will have the best opportunity to learn what healthy relationships look like and how to make good decisions about sexual health and family planning.

“We feel comprehensive sex education is necessary to reduce the disparities between those in care and those that aren’t. We want to ensure the best future we can for those in foster care and [...] that each youth has access to this information.”

– Joey Freeman, Spokane MYN Chapter Member



Address the Foster Parent Crisis by Implementing the Mockingbird Family Model

EVERETT CHAPTER

The Everett Chapter wants a new Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) constellation to be implemented in the Everett region, with an emphasis on recruiting foster parents who want to care for adolescents. Chapter members recognize the difference that dedicated foster parents make in their lives, and they believe the MFM is the best way to empower caregivers to do their jobs in a supported, sustainable way. In every MFM constellation, six to ten licensed foster families live in close proximity to a veteran foster care family – called a Hub Home – that provides peer support, social activities, planned and unplanned respite or crisis care, and assistance in navigating the child welfare system. Early evaluations showed how the MFM improved rates of child safety, permanency, placement stability, sibling connection, culturally relevant care, and caregiver retention. In the Everett region, there were only 46 licensed foster homes to serve 300 youth in crisis in 2014. Without enough options, youth might be placed in an institutional setting, or outside of their home community. They might also be moved from place to place until something more permanent becomes available. The Chapter wants to avoid those negative outcomes, and instead provide youth and caregivers with the support they need to thrive.

“Foster care can be challenging and isolating, but having a family-led support system can be amazingly powerful. [...] Our chapter believes the Mockingbird Family Model can provide foster parents with [a] support system of peers to share their experiences and challenges.”

– Jil Nance, Everett MYN Chapter Leader

YOUTH REPORT TO COMMUNITY LEADERS

Thank you to the members of the *Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care!*



Attending Commission Members

Justice Bobbe Bridge (ret.), Center for Children & Youth Justice, Commission Co-Chair

Mike Canfield, Foster Parents Association of Washington State

Judge Kitty-Ann van Doorninck, Superior Court Judges' Association (SCJA) Designee for Judge Michael Downes

Sabian Hart, Youth in Foster Care Representative, Olympia MYN Chapter Leader

Kristy Healing, Northwest Intertribal Court System Representative

Representative Ruth Kagi, 32nd Legislative District, Chair of the House Early Learning and Human Services Committee

Jeannie Kee, Foster Youth Alumni Representative

Jill Malat, Office of Civil Legal Aid, Children's Representation Program

Joanne Moore, Washington State Office of Public Defense

Tonia Morrison, Parent Advocate Representative

Ryan Murrey, Executive Director, Washington State CASA

Dan Newell, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Designee for Randy Dorn

Kimberly Ong, Supreme Court Commission Staff

Linh Tran, Assistant Attorney General, Washington State Office of the Attorney General

Carrie Wayno, Assistant Attorney General, Washington State Office of the Attorney General, Designee for Bob Ferguson

YOUTH REPORT TO COMMUNITY LEADERS

Thank you to the members of the *Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs Advisory Committee*



Attending Advisory Committee Members

Representative Jake Fey, 27th Legislative District
Melinda Giovengo, Executive Director, YouthCare, Committee Vice Chair
Kris Hermanns, Executive Director, Pride Foundation
Katara Jordan, Senior Manager, Policy and Advocacy, Building Changes

Kim Justice, Executive Director, Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs
Sierra Phillips, Youth Representative, The Mockingbird Society
Casey Trupin, Youth Homelessness Program Officer, Raikes Foundation, Committee Chair

2016 JIM THEOFELIS ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

The Jim Theofelis Advocate of the Year award recognizes MYN and YAEH participants who demonstrate exemplary leadership, a passion for advocacy, and dedication to the mission of The Mockingbird Society. The award is named in honor of Mockingbird's founding Executive Director. Youth are nominated by their peers, and staff members select the winners. The Advocate of the Year, the overall award winner, has the opportunity to shadow a legislator or government official during the following legislative session as a reward for their hard work.

The 2016 Advocate of the Year is Melisa Suljic, Everett Chapter Leader. Known for being a well-spoken advocate, Melisa was the keynote speaker at the 2015 Mockingbird Luncheon, and helped to facilitate a workshop at the National Alliance to End Homelessness Youth and Families Conference in Oakland, California this past February.

Melisa's Engagement Specialist had this to say about her: "She leads with passion, integrity, and tenacity. She is always looking for new opportunities to grow and learn. She takes pride in this work, and anyone who has worked with her knows that her spirit shines bright. She challenges everyone around her to be the best that they can be, while also having as much fun as possible. It has been a true pleasure to get to work alongside her this year and I have no doubt that she will continue to be an amazing advocate and a powerful leader in whatever comes next for her."



**MELISA SULJIC AND
JIM THEOFELIS**

Melisa will have the opportunity to shadow Representative Timm Ormsby, Chair of the House Appropriations Committee and champion for our young people.



