



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



SUFFOLK
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Foster Care Services

Enrollment of Students in Foster Care in Suffolk Public Schools

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 is a federal mandate that ensures school stability for children in out-of-home care. The act requires that the child welfare agency (i.e., department of social services, child-placing agencies, etc.) coordinate with local educational agencies (local school divisions) to ensure educational stability for every child in foster care. The Code of Virginia was amended in 2011 to mirror the educational stability component of the Fostering Connections Act.

For children and youth in foster care, a change in *home* placement frequently results in a change in *school* placement. The educational impact of every school change is significant. Each time students enter new schools they must adjust to different curricula, different expectations, new friends, and new teachers. Keeping children in the same school:

- provides continuity in education;
- maintains important relationships at school;
- provides stability during a traumatic time for the children; and
- improves educational and life outcomes.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) case worker and Suffolk Public Schools' (SPS) foster care liaison will work together to determine the student's best interest for school placement and ensure educational stability for the student. *The presumption is that the student will remain in the current school where he/she was last enrolled, unless contrary to the student's best interest.* The DSS caseworker and SPS foster care liaison, in collaboration with the student and other key partners, make a determination as to whether the student should:

- remain in the school where the student was enrolled at the time of placement in the new residence, considering the appropriateness of the educational setting; or
- change schools and enroll in the school of residence for the child's or youth's new residence placement, if remaining in the current school is not in the student's best interest. The student must be enrolled immediately and appropriately with all educational records provided to the new school.

For more information regarding enrolling a Foster Care student in Suffolk Public Schools, please contact:

Randolph Boone, *Foster Care Liaison*
Office of Student Services
Suffolk Public Schools
757-925-6750

You may also visit the [Suffolk Department of Social Services](#). You can contact Suffolk DSS at 757-514-7450, or call 1-888-VDSS-2DA (1-888-837-7232). You may also contact us via mail by writing to the [Suffolk Department of Social Services](#).