



Introduction to the Sample Foster Care Best Interest Determination Worksheet

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Let's Get Started



Logistics

- Can you hear us ?
- Using the Public Chat and Q&A
- Availability of Forms and Webinar Slides
- Role Poll

Agenda

- ESSA Title 1A Foster Care Provisions
- Overview of the Best Interest Determination Process and Rights
- Review of Best Interest Determination Worksheet
- Disputes
- Questions and Answers



ESSA: Title 1, Part A Provisions

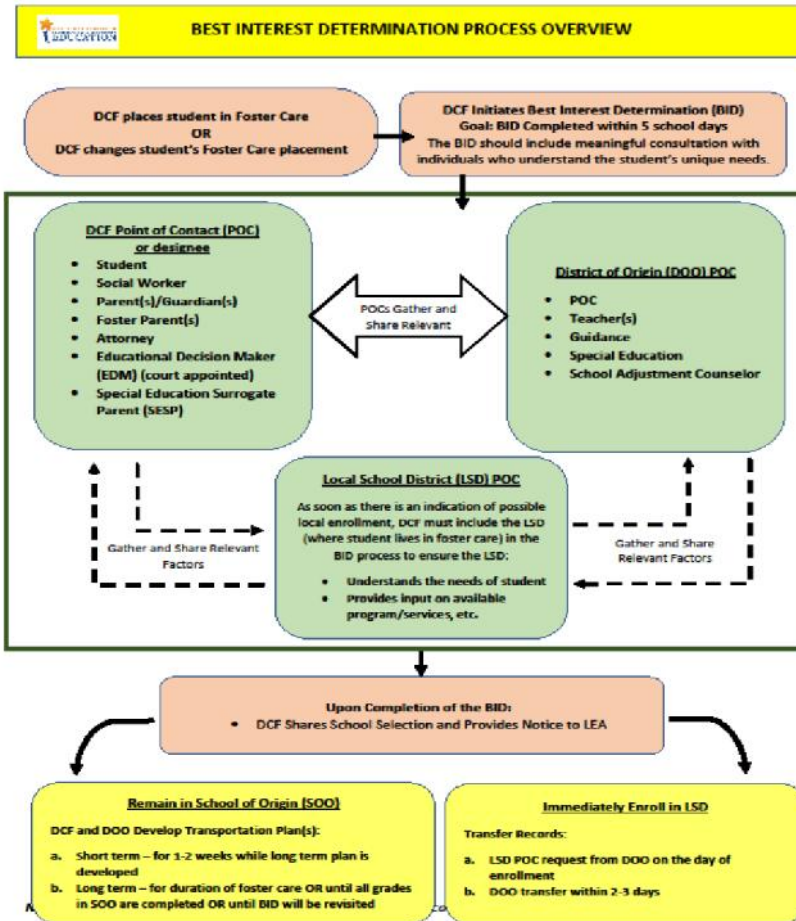
Ensures educational stability for students in foster care

- Requires a foster care point of contact in every district
- Requires a state foster care point of contact at DESE and DCF
- Establishes specific educational rights for students in foster care
 - School of Origin
 - A Best Interest Determination
 - Transportation
 - Immediate Enrollment



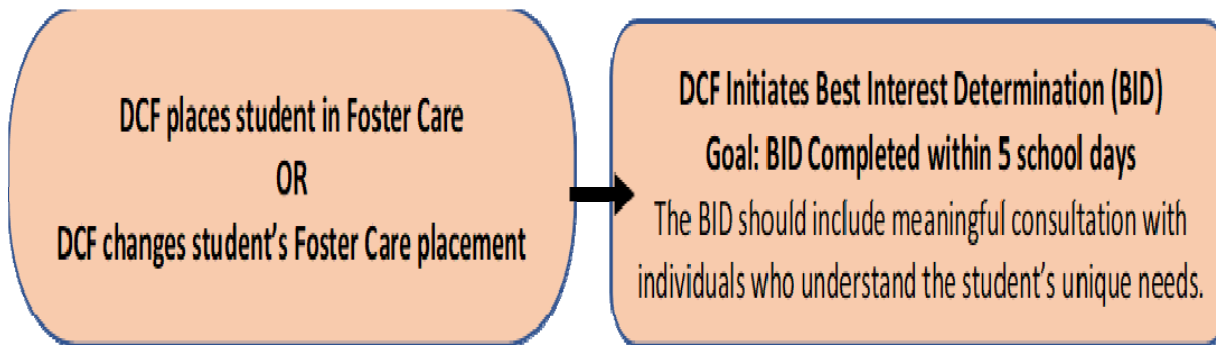
BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

Overview Chart is Now Available!



