

# 10 Ways to Support your Foster Scholar at School

## 1. Keep in Contact

Reach out to school employees and form a positive working relationship with them. Let school counselors, teachers and administrators know that they can always call or email you if needed. Also obtain contact information from your scholar's teachers. Attempt to remain in regular contact with them. Use all forms and means of communication. Through text messages, email, cell phones, and office phones. It is essential that you remain up to date with your scholar's progress, both with academics and behavior.

## 2. Set up AERIES Parent Portal

Use AERIES regularly to stay updated on your scholar's progress. AERIES is an online portal that shows attendance, grades, and behavior interventions for your scholar.

## 3. Connect with the District's Foster Scholar Liaison

The foster liaison is responsible for administering monthly updates with scholars and their families. Please use these phone calls to get answers to questions you may have regarding the academic, social, and emotional health of your scholar. The liaison is responsible for ensuring barriers to academic success are removed so your scholar may thrive. The liaison may provide access to laptops, school supplies, uniforms, and other supplies as needed to support your scholar.

## 4. Update Teachers

Not only should you as a foster parent request regular behavior updates from the scholar's school, but a responsible foster parent will provide such information to the school as well. If your foster scholar is having a particularly difficult time at home, let the teachers and counselors know, allowing these educators to be prepared and equipped to handle any difficulties that might come their way.

## 5. Let the School Know about Visitation Day

Visitation day can be hard sometimes. It is likely that your scholar from foster care will have a difficult time concentrating and focusing on school work the day of a visitation, and many times the day after, as well. When your scholar is having an emotional or challenging time with visitations, you can help your scholar by informing the teachers beforehand, giving them some notice in advance. An email, a text message, or a phone call are all means that you can use to notify teachers and school counselors. Along with this, you can suggest to the scholar's caseworker that visitations and medical appointments be made after school or on weekends, in order to not miss any more days of school, so the scholar doesn't fall even further behind.

## **6. Help with School Work**

School work will likely not come easy. Foster scholars, in general, tend to perform below level in regard to both academic performance and positive behavior. Most scholars in foster care are behind in math and reading skills. It is important that you and the scholar's teachers set realistic goals for the scholar. Find out where the scholar's learning ability and level of knowledge is, and work with her/him at this level. Talk to your scholar's teachers about his/her abilities and if any accommodations need to be made. You should encourage your scholar to set goals and expectations, and celebrate every success, no matter how big or small they may be.

## **7. Be Involved**

You can help your foster scholar in his development by encouraging your scholar to participate in activities outside of the classroom. Many schools have extracurricular organizations and activities with various school sports, music, and clubs. Along with this, community sports and organizations also allow scholars the opportunity to not only participate and develop these skills, but to learn new skills, develop talents and to exercise.

## **8. Be Ready**

It is going to be tough for your scholar. A scholar in foster care often has a very hard time exhibiting proper school behavior during the school day, as school is simply a constant reminder that they are, indeed, foster scholars without a true home. The continuous reminder that their peers are living with biological family members, while they are not, is a difficult reality for them and can be manifested in several ways. Some foster scholars simply withdraw and become antisocial in an attempt to escape their current environment. Some scholars may have a difficult time adjusting as they may have been through various placements and schools within a short period of time. Others may thrive. Each foster scholar is different so it is imperative you have regular check-ins with your scholar daily, to see where and how you can best support them.

## **9. Take a Tour**

This is yet another unfamiliar place for your scholar from foster care. Before his/her very first day in class, take some time to go on a tour with your scholar through the building. Ask an administrator or school counselor to guide you and your scholar through the school. This will allow your scholar to feel more comfortable once she/he begins class.

## **10. Understand this is Probably Not Fun**

In some cases, school is the last place your foster scholar wants to be at. They may want to go back to their home and family, and is simply trying to survive each day. Some foster scholars often have a difficult time exhibiting proper school behavior during the school day. For many, school is a constant reminder that they are, indeed, foster scholars without a true home. The continuous reminder that their peers are living with biological family members, while they are not, is a difficult reality for them and can be manifested in several ways. Some foster scholars simply withdraw and become antisocial in an attempt to escape their current environment. For many foster scholars, violent behavior becomes the norm, as they not only act out in a negative and disruptive fashion in school, but in their foster home as well. This can prompt yet another move to a new foster home and another school.

Your scholar from foster care is depending on you to help them, not just in your home, but at school, as well. Quite simply, if you don't help them succeed, who will?

Adapted from: <https://www.scholaradvocates.net/8-ways-help-foster-scholarren-school/>