

BREAKOUT SESSION NOTES

How does our profession contribute to challenges?

Advocates	CASA	CPS	Education	Judges
Lack of knowledge about foster youth education issues.	Not talking to youth about education.	Lack of clarity on the law and related procedures and protocols.	Lack of trauma-informed educators, funding, staff, and time.	Large caseload means less time spent on each case and less time to develop relationships.
Lack of “fierce advocate” holding CPS and schools accountable for educational needs.	Others are not always clear about CASA’s role.	Incomplete and outdated Education Portfolios.	Lack of training: - ESCs’ training role is unclear. - Foster Care Liaison’s training role is unclear. - Clarify duties of counselors, principals, registrars.	
Lack of awareness of impact of trauma and nuances of trauma-informed care.	Maybe have not equipped advocates to navigate school system; might be missing emphasis on education in training.	Inconsistent/inadequate communication with relatives (i.e. about Education Portfolio content).	System is rigid on rules (i.e. enrollment procedures).	Inconsistent/inadequate communication between agencies.
Lack of collaboration/training with foster parents.		Child welfare staff turnover and excessive workload.	Not able to identify foster youth.	Lack of leadership within communities.
Lack of clarity about roles and responsibility.		Repeated placement moves.	Difficulties with information gathering and knowing what educational information is needed.	Lack of information about child’s education; when Education Portfolio is brought to court, it is often incomplete or empty.
Lack of education philosophy among advocates.		Lack of clarity on source(s) of information about children.	Poor communication between CPS/school personnel, between ISDs.	
Low expectations (i.e. regarding college); prejudice.		Lack of communication with schools.	Dropout rate and AYP influence placement decisions.	Too few foster homes.
Lack of focus due to child mobility.	Advocates do not always feel empowered or know where they can have impact.	Priority on safety—not education.	TREx not user-friendly; insufficient special education information.	
Advocates disrupting school day.		Low expectations of youth.	Failure to maintain confidentiality.	Barriers to sharing information (i.e. confidentiality issues).
Hard to advocate without running risk of being professionally alienated.		CPS stakeholders interrupt school day.	Lower academic expectations for foster children.	
Foster parents acting as educational advocate when cannot fill that role adequately.			Staff juggle several roles (especially in rural areas).	
No education advocacy training in PRIDE (as used in TX).			Difficult to gather foster parent, CPS, and ISD at mutually-convenient time.	
			Cafeteria managers unaware of foster care exceptions.	
			Lack of clarity about application of the Uninterrupted Scholars Act and FERPA.	
			System loses records.	

What can we, as a profession, do to improve these outcomes?

Advocates	CASA	CPS	Education	Judges
Seek CASAs as surrogates.	Advocate for education in court.	Improve communication within CPS, with schools and foster parents.	Support credit recovery, tutoring; do not encourage minimum plan.	Keep children with same school district.
Ensure clients have advocates in school.	Consider school placement in moves.	Include children in education-related discussions, communicate high expectations.	Educate staff about specific needs, impact of trauma; create open campus culture.	Share Education Summit knowledge with CASA.
Change attitude, raise expectations; advocate aggressively.	Update caregivers on child's education.	Check and revise Education Portfolio regularly.	Hire more liaisons, expand training, meet with ESCs regularly.	Team with local agencies.
Disrupt school less.	Follow child's grades and attendance; be known at school; talk to kids about school.	Raise awareness of/become familiarized with residential contracts and licensing standard requirements.	- Share their contact information on TEA website, clarify liaison's role.	Convene one-on-one placement hearings; have all players in one room.
Work with former educators to advocate for children and link with right services.	Ensure Education Portfolios and other records available, updated; offer to personally transport records and get copies for caregivers.	- Learn what to do when standards are not followed.	Create needs assessment and support strategies.	Appoint education "guardian" to remain with child throughout all placement and school moves; consider CASA.
Seek improvement in quality of evaluations and assessments.	Participate in enrollment conference.	- Who to communicate to?	Collaborate to address transportation issues.	Require children in court for all hearings.
Request IEEs.	Advocate for early assessments.	Training, mentoring, setting agenda for monthly visits.	Codify proven strategies.	Advocate for more foster parents.
Advocate for more education specialists.	Create relationship with/help provide training to Foster Care Liaisons.	- Who is important to student at school?	Raise expectations; pursue PBS.	Ask more education-related questions (school discipline, on-track with peers); use NCJFCJ questions.
Link with disability advocates to work with foster youth.	Ask school districts to designate and register their Foster Care Liaisons.	Meet with counselors.	Match kids with best-fit teacher.	Shorten special education assessment time frame.
Improve communication with youth.	Continue active support and/or appointment into extended care.	Update PRIDE training with TFFA.	Engage caregivers; educate them about academic supports.	Engage caregivers; educate them about academic supports.
Advocate for voluntary education advocates in foster placing agencies.	Use administrative support to address roadblocks.	Provide education training for case workers.	Train foster parent and CASA on education.	Train registrars and PEIMS coordinators on law, 2085.
Start/participate in consortiums.		Emphasize education to all parties.	Identify campus "champions" for foster care education and CPA contacts.	Make Education Portfolio available electronically; bring to court for review.
			Use foster care alumni as mentors.	Encouraging judges to attend CPC judges' conference, other educational summits.
			Ask Commissioner Williams to share information with campus administrators.	Use meetings with stakeholders to spread the word to local education and CPS caseworkers.
			Share successes and challenges with TEA to keep improving.	

