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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS TOOLKIT

FOR CAREGIVERS AND
EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS HOLDERS

LAUSD
UNIFIED



Dear Caregiver and/or Educational Rights Holder,

The goal of Student Support Programs is to provide specialized support services for targeted student populations, including students in the foster care system. We provide advocacy and comprehensive support for our students with open or recently closed DCFS cases, and their caregivers and/or educational right holders. We hope you find this “Know Your Rights Toolkit” for caregivers and educational rights holders helpful as it contains information specifically for students in foster care. Some of the materials in the toolkit include student rights, relevant legislation, information on Child Trafficking and our program directory.

Student Support Programs promotes academic success by providing on-going support services, and collaboration with parents/caregivers, school staff and community partners to further assist our students. This includes Specialized Student Services (SSS) counselors who focus on:

- Promoting school stability and timely transfer of school records
- Increasing regular school attendance
- Ensuring that students are enrolled in appropriate classes and monitoring progress
- Ensuring that each student has a graduation plan
- Providing career and college preparation services
- Advocating for the rights of students in specialized student populations
- Working with caregivers and educational rights holders to enhance involvement in the educational process
- Connecting families with district and community resources
- Providing linkages to group and individual counseling, if necessary

If you have questions or would like to receive additional information regarding our services, please email ask-ssp@lausd.net.

Sincerely,

Denise A. Miranda, Ed.D. | Director

Student Support Programs

Student Support and Attendance Services Branch

lausd.org/studentsupportprograms



Know Your Rights Toolkit

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SPECIALIZED STUDENT SERVICES COUNSELOR (SSSC)

*Provides local, integrated, and specialized support services for targeted student populations, including students in **foster care**, **experiencing homelessness**, and/or **involved in the juvenile justice system**.*

WHAT TYPE OF SUPPORT DO SSS COUNSELORS PROVIDE?

- Provide case management services
- Link families to resources including transportation, food, and housing
- Consult with school and district personnel on policies and resources
- Coordinate and advocate services to address barriers to educational achievement and educational rights
- Collaborate with faculty, support staff, and community agencies



WHAT ARE SSS COUNSELORS OBJECTIVES?

- Increase attendance rates and school engagement
- Increase academic achievement and graduation rates
- Increase school stability



WHAT RIGHTS DO SSS COUNSELORS ADVOCATE FOR?



[http://](http://www.lausd.org/ssc)

www.lausd.org/ssc





STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

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✓ DEFINITION

In the State of California a "foster youth" is defined as a youth who is currently the subject of a petition filed in the dependency court and is under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. Youth who are declared dependents or "wards" of the dependency court have an "open court case" and are supervised by child welfare agencies. A foster youth may be living in a foster home, group home, with biological parents or relatives, or under court supervision. This may also include dependents of the court of a tribal organization as well as youth with DCFS to voluntary placement agreements.

✓ IDENTIFICATION

To help identify and support our students in foster care, a students' information on if they have an "open court case", may be shared between child welfare agencies (such as Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and LAUSD.

✓ SCHOOL OF ORIGIN

Students have the right to remain at the last school enrolled, the school attended when their court case opened, any school attended in the last 15 months, or their school of residence. They also have the right to remain in the school and District as long as their court case is open (for elementary/middle school, the right extends until the end of the school year in which the case closes; and for high school, it extends until high school graduation).

✓ TRANSPORTATION

Transportation assistance can be provided by a caregiver or foster parent and financial assistance may be provided through DCFS. Be sure to ask an SSS counselor about options for using an LAUSD school bus route, or TAP cards for public transportation.

✓ ENROLLMENT

Students have a right to immediate enrollment in school even if they are unable to produce records normally required for enrollment such as transcripts, other education records, medical records including immunizations, or proof of residency. The youth also have a right to attend school even if they do not have uniforms or other supplies required by the school.

✓ CREDITS/GRADES

Partial credits must be accepted by a school based on "weeks of enrollment", regardless of whether or not a student completed the semester at their previous school. A student may maintain grades and credits earned from a previous school placement, even if they transferred mid-semester.

✓ GRADUATION

Graduation exemptions are available if the student meets specific criteria. The student must have an "open court case" during a school change, is after the second year of high school, and not on track to graduate with District graduation requirements.

✓ DISPUTE RESOLUTION/UCP

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment of a student in the foster care system, the student must be immediately enrolled, pending the resolution of the dispute and the District Foster Youth Liaison must be contacted. The District's Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) may be used to report noncompliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations and/or to appeal District decisions regarding such complaints. UCP brochures and complaint forms are available at all school sites and on the District's website at <http://achieve.lausd.net/Page/3655>



CALIFORNIA
FOSTER CARE
OMBUDSPERSON
YOU HAVE RIGHTS!