Foster Care Identified

Step 1 – DCF Identifies FC student and initiates BID

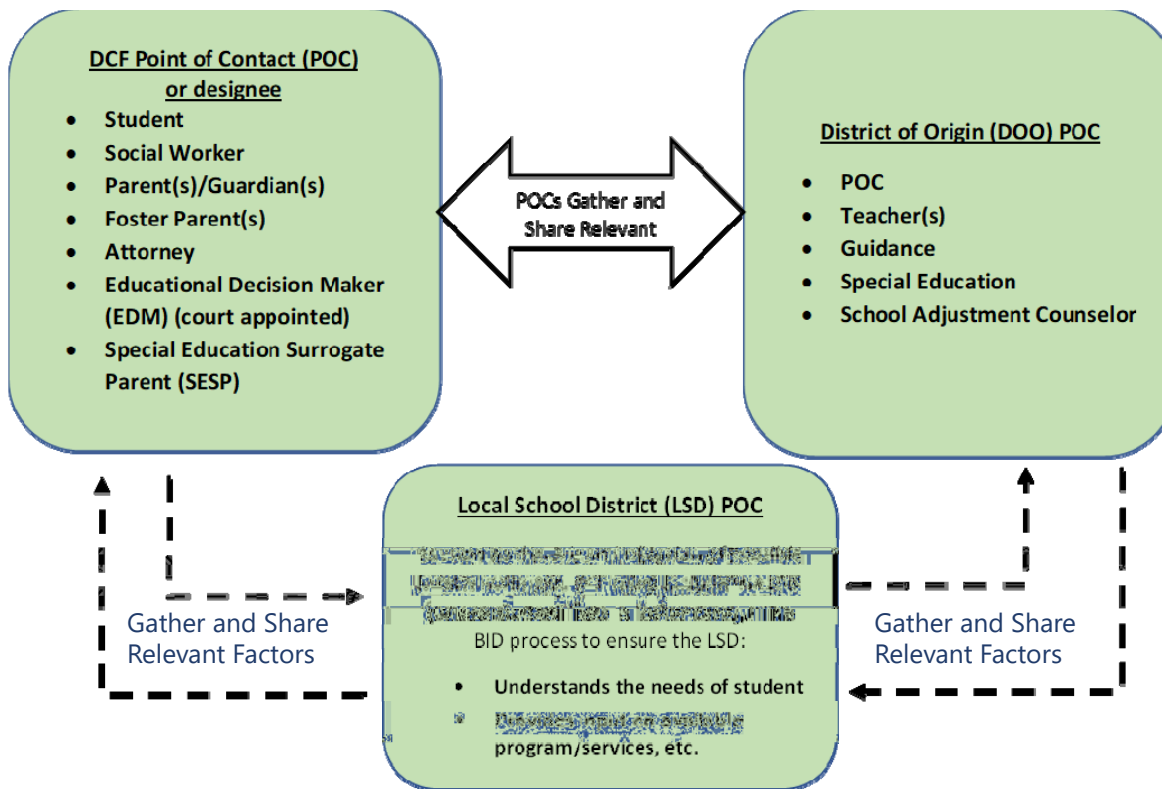


Note

- Decisions about which school a student will attend should be made collaboratively.
- Should include those in the best position to understand the student's unique needs.
- Student should remain in their school of origin until BID is completed.
- Process should be collaborative...but doesn't need to be one big meeting!

Collaboration

Step 2 – School Districts and DCF Collaborate



Note

- Collaborators may want to consider if the school of origin is in the best interest but only for a limited duration of time.
- Collaborators involved in the decision may wish to determine a time to revisit the question of whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin or enroll locally.
- Transportation costs should **not** be a factor in determining the best interest for the purpose of school selection.

Determination

Step 3 – Upon Completion of BID

Upon Completion of the BID:

- DCF Shares School Selection and Provides Notice to LEA

Note

- Notice to LEA from DCF - includes Emergency contact, residence, social worker, record release, transportation needs, etc.

Determination: School of Origin

Step 4a – Remain in School of Origin

Remain in School of Origin (SOO)

DCF and DOO Develop Transportation Plan(s):

- a. Short term – for 1-2 weeks while long term plan is developed
- b. Long term – for duration of foster care OR until all grades in SOO are completed OR until BID will be revisited

Note

- School of origin - school the student was attending when placed in foster care, or at time of a subsequent change in foster care placement.
- Districts must collaborate with DCF to establish policies and procedures to ensure that students who need transportation to remain in their school of origin get it.
- Absent another agreement, districts of origin are responsible for providing transportation to and from the school of origin.
- Districts should document all costs associated with this transportation.