What can I personally do to improve these outcomes?

Advocates	CASA	CPS	Education	Judges
<p>Add component of education training to foster parent training process.</p> <p>Look for someone within organization that can be the “education advocate.”</p> <p>Try to use mechanics that we already have at TFFA more often—i.e. email blasts monthly with an education “hint”. Have an article in each Focus that fleshes out those education hints.</p> <p>Raise awareness—online, print media, in person.</p> <p>Build standards into credentialing packets for private agencies. Work with DFPS and regional school districts to reinforce these concepts.</p> <p>Develop our web page and resources for AALs.</p> <p>Share successes, connect people with resources.</p> <p>Collaborate with other agencies.</p> <p>Develop more pre-screening training and development.</p> <p>Ensure that any policy that comes to the table truly acknowledges education concerns.</p> <p>Share all the recommendations from the Blueprint.</p>	<p>Create personal relationships with school personnel,</p> <p>Provide clear guidelines to volunteers about what information to share.</p> <p>Remind teachers about their ability to positively impact foster youth.</p> <p>Help celebrate successes with individual teachers and children.</p> <p>Share trauma informed care information with schools/teachers.</p> <p>Encourage foster parents/support their relationships with teachers.</p> <p>Attend parent/teacher conferences or set up one-on-one meetings. - Include CPS, foster parents, etc. when appropriate. - CASA can initiate and organize these meetings and follow up with others on educational needs.</p> <p>Advocate for school transition needs.</p>	<p>Role model for caseworkers.</p> <p>Ask more questions regarding education.</p> <p>Include education as part of Permanency Conference discussion points.</p> <p>Check IMPACT and update.</p> <p>Disrupt school less.</p> <p>Develop and participate in consortiums.</p> <p>Engage districts in foster youth-specific education issues.</p> <p>Work with CPAs to improve recruitment.</p> <p>Collaborate with teachers and foster parents; advocate for reading, math services.</p> <p>Invite teachers to Circles of Support Conferences¹.</p> <p>Find tutors with Child Welfare Board.</p> <p>Consider school placement at CPU.</p>	<p>Assess district’s accountability measures; evaluate available resources; get district consensus.</p> <p>Create listserv distribution process; volunteer to manage.</p> <p>Establish PEIMS indicator or otherwise identify as “at-risk”.</p> <p>Discuss education during monthly counseling networking sessions.</p> <p>Share information and resources extensively, when appropriate.</p> <p>Create fact sheets.</p> <p>Organize local meetings and develop a protocol for initiating discussion. - Tap into “community resource coordination group”. -Collaborate with Education Specialists.</p> <p>Research use of Title I Part D funds.</p> <p>Improve, standardize outcome tracking.</p> <p>Liaisons should explain enrollment, encourage placements close to home.</p> <p>ESCs must provide oversight.</p>	<p>Individual judges can locate foster homes.</p> <p>Encourage a culture of “go-to-college”.</p> <p>Ask more education-related questions, require information be added to affidavit.</p> <p>Meet with all agencies involved with child.</p> <p>Have Education Portfolio at hearing.</p> <p>Gain access to TReX.</p> <p>Review Joy Baskin’s paper.</p> <p>Hold quarterly meetings with CPAs.</p> <p>Meet with youth council.</p> <p>Order more Wraparound services to support education needs.</p>

¹ A Circle of Support Conference is a type of meeting offered to foster youth aged 16 and older to (a) develop a transition plan for moving from substitute care to adulthood and (b) connect them with supportive and caring adults who can help the youth after he or she leaves substitute care. See http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/circles_of_support.asp

			Tier 3 RTI – use foster children training as example and embed.	
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How do we pass the word along to our colleagues?

