LEGAL CENTER FOR FOSTER CARE & EDUCATION

Questions and Answers:
Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Children in Foster Care

Q: What is the *Blueprint for Change*?

A: The *Blueprint for Change* is a detailed framework that includes goals and benchmarks (or subgoals) for children and youth that will help ensure their education success. The document contains national and state examples (programs, resources, and strategies) that implement these recommendations; the examples are correlated with the appropriate goal and benchmark. The *Blueprint for Change* can be used for various purposes and by various stakeholders.

Q: How was the Blueprint for Change created?

A: The idea for the *Blueprint for Change* originated among members of the National Working Group for Foster Care and Education, a group comprised of national organizations that represent various stakeholders (foster parents, judges, caseworkers, etc.), who can have an impact on a child's education success while in out-of-home care. These organizations wanted to create a common agenda for all stakeholders which could then be tailored to a specific group's needs. The Legal Center for Foster Care and Education spent a year creating this framework. In putting it together, input was received from advocates and professionals from around the country, including the members of the National Working Group. The Legal Center FCE also began to compile the examples that correlate with each goal. The examples give a preliminary picture of what efforts and resources currently exist.

Q: What are the Eight Goals?

A: The eight goals are written from a youth's perspective and cover the spectrum from early childhood learning to postsecondary education. The are: 1) Youth are entitled to remain in their same school when feasible; 2) Youth are guaranteed seamless transitions between schools and school districts when school moves occur; 3) Young children enter school ready to learn; 4) Youth have the opportunity and support to fully participate in all aspects of the school experience; 5) Youth have supports to prevent school dropout, truancy, and disciplinary actions; 6) Youth are involved and engaged in all aspects of their education and educational planning and are empowered to be advocates for their education needs and pursuits; 7) Youth have an adult who is invested in his or her education during and after his or her time in out of home care; and 8) Youth have supports to enter into, and complete, postsecondary education.

Q: Who is the target audience for the *Blueprint for Change*?

A: The target audience for the *Blueprint for Change* is anyone who touches the life a child in out-of-home care, and anyone who can help with the child's education goals and pursuits. This includes judges, attorneys and GALs, biological and foster parents, youth, child welfare administrators and caseworkers, educators, and legislators.

Q: How are the needs of children with disabilities in out-of-home care addressed in the Blueprint?

A: All goals and benchmarks apply to youth with disabilities, but the last benchmarks within each goal apply only to youth with disabilities.

Q: How should the *Blueprint for Change* be used?

A: The *Blueprint for Change* has multiple uses. First, it provides information for direct case advocates to enhance educational opportunity and achievement of children in out-of-home care. For example, a caseworker or child's attorney could use the *Blueprint for Change* as a checklist or guide to help identify issues that affect a particular child and to ensure that all routes are being pursued to obtain necessary education. The *Blueprint for Change* is also designed to guide system reform efforts by agency and court administrators or other community leaders. For example, a child welfare agency administrator charged with collaborating with the local education agency to better serve children involved with both systems can use the *Blueprint for Change* as a guide for initial conversations or to create an agenda to review how a jurisdiction is addressing each goal and benchmark.

Q: Where can I get a copy of the *Blueprint for Change*?

A: Download a free copy of the *Blueprint for Change* at www.abanet.org/child/education/blueprint. You will be required to provide basic registration information to access this free download. The Legal Center FCE is tracking how the *Blueprint for Change* is being used and you may be contacted in the future to provide information about how you were able to incorporate the *Blueprint for Change* into your work.

Q: Can I use multiple copies of the *Blueprint for Change* with my staff in trainings or at meetings and conferences?

A: Absolutely. The *Blueprint for Change* is intended to duplicated and use as a tool for training or to guide conversations at meetings and conferences. The Legal Center FCE only asks that appropriate citations and credits are provided.

Q: Who do I contact if I have a comment or question about the *Blueprint for Change*, or if I have an example I think should be included?

A: Please send all comments, questions and suggestions about additions to ccleducation@abanet.org.