REPRESENTATIVE TIMM ORMSBY

*Chair of the House Appropriations Committee
3rd Legislative District*

2016 HONORABLE MENTIONS



SIERRA PHILLIPS
YAEH Chapter Leader



SABIAN HART
Olympia MYN Chapter Leader



JADE TILLEQUOTS
Yakima MYN Chapter Leader



MINNIE BLIESNER
Spokane MYN Chapter Leader



ASHLEY ALDRICH
Seattle MYN Chapter Member



CAROL FREEMAN
Tacoma MYN Chapter Leader



The Mockingbird Society

Improving foster care | Ending youth homelessness

OUR SINCEREST THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP
SUMMIT SPONSORS**



casey family programs®



Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

Transforming lives



center for
CHILDREN & YOUTH
JUSTICE | *Better systems. Better lives.®*



Department of Commerce



WASHINGTON
COURTS

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS



coordinated care™

About Us

The Mockingbird Society

The Mockingbird Society is an advocacy organization that works with young people and families to improve foster care and end youth homelessness. Our youth programs train young people who have been homeless or in foster care to be their own best advocates. By doing so, they change policies and perceptions that stand in the way of every child having a safe and stable home. Our family programs advocate for innovation in the way services such as foster care are delivered. Together, our solutions focus on improving the social service systems that ultimately serve thousands of children, youth and families each year in Washington and beyond.

About Us

The Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care

The Washington State Supreme Court Commission on Children in Foster Care's mission is to provide all children in foster care with safe, permanent families in which their physical, emotional, intellectual, and social needs are met. The Commission's goals are to:

- Monitor and report on the extent to which child welfare programs and courts are responsive to the needs of the children in their joint care.
- Broaden public awareness of and support for meeting the needs of children and families in foster care.
- Institutionalize collaboration beyond the terms of office of individual agency directors and elected officials.

The Commission can achieve its goals through initiating policy decisions and needed legislative and court rule changes.

About Us

The Office of Homeless Youth Prevention & Protection Programs Advisory Committee

Created in 2015, the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs leads the statewide efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness for youth and young adults through five priority service areas to ensure our youth and young adults have:

- Stable Housing – Every youth has a safe and healthy place to sleep at night.
- Family Reconciliation – Families are reunited when safe and appropriate.
- Permanent Connections – Youth have opportunities to establish positive, healthy relationships with adults.
- Education and Employment – Youth have opportunities to advance in their education or training and obtain employment.
- Social and Emotional Well-Being – Youth have access to behavioral and physical health care; services nurture each youth's individual strengths and abilities.

The work of the office is guided by a 12-member Advisory Committee composed of advocates, legislators, law enforcement, service providers, and other stakeholders. Except for legislative members, Advisory Committee members are appointed by the Governor.

mockingbirdsociety.org





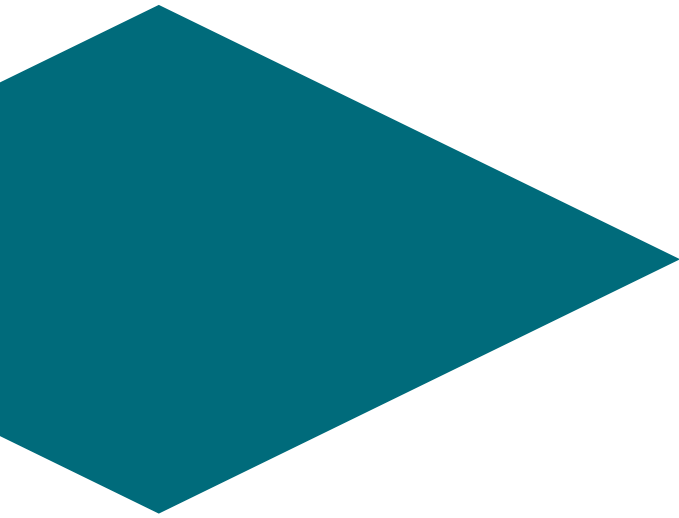
THE

FOSTER INNOVATION LAB

EST. 2016



COMPLEX
PROBLEMS
WITHOUT
SIMPLE
SOLUTIONS



welcome to
THE LAB



Bring common business principles into the foster care system.

Shift the current culture towards creativity and empowerment.

Cultivate a space for collaborative learning.

CLARIFY THE PROBLEM



**CONDUCT
EXPERIMENTAL
SOLUTIONS**

LEARN AND SHARE





CONFIRMATION OF
DELIVERY OF
CAREGIVER REPORTS
TO THE COURT



TEST EXAMPLE

Hypothesis:

Test Steps:

Test Participants:

Measurement:

Results:





TEST EXAMPLE

Hypothesis:

Foster parents will report increased satisfaction if they receive a confirmation that their caregiver report was received.



TEST EXAMPLE

Test Steps:

Instruct a sample of foster parents to mail or hand-deliver their caregiver reports with a self-addressed-stamped-envelope and a cover sheet that asks the clerk to stamp as received and return.





TEST EXAMPLE

Measurement:

Survey that sample of foster parents before and after the hearing date to determine satisfaction level.

Collect feedback on the difficulty and impact of the experiment.





WANT TO
HELP?

www.fosterinnovationlab.com

labstaff@fosterinnovationlab.com