

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Child and Family Services Agency



Who is involved in the child's life in terms of education?

- **Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) Social Worker and/or designated support staff:** The child is temporarily committed to the care of the Child and Family Services Agency. This child will have either a CFSA Social Worker or Social Worker through a contracted private agency. Additionally, many students are assigned CFSA appointed support staff (i.e. Family Support Workers) who will be involved in the child's educational process and monitoring.
- **Caregiver:** The caregiver is the individual(s) primarily responsible for the child's needs while a child is placed in the care of CFSA. A caregiver can range from a relative or friend of the child's family to a foster parent or group home facility. In DC, caregivers are also referred to as "Resource Parent".
- **Education Decision Maker:** Unless the District of Columbia Superior Court has limited education rights, the biological parent or parents still retain education decision-making rights. The Education Decision Maker is the person appointed by the DC Superior Court to make decisions regarding the child's education. If a child receives, or may be in need of, special education services, the Education Decision Maker is the person with the legal authority to make special education decisions on the child's behalf and provide consent for evaluation and services.

For children eligible for Special Education, if someone else other than the parent has been appointed to serve as the Education Decision Maker then s/he is considered the "parent" or "surrogate parent" under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and has the same rights as a parent to participate in the special education process.

Who to notify for education-related issues:

- **Illness, Injury, Homework Issues, Field Trip or other authorizations** (*day-to-day decisions*)
 - Contact the caregiver with any concerns. If you cannot reach the caregiver, please contact the Social Worker.
- **Discipline Issues:**
 - For immediate response, call the caregiver. If you cannot reach the caregiver, please contact the Social Worker.
 - Notify the Education Decision Maker to inform him/her of the incident and to schedule a disciplinary meeting, if necessary.
 - It is helpful to send all written notices about school discipline to the Social Worker, Caregiver, and Education Decision Maker.
- **Special Education Decision Making:**
 - Notify the Education Decision Maker of all issues related to identification, evaluation, educational placement, and provision of special education and related services for a child. The Education Decision Maker must sign all documents related to the child's special education needs even when the child is in CFSA custody.
It is helpful to send all written notices related to special education to the Social Worker, caregiver, and Education Decision Maker.

If you are unsure of who to contact, or the contact information listed on this form is not serving your needs, please contact the Social Worker or the following CFSA education specialists in the Office of Well Being:

- Timothy Fitzgerald, 202-727-8028, timothy.fitzgerald@dc.gov
- Charlotte Williams, 202-715-7787, charlotte.williams2@dc.gov
- Cortni Mitchell-Colston, 202-727-4951, cortni.mitchell-colston2@dc.gov
- **General Questions:** Megan Dho, Education Supervisor, 202-727-1303; megan.dho@dc.gov