Advocates	CASA	CPS	Education	Judges
<p>Include education advocacy in all training for foster parents</p> <p>Get judges to appoint or link advocacy lawyer to represent at education meetings</p> <p>Courts designate Education Decision-Maker to empower advocacy</p>	<p>Emphasize importance of education and Education Portfolio with volunteers.</p> <p>Emphasize the importance of providing academic support and encouragement to youth and celebrating academic success.</p> <p>Review training (initial and ongoing) for possible improvements.</p> <p>Invite school personnel to provide ongoing volunteer and staff training.</p> <p>Consider impact of visits/provision of services during school hours; ensure, at least, not interrupting same class at same time.</p> <p>Help support/advocate for extracurricular activities.</p> <p>Community advocacy and awareness regarding services and therapists - Provide at child’s home/on evenings and weekends.</p>	<p>Provide education-related presentations at staff meetings.</p> <p>Add a “school notes” section to regional newsletter and discuss education at unit/leadership meetings.</p> <p>Develop an education app for smart phones.</p> <p>Train/retrain caseworkers and other personnel on education issues.</p> <p>Ensure education issues are discussed during case staffings.</p> <p>Publish an education-related “Tip of the Day”.</p> <p>Perhaps develop an anonymous way to ask questions.</p> <p>Train schools on CPS benefits.</p> <p>Listen more to each other and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Convene monthly meetings.</p> <p>Host online trainings; leverage Project Share website and other existing websites; standardize online resources.</p> <p>Use TEA letter distributed to superintendents each August. - See Region 20’s “Briefcase for the Superintendent” and enlist TASA support. - Publish listserv “blasts” to ESCs and ask them to share. - TASB to disseminate information to school boards. - Update legal community.</p> <p>Educate counselors and nurses (via the Nurses’ Network).</p> <p>Update school website with resource links.</p> <p>Seek guidance from foster care alumni speaker bureau.</p> <p>Utilize nonprofit community; seek foundation or grant funding for support.</p> <p>Provide information to caregivers and Foster Care Liaisons about enrollment processes;</p>	<p>NO RESPONSES LISTED FOR THIS QUESTION.</p>

			integrate into training about CPS.	
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<i>What resources and/or information is still needed to effectively support improved education outcomes?</i>				
Advocates	CASA	CPS	Education	Judges
<p>Tools to help implement quality special education services.</p> <p>Training on how to read an IEP.</p> <p>More education specialists in DFPS.</p> <p>Call for education advocates in foster placing agencies.</p> <p>Judicial checklists and sample court orders.</p> <p>Training videos (model quality advocacy and good judicial inquiry) and webinars.</p>	<p>Information about foster care liaisons (and educate them about CASA's role).</p> <p>Better relationships with CPS education specialists.</p> <p>Information about surrogate parents: role, process of appointment, training to qualify.</p> <p>If possible, identify volunteers/CASA leaders with school experience/expertise to help support peers.</p>	<p>Raise awareness (i.e. real need for transportation solutions).</p> <p>Gain access to TReX.</p> <p>Recruit and hire more staff, including education specialists; ensure smaller workload for all.</p> <p>Obtain tutoring resources that meet specific needs.</p> <p>Recruit more mentors.</p> <p>Develop community partnerships (i.e. Communities in Schools).</p> <p>Improve dialogue between caseworkers and foster parents.</p> <p>Develop more placement resources.</p> <p>Develop improved parent training.</p> <p>Improve attorney advocacy.</p> <p>Seek more judicial training.</p> <p>Support kids' participation in extracurricular activities.</p> <p>Seek access to more Wraparound services.</p> <p>Ensure youth voice included on agenda at TFFA.</p> <p>Seek more relative/fictive kin placements.</p> <p>Improve school input in evaluations.</p> <p>Obtain more training on psychological evaluations.</p> <p>Develop an electronic Education Portfolio.</p>	<p>Need to identify students who are in care.</p> <p>Need additional training in all areas, including education law, trauma-informed care, CPS system, foster care experience, etc.</p> <p>Need to improve the quality of information entered into the Education Portfolio.</p> <p>Need on-demand resource to turn to when the need arises (i.e. website).</p> <p>Need access to simple one-page information sheet with appropriate contact information.</p> <p>Need to develop protocol for convening local stakeholder groups around issue.</p> <p>Need information about and resources for transportation.</p> <p>Need CPS contact list.</p> <p>Glean best practices from model districts.</p> <p>Share legislative updates.</p> <p>Research grant opportunities.</p> <p>Create court orders that specifically address education (or turn Form 2085 into a court form).</p>	<p>Create a more robust online system for credit complete for foster youth, similar to Texas Virtual School Network, to allow kids to catch up with missed class credits.</p> <p>Foster home location map to overlay with school districts.</p> <p>School information added to court report.</p>