Determination: Immediate Enrollment

Step 4b – Immediately Enroll in Local School District

Immediately Enroll in LSD

Transfer Records:

- a. LSD POC request from DOO on the day of enrollment
- b. DOO transfer within 2-3 days

Note

- If determined to be in a student's best interest to attend school locally (where placed in foster care), district must enroll immediately.
- With or without documentation
- District POCs should initiate records transfer, help facilitate transition
- ***Remember if there is no change in school of origin, there should be no change in enrollment.

Best Interest Determination Worksheet

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION FOR FOSTER CARE SCHOOL SELECTION – WORKSHEET			
Completed by: <input type="checkbox"/> LEA <input type="checkbox"/> DCF			
STUDENT:			
Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY):		GRADE LEVEL:	
Does the student have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)? (Yes/No)	Is the IEP signed? (Yes/No) If Yes, indicate by whom		
Does the student's IEP include transportation as a related service? (Yes/No)	Does the student have a 504 Plan? (Yes/No)		
SCHOOL (& DISTRICT) OF ORIGIN:			
DISTRICT OF ORIGIN POINT OF CONTACT (POC):			
LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (LSD): <i>(where student is living in foster care)</i>			
LSD POC:			
DCF Area Offices:			
DCF POC, Social Worker and Education Coordinators:			
FACTORS CONSIDERED			
<p>The following multiple factors related to the student's unique needs should be considered when making the BID. Additional factors may be considered and should be included under Other Factor(s). Check all factors considered and make notes below for documentation. Attach other relevant documents as appropriate (e.g., IEP, 504 Plan, Report Cards, Progress Reports, etc.)</p>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Student's preference (when age appropriate) <input type="checkbox"/> Preferences of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or EDM(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Distance/duration of travel to/from school <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipated duration of time in placement <input type="checkbox"/> Number of placements <input type="checkbox"/> Duration of time in the current school <input type="checkbox"/> Time of academic year <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance of family relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Placement and/or school(s) of sibling(s) <i>(provide names of sibling(s) and school(s) attending in BID notes section)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanency and goal(s) of placement (e.g., reunification, adoption, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Relationships to school staff and peers <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement in extracurricular activities <input type="checkbox"/> Current educational goals and services <input type="checkbox"/> Clinical/behavioral issues <input type="checkbox"/> Availability and quality of educational and SEL services <input type="checkbox"/> Immediate availability of services to meet needs of IEP or 504 Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Individual skills, needs, and social connections <input type="checkbox"/> School climate and safety issues on student <input type="checkbox"/> Academic performance and skills <input type="checkbox"/> Other Factor(s)		
NOTES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cost of transportation may not be factored when conducting the BID. Financial or programmatic responsibility for a student's special education services are separate from enrollment and the BID process. After the best interest determination, requests for clarification of school district responsibility for a student's special education services can be directed to DESE's Office of Special Education Policy and Planning. 			

Worksheet Page 1 Now Available!



Section One

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION FOR FOSTER CARE SCHOOL SELECTION – WORKSHEET			
Completed by: <input type="checkbox"/> LEA <input type="checkbox"/> DCF			
STUDENT:			
Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY):		GRADE LEVEL:	
Does the student have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)? (Yes/No)		Is the IEP signed? (Yes/No) If Yes, indicate by whom	
Does the student’s IEP include transportation as a related service? (Yes/No)		Does the student have a 504 Plan? (Yes/No)	
SCHOOL (& DISTRICT) OF ORIGIN:			
DISTRICT OF ORIGIN POINT OF CONTACT (POC):			
LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (LSD): <i>(where student is living in foster care)</i>			
LSD POC:			
DCF Area Office:			
DCF POC, Social Worker and Education Coordinator:			

