

# A Beginner's Guide to Foster Care

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Kimberly Humphrey  
Office of Federal and State Accountability

# Objectives

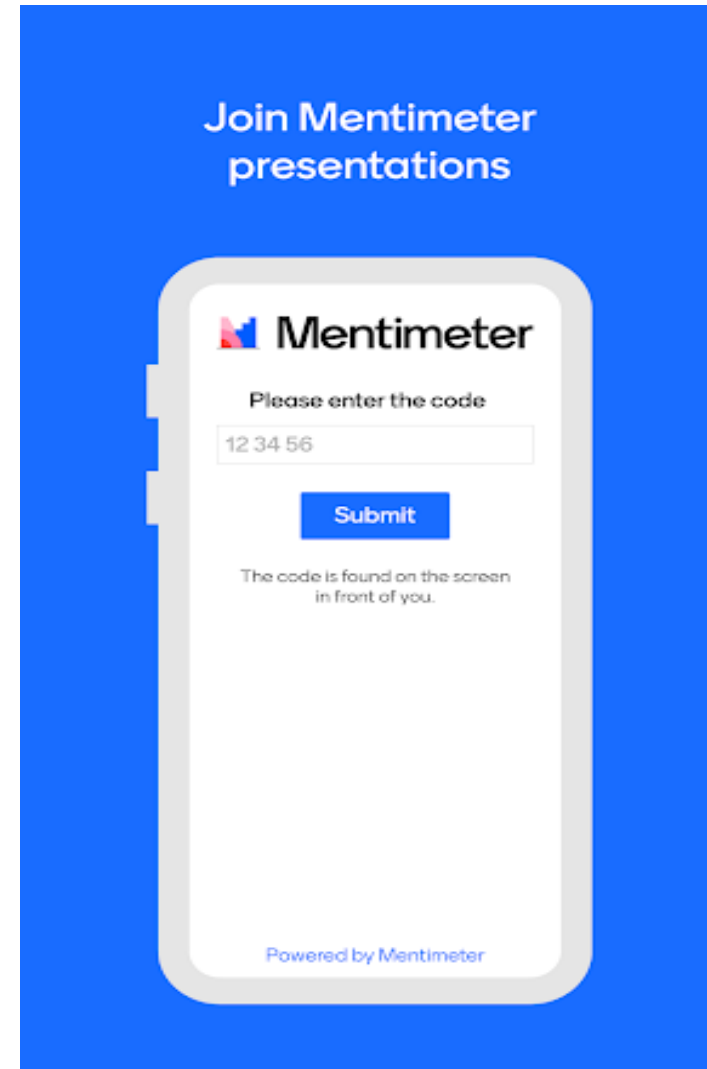
- Review the Fostering Connections Act and the Reauthorization of The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 including Local Education Agency (LEA) and the Child Welfare Agency (CWA) responsibilities
- Explore how collaboration between child welfare agencies, schools, and school districts can positively impact student outcomes.
- Investigate ways to maximize educational stability for students in foster care



# Question: What is your role?

Presenter:  
Kim Humphrey, MSW  
Department of Education,  
Foster Care Point of Contact

Code: 5216 8242



# Definition of Foster Care

- Is when 24-hour substitute care is provided because the child has been placed away from his or her parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility. This definition is established by the Fostering Connections Act.\*
- Formal Kinship Foster Care: A relative who is related to a child by blood, marriage, adoption, or another adult (Fictive Kin) who is not related by blood, marriage, or adoption, but who has a relationship with the child or the child's family has met the requirements for licensure as a foster parent.

\*Includes but not limited to Foster Care Family, Group Home, Emergency Shelters, Residential Facilities, Kinship providers



# Other Arrangements

## Informal Kinship Care:

These arrangements are not formalized through the courts or child welfare agency (CWA). They might be recommended by the CWA (might be referred to as a ‘safety plan’ through family preservation), but this is not foster care as defined on the previous slide.



# Foster Care Data

54% of young adults who age out of foster care have completed high school.

On average, youth in foster care read at only a 7th grade level after completing 10th or 11th grade.

Children and youth in foster care who lack educational stability are more likely to suffer from mental health problems, live in poverty, and many become homeless.

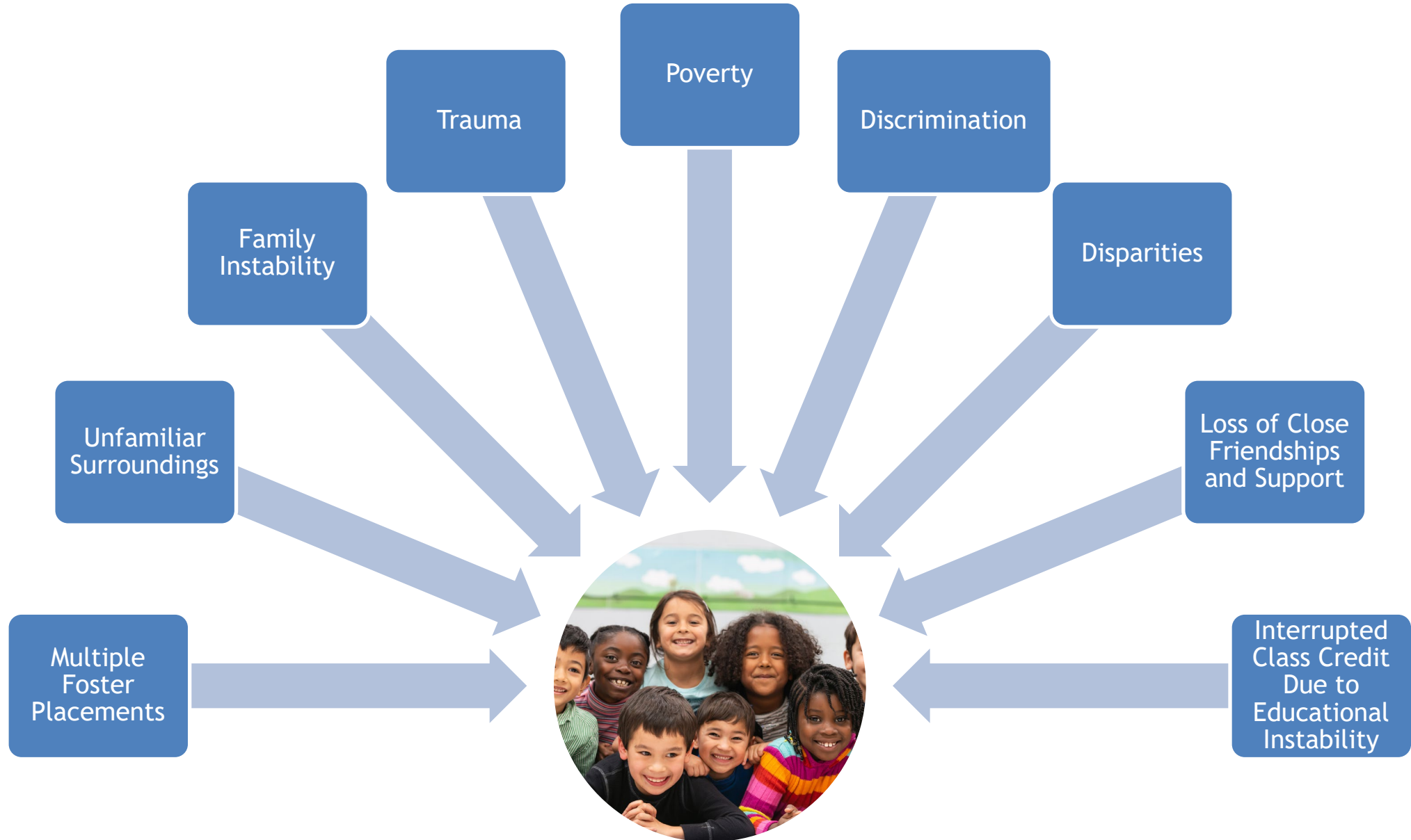


# South Carolina Foster Care Data

- Approximately 4,100 students are identified as students in foster care, per the Foster Roster Count.
- Currently, there are only 7 districts with no students in foster care.
- 1,408 (around 34%) students in foster care receive special education services (504, IEP, IBP).
- Children in foster care for 8 days to 1 year experience the following number of placements:
  - 1 placement—40%
  - 2 placements—30%
  - 3 placements—14%
  - 4-9 placements—14%
  - 10 or more placements—1%



# What a Student in Foster Care may be Experiencing



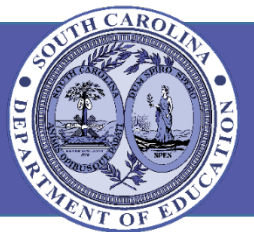




# Educational Stability Can Make a Difference

Educators make crucial contributions to the development and well-being of children and youth. Due to their close relationships with children and families, educators can play a key role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect and, when necessary, support children, youth, and families involved with child welfare.

- Provide continuity in education
- Maintain important relationships at school
- Provide stability during a traumatic time for the child
- Improves the chances of successful completion of high school



# Educational Stability for Students in Foster Care

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA), includes new foster care provisions in Title I, Part A. These provisions went into effect on December 10, 2016. In June 2016, the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services released joint, [non-regulatory guidance](#) on ESSA's educational stability provisions.



# Shared Responsibility

ESSA requires the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to describe the steps it will take to collaborate with the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) to ensure the educational stability of children in foster care. [ESSA section 1112(c)(5)(A)]

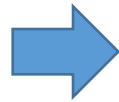


# A Shared Responsibility



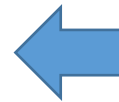
## Child Welfare

- Local Case Workers
- Regional Community Liaisons Coordinators
- State Level Contact
- Foster Parents



## Enrollment Protocols

- Best Interest Determination (BIDs)
- Immediate Enrollment with Record Transfer/Sharing
- Transportation Plans



## Education

- LEA and SEA Foster Care Point of Contacts
- Special Education
- School Staff



# Title I, Part A- Educational Stability [ESSA section 1111(g)(1)(E)]

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## BEST INTEREST DETERMINATION (BID)

A student in foster care must remain in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement (School Of Origin-SOO) unless it is not in the child's best interest, including consideration of the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.

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Allows stakeholders to determine whether it is in a student's best interest to remain at his/her SOO or enroll in the neighborhood school associated with his/her current placement.

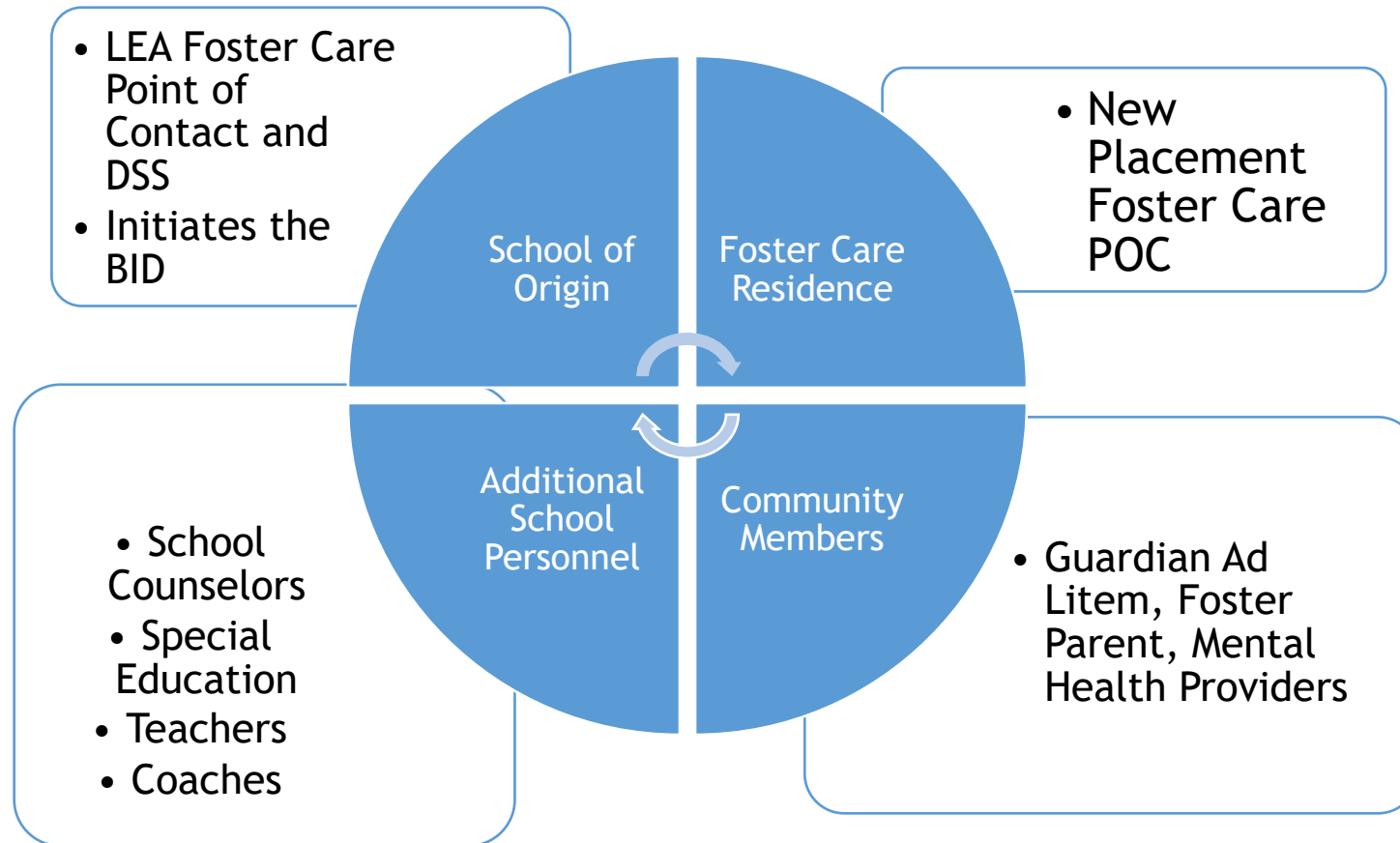
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## IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT (IE)

If it is not in the child's best interest to remain in the school in which the child is currently attending, then the child is to be immediately enrolled in the new school.



# BID Meetings



# IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT

- Case manager or foster care parents should take the immediate enrollment forms and signed BID forms to the new school.
- A child can't be denied enrollment because they don't have proper documentation (i.e., school, health, and additional documents)
- The child should be attending classes and receiving appropriate academic services even if all the documentation is not yet complete.





# Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008

Amended titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act

Child Welfare Agencies (CWA) must include certain education records in a child's written case plan including:

- the most recent names and addresses of the child's educational providers
- the child's grade level performance
- the child's school record
- other relevant education information that the CWA has determined is appropriate to include in the case plan

P.L. 110-351



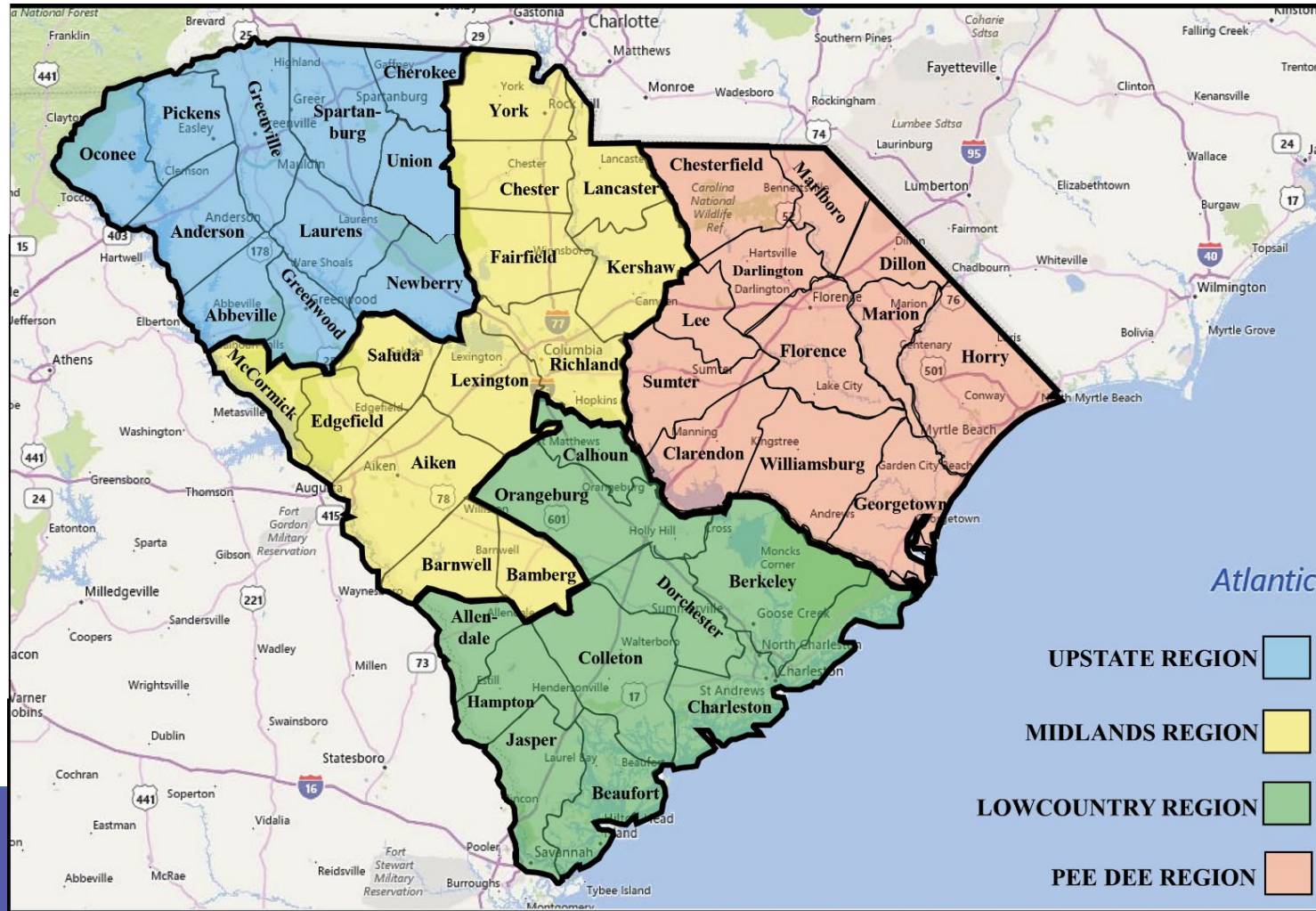
# DSS Local Point of Contact Case Managers

Responsibilities include the following:

- Serving as the primary POC between schools, families, and other service providers
- Notifying the LEA POC when a foster care child enters foster care or has a change of placement
- Inviting relevant parties to participate in the best interest determination of the foster care child
- Completing the immediate enrollment form when it is not in the best interest of the foster care child to remain in the current school
- Facilitating enrollment in the new school



## Additional Points of Contact: Regional Community Liaison Coordinators



# Contact Information

Shana Charles: Statewide Education/Non-Citizen Advocate, 803-898-3123 office, 803-360-5351 cell  
[shana.charles@dss.sc.gov](mailto:shana.charles@dss.sc.gov)

LaVerne Latham: Lowcountry CLC, 803-813-1480 office, 803-378-4263 cell,  
[Laverne.p.latham@dss.sc.gov](mailto:Laverne.p.latham@dss.sc.gov)

Tahmeka Pigott-Murphy: Upstate CLC, 864-467-7757 office, 803-391-9751 cell,  
[Tahmeka.PigottMurphy@dss.sc.gov](mailto:Tahmeka.PigottMurphy@dss.sc.gov)

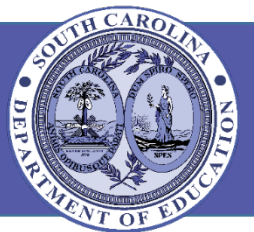
Avone D. Hunter: Pee Dee CLC, (803) 773-0148 ext. 309 office, (803) 530-5370 cell,  
[Avone.hunter@dss.sc.gov](mailto:Avone.hunter@dss.sc.gov)

Midlands CLC contact coming soon!



# LEA Point of Contact Foster Care Liaison

- Facilitating the best interest determination process [ESSA Section 1111(g)(1)(E)(i)]-  
POC for BID Process (take into account summer break)
- Facilitating the transfer of records when it is determined not to be in a child's best interest to remain in his/her current school [ESSA Section 1112 (c)(5)(B)(i)]
- Ensuring that barriers are removed that prevent students in foster care from immediately enrolling in the district when ESSA provisions have been followed
- Facilitating the data sharing process with CWAs
- Developing and coordinating local transportation procedures in collaboration with local CWA POC [ESSA Section 1112 (c)(5)(B)(i)]



# State Education Agency Requirements [ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(E)]



SEA collaboration with State CWA



Provide guidance on policies (including Schools of Origin, Best Interest Determinations, Immediate enrollment & records transfer, etc.)



Technical Assistance and Professional Development



SEA point of contact



In addition, send out monthly foster count emails





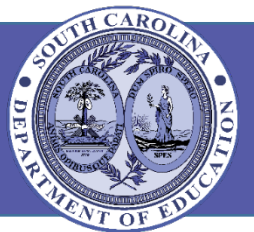
# Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Foster Care

Does the child have an IEP, 504 Plan, or BIP (Behavior Intervention Plan)?

Please provide a copy of the documents with the Case Manager

The receiving school should accept the current IEP and provide services to the child.

30 days to re-evaluate the IEP

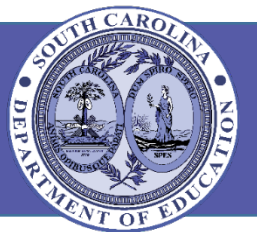


# Transportation

- Case Manager must be involved in the Transportation Plan.
- LEA POC and Case Managers can work with Regional CLCs to create an individual transportation plan.
- During SCDE Monitoring, Districts will provide an example of this plan.

Each LEA should maintain written transportation procedures:

- How such transportation will be “provided, arranged, and funded”;
- How “additional costs” incurred in transporting the student to the SOO will be handled; and
- How transportation will be provided in a “cost-effective” manner.







COLLABORATION

# Multi-Tiered Systems of Support



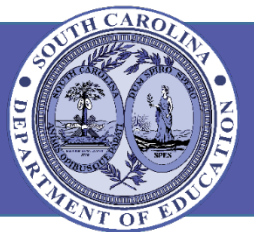
# Community Connections

- Local Community Based Organizations (Churches, Associations, Non-profits)
- [Foster Parent Association](#)
- [Halos \(Charleston, Low Country\)](#)
- [Epworth Children's Home](#)
- [South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force](#)
- [The Hive Community Circle \(Domestic Violence and Abuse\)](#)
- [Children's Trust of South Carolina](#)
- [Family Connections \(Special Needs\)](#)
- [Kin GAP \(Guardianship Assistance Program\) Bill](#)
- [KinshipSC](#)
- [Pendleton Place \(Upstate\)](#)
- [Kindred Hearts of South Carolina \(Midlands\)](#)
- [DSS Resources](#)
- [SC Thrive](#)
- [Food Access Map](#)



# Optimistic Closure

- What are two things you learned today that will increase the educational stability of student in foster care?
- Who is one person/organization you are going to connect with to help you serve your students in foster care?
- Share what your district is already doing that helps students in foster care succeed.





Questions

# Contact Information

Kim Humphrey, SCDE Foster Care Point of Contact

Phone: 803.734.3759

Email: [khumphrey@ed.sc.gov](mailto:khumphrey@ed.sc.gov)

