

To: All Staff

From: John Bates, Foster Care Program Manager

Date: January 23, 2003

RE: Foster Children Entering A New School

Children who come into foster care are usually entering a stranger's home. Entering a stranger's home, coupled with changing schools, can be a very a traumatic experience for the child. This unexpected change makes a child's transition into a new school even more difficult. It is one of our goals to help make this challenging transition an easier one for the foster child involved.

In a wonderful collaborative effort to assist foster children at the time of entering a new school after being placed in a foster home, the Department of Education has agreed to have school personnel available to conference with division staff and foster parents upon enrolling or shortly thereafter enrolling a foster child in school. Prior to the meeting, the DFS staff will have the Interagency Consent to Release Information form signed so that information can be freely shared between DFS and the school personnel. This will be the time when DFS staff can share information that will help the school in developing the child's educational plan and ease the stress on the child that naturally occurs when placed in a new school environment.

Effective immediately when enrolling a foster child into a new school, you should:

- Telephone the school counselor to inform them you will be enrolling a foster child in school and request a conference upon arrival.
- Contact the foster parent to request their participation in this meeting.
- If the child has an educational surrogate contact them to request they participate in this meeting
- Be prepared to share medical or other special needs of the foster child
- DFS staff should request a mentor for the child during this meeting

The counselor will include the child's teacher and any other appropriate school staff for this meeting. Thanks in advance for your cooperation in this effort and "Thinking of the Child First".