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Know Your Rights

California Foster Care Youth

Foster Youth Resources | FYH (ca.gov)

CLICK HERE



Foster Youth Rights Handbook (ca.gov)

CLICK HERE





SPECIALIZED STUDENT SERVICES *Directory*

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*Find
Your*

**SPECIALIZED STUDENT
SERVICES COUNSELOR**

SSS School Directory 2025-26



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ASSEMBLY BILLS

Extended Foster Care (Up to Age 21)

AB 12

- Be in high school or a GED program
- Be in college or a job training program
- Work at least 80 hours a month
- Be in a program that helps you get ready for a job
- Have a medical condition that stops you from doing the above

Stay in Your School & Keep Your Credits:

AB 490

- You have the right to stay in your current school if your living situation changes.
- You can start at a new school right away without needing paperwork.
- Schools must give you credit for the classes you've already taken, even if you move.

Keep Moving with Your School

AB 1933

- If you move to a new home in a different area, you can still go to your original school.
- You can also move on to the next school (like middle to high school) in that same area.
- You can stay at that school as long as you're in foster care—even if that ends during the school year.

Click or scan to learn more about SOO & BID



Flexible Graduation Option

AB 167/216

- If you moved schools after 10th grade, you might be able to graduate with just the basic state requirements.
- You can stay an extra (5th) year if you need more time.
- Using this option might limit your ability to go to certain colleges—but you can still go to a community college.

Click or scan to learn more about legislation:



WHAT IS UCP?

The **Uniform Complaint Procedure** (UCP) is a way for students and families to speak up if something unfair or wrong is happening at school.

You can file a complaint if you experience or see:

- **Discrimination, harassment, bullying, or intimidation, or the school not following certain laws or rules**

Click or scan to learn more about UCP:





KEY DEFINITIONS

Sometimes, people are taken advantage of in serious ways. **Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. Causing someone under the age of 18 to engage in a commercial sex act, regardless of using force, fraud, or coercion is human trafficking under U.S. law.**

If someone is under 18 and is made to do anything sexual in exchange for money or things, that's always considered human trafficking, even if no one used threats.

Traffickers might:

- Make false promises about love, money, or a better life
- Lie about jobs or opportunities
- Use fear, guilt, or threats to keep control
- Use violence or emotional abuse
- Try to trap someone in debt

A lot of people think human trafficking only happens when someone is taken far away, but that's not true. It can happen without anyone being moved at all—even in their own neighborhood.

Human trafficking victims can be any age, background, gender, or culture. This is never their fault.

Click or scan for additional resources



WHO ARE THEY?

Traffickers can be anyone—no matter their age, gender, or background. They might seem like someone you can trust, like:

- “Pimps” or a romantic partner
- Employers or other professionals
- Community leaders
- Family members
- Friends or peers
- Strangers connected by mutual friends

RISK FACTORS

Traffickers often take advantage of people who don't have strong support systems.

They look for people who might be going through tough times—like not having stable housing, feeling alone, being new to the country, not speaking English well, or dealing with past trauma or abuse.

Sometimes, they offer things that seem helpful—like money, love, or a place to stay—but it's really a trick to take control.

Traffickers also target teens just because they're young and might not have the life experience yet to recognize a dangerous situation. That's why it's important to know the signs, trust your gut, and look out for each other.

HOW TRAFFICKERS REACH YOUTH

Traffickers look for places where they can find and trick vulnerable youth. Some common ways include:

- **Online & Social Media**
- **Public Places**
- **Schools**
- **Group Homes & Shelters**

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

1

Sometimes people are taken advantage of, and it's not their fault.

- What are some red flags that someone might not have your best interest?
- What does a healthy relationship look like—friendship, family, romantic?
- What helps you feel seen, respected, or supported?

2

Protective factors are things that help us stay strong and safe.

- Knowing who your trusted adults are
- Looking out for friends who may not speak up
- Knowing what healthy friendships look like
- Asking for help and knowing that needing help isn't weakness—it's wisdom



OUR COMMUNITY LA®
Technology • Empowerment • Connections • Hope

WIN®
WHAT I NEED

Connecting individuals & families to free & low-cost essential services
12 Search Categories | 2000+ Free or Low-Cost Service Providers | No Referrals Needed

Available for free on Google Play, the App Store, and oclawin.org/win-app

WIN What I Need® Los Angeles

Home Map Search Search

Shelter	Crisis	Food	Drop-In
Health	Legal	Hotline	Education
Jobs	Transit	Benefits	More

Developed with the input of homeless youth and adults around LA County, the Free, Easy to Use WIN What I Need mobile app is available 24/7 and connects anyone who is searching for free or low-cost services to thousands of available helpful programs.

Available in English and Spanish, WIN™ is downloadable from the app stores (Search for WIN What I Need) and available for use on OCLA's website!

» [Go to WIN App Online](#)

