

Educational Workplan for Children Housed in Level II Contract Group Care

There is a presumption that children who are staffed and placed in Level II group care placements should be educated in local public schools. All Level II group care placements will designate a staff person to serve as a school liaison for children in DCS custody. The DCS educational specialist and contract agency school liaison will work closely to assure any child enrolled in public school gets the necessary educational plan to assure success. The contract agency liaison will communicate with the local school system where the child is enrolled (LEA) to establish the type of working relationship that allows the child to succeed and to ensure that children in DCS custody are being treated fairly and provided appropriate education services. For each individual child, the contract agency liaison will be responsible for monitoring school performance and behavioral issues, so that the contract agency can provide educational supports, which are complimentary to the public school program.

Agencies with Level II group homes and treatment centers may have youth who have an identified and documented treatment need which would seem to prohibit a public school educational placement for a period of time. Agencies with a Level II group facility wishing to operate an in-house educational program for children in DCS custody must submit a proposal to operate this component. DCS must grant approval in order for the agency to operate an in-house school, serving children in DCS custody.

Agencies contracting to provide in-house school services will take the following steps in determination of educational services:

- At admission each youth will be reviewed by the treatment team and the DCS case manager for determination of educational needs.
- The agency will admit the youth to public school, monitor, and provide liaison services if the treatment team determines and documents that a youth does not have treatment or educational issues which would require in-house school services.
- If the youth requires an in-house educational program, the youth may be served in the agency in-house school up to thirty (30) total days.
- At, or prior to the thirty-day limit, the contract agency will schedule a staffing and give notice to all interested parties. The staffing must include the Home County Case Manager, individual(s) with educational rights, agency staff, other involved adults, and the educational specialist and/or attorney, or health unit staff, as necessary and appropriate. A consensus will be reached regarding educational services that will best meet the needs of the youth and his/her treatment plan. If the consensus indicates that the child should continue to receive services at an in-house school, the reasons for such placement and the goals of in-house services must be clearly documented. An expected duration for in-house educational services should be included in the documentation.

- If no consensus regarding the most appropriate educational setting is reached at the staffing, the HCCM and education specialist will, within 3 days of the staffing, present the case directly to the regional administrator for a decision.

If the youth is to remain in an in-house school for more than 30 days, the treatment team will establish the specific treatment issues that require the child to be in the in-house class and provide a review and target date for completion of the treatment and projected date for transition to public school.

It is anticipated that there may be a basis for DCS custody youth to be in an in-house school for the following reasons:

- Youth with current identified alcohol and drug treatment issues that require a self-contained treatment program
- Youth with identified sexual offending treatment issues that require self-contained program
- Youth for who zero tolerance issues prohibit enrollment despite involvement and efforts of the educational specialist and the education attorney.
- Youth placed in wilderness programs in which the treatment regime is so integrally related to the education program that attendance at public school will disrupt treatment.
- Youth with crisis requiring intensive supervision due to community or child safety treatment needs or at imminent risk of disruption of placement within this service.

Youth who may be approved by the Regional Administrator for waiver from attending public school and be enrolled in alternative educational programs include:

- Youth age 17, appropriate, eligible, and desiring to take the G.E.D.
- Youth eligible for, and desiring enrollment in vocational or journeyman training
- Youth who have graduated from high school or achieved a G.E.D.

DCS Transition Plan For Level II Children in Group Care (Residential Treatment Programs)

- On February 1, 2003, the Director of Resource Development will send an informational letter to all level 2 providers notifying them of the new requirements for in-house schools serving children in DCS custody. A representative from DOE may be invited to attend planning/strategy meetings with providers.
- By March 15, 2003, agencies desiring to have an in-house school serving children in DCS custody will be required to submit a proposