



Foster and Relative Care Initiative Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the LAUP Foster Care Initiative (FCI)?

The Foster Care Initiative is a pilot project designed to increase enrollment of children in foster care or relative care in LAUP-funded preschools, to provide early identification, screening, referral and follow-up for these children and to enhance provider's ability to serve LAUP foster children and caregivers.

2. What does the term "relative care" mean? Is it different from foster care?

The term *relative care* is used to refer to children who are NOT formally involved in the child welfare system. These children reside with family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles or older siblings through informal means or through formalized arrangements such as guardianship through probate court. *Foster care* is meant to specify those children, regardless of their placement type, who are under the supervision of child welfare. Although some children in foster care reside with relatives, the term used to distinguish that is *kinship care*.

3. Why is it important to focus on children in foster or relative care?

Being better prepared for kindergarten and beyond is critical for children in foster and relative care due to long-term educational implications that affect this at-risk student population. According to studies, it is estimated that 25 percent of foster care children are placed in special education, as many as 75 percent in California function below grade level, and 83 percent are held back by grade 3.

4. How do LAUP preschool providers participate in the pilot project?

LAUP preschools that participate in the pilot project are encouraged to incorporate outreach strategies for enrollment, attend special trainings, and support foster and relative caregivers by helping them access community resources they need.

5. What kind of training do LAUP preschool providers receive?

LAUP Foster Care Initiative offers workshops that promote positive mental health in preschool children as well as show providers how to use specific screening tools. Socio-emotional wellness is an important part of school readiness and early intervention for social, emotional or behavioral concerns among these children is especially important.

6. Is LAUP working with the Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS)?

Yes. LAUP is working with DCFS to promote LAUP programs and to encourage foster and relative caregivers to enroll their four-year-olds in LAUP-funded preschools.

7. Which LAUP providers participate in the Foster Care Initiative?

Providers who are invited to become a demonstration site have been specially selected because they meet certain criteria. Providers who choose to participate in the pilot project will be well prepared to promote inclusion of foster children and children in relative care in their preschools, thereby enhancing the quality of their program.

8. Where can I find more information about foster and relative care as well as resources in my community?

Below are a few web links to resources in Los Angeles County as well as online national resources.

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health
Mental Health Service Providers Listed by Service Area
<http://dmh.lacounty.info/providers/map-sa.html>

The National Foster Parent Association, a nonprofit, volunteer organization, is the only national organization which strives to support foster parents and remains a consistently strong voice on behalf of all children.

<http://www.nfpainc.org/>

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) represents over 7,500 child and adolescent psychiatrists. This web page contains information and fact sheets for families regarding foster care.

http://www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/foster_care

The Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care was announced on May 7, 2003. The Commission seeks to investigate and offer comprehensive recommendations in the following targeted areas: 1) Improving existing federal financing mechanisms to facilitate faster movement of children from foster care into safe, permanent families and to reduce the need to place children in foster care. 2) Improving court oversight of child welfare cases to facilitate better and timelier decisions related to children's safety, permanence, and well-being.

<http://pewfostercare.org/>

California Department of Social Services, Children and Family Services Foster Care

http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cfsweb/FosterCare_310.htm

The Foster and Kinship Care Education (FKCE) Program provides education and support opportunities to caregivers of children and youth in out-of-home care so that these providers may meet the educational, emotional, behavioral and developmental needs of children and youth in the foster care system

http://www.cccco.edu/divisions/ss/fostercare/foster_child.htm

The California Foster Youth Education Task Force is a coalition of 21 organizations dedicated to improving educational outcomes for foster youth. This web link will direct you to educational fact sheets for children in foster care. Information provided includes AB490, Special Education, Educational Rights for children in out-of-home care, non-public schools, AB3632 and school discipline.

<http://www.abanet.org/child/rciji/education/californiafactsheets082205.pdf>

The Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care (HCPCFC) is a public health nursing program located in county child welfare service agencies and probation departments to provide public health nurse expertise in meeting the medical, dental, mental and developmental needs of children and youth in foster care.

<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/pcfh/cms/hcpcfc/>

Los Angeles County Department of Children & Family Services

<http://dcfs.co.la.ca.us/>

Casey Family Programs' mission is to provide and improve—and ultimately prevent the need for—foster care. Casey Family Programs provides direct services, and they promote advances in child-welfare practice and policy.

<http://www.casey.org/Home>