Section Two

FACTORS CONSIDERED	
<p>The following multiple factors related to the student’s unique needs should be considered when making the BID. Additional factors may be considered and should be included under Other Factor(s). Check all factors considered and make notes below for documentation. Attach other relevant documents as appropriate (e.g., IEP, 504 Plan, Report Cards, Progress Reports, etc.)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Student’s preference (when age appropriate) <input type="checkbox"/> Preferences of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or EDM(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Distance/duration of travel to/from school <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipated duration of time in placement <input type="checkbox"/> Number of placements <input type="checkbox"/> Duration of time in the current school <input type="checkbox"/> Time of academic year <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance of family relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Placement and/or school(s) of sibling(s) <i>(provide names of sibling(s) and school(s) attending in BID notes section)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Permanency and goal(s) of placement (e.g., reunification; adoption, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Relationships to school staff and peers <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement in extracurricular activities <input type="checkbox"/> Current educational goals and services <input type="checkbox"/> Clinical/behavioral issues <input type="checkbox"/> Availability and quality of educational and SEL services <input type="checkbox"/> Immediate availability of services to meet needs of IEP or 504 Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Individual skills, needs, and social connections <input type="checkbox"/> School climate and safety issues on student <input type="checkbox"/> Academic performance and skills <input type="checkbox"/> Other Factor(s)
<p>NOTES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The cost of transportation may not be factored when conducting the BID.</i> • <i>Financial or programmatic responsibility for a student’s special education services are separate from enrollment and the BID process. After the best interest determination, requests for clarification of school district responsibility for a student’s special education services can be directed to DESE’s Office of Special Education Policy and Planning.</i> 	



Best Interest Determination Worksheet Page 2

BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION FOR FOSTER CARE SCHOOL SELECTION – WORKSHEET Completed by: <input type="checkbox"/> LEA <input type="checkbox"/> DCF			
BID NOTES			
COLLABORATORS IN THE BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check box if attaching any relevant correspondences/comments.			
NAME & CONTACT INFORMATION	RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT	DATE(S) and METHOD(S) OF ENGAGEMENT IN BID	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
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		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment

Worksheet Page 2 Now Available!



Section Three

BID NOTES

Section Four

COLLABORATORS IN THE BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check box if attaching any relevant correspondences/comments.			
NAME & CONTACT INFORMATION	RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT	DATE(s) and METHOD(s) OF ENGAGEMENT IN BID	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment
		<input type="checkbox"/> Call <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-Face	Date: <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment

Best Interest Determination Worksheet Page 3

Upon completion of conversations with ALL individuals who understand the unique needs of the student, the following is the resulting BID. The student will:			
<input type="checkbox"/> REMAIN ENROLLED IN SCHOOL OF ORIGIN. DCF will provide Notice to LEA to DOO.			
If any specialized transportation is needed, please describe:			
Short-Term Transportation Plan: (How will the student get to school while a permanent plan is established?)			
<input type="checkbox"/> DCF:			
<input type="checkbox"/> District:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe):			
Long-term Transportation Plan: (How will the student get to school?)			
Plan to revisit BID?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a plan to revisit the BID? If so, describe the factors to be revisited, person responsible for follow-up, etc.			
Person responsible for follow-up:			
Approximate date to revisit:			
<input type="checkbox"/> ENROLL LOCALLY (where the student is living in foster care).			
<input type="checkbox"/> DCF provides Notice to LEA and initiate immediate enrollment.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Records transfer requested by LSD POC (on the day of enrollment.)			
<input type="checkbox"/> DOO complete records transfer as soon as possible (within 2-3 days.)			
Checkmarks below indicate acknowledgement that the BID process occurred, has been completed and is accurately represented in this document.			
	NAME	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DATE
DCF Representative:			
DOO POC:			
LSD POC:			

Worksheet Page 3 Now Available!



IMPORTANT!

NOTE

This process and worksheet are not required, but are encouraged to facilitate and document the required BID.

School Selection Disputes

- Upon completion of the best interest determination, DCF has the authority to make final decisions about a student's best interest, but ***a school district may dispute DCF's best interest determination.***
- During the dispute resolution process, the student *must* attend the school selected by DCF following the local BID process. Transportation must be provided for the student, if needed.
- The dispute process and form can be found on DESE's Foster Care Webpage: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/foster/> and should be submitted to DESE at achievement@doe.mass.edu.

Almost done!

Questions?



Contact Information for Educational Stability Team

Christine Cowen, Migrant Education, Military Connected Students

781. 338.6301 ccowen@doe.mass.edu

Kristen McKinnon, Foster Care Point of Contact

781.338.6306 kmckinnon@doe.mass.edu

Sarah Slutterback, Homeless Education

781.338.6330 sslutterback@doe.mass.edu

Technical Assistance: Problem Resolution Services, 781.338.3700



THANK YOU

Educational Stability Team, Office of Student and Family Support

 781.338.3010

 achievement@doe.mass.edu

 www.doe.mass.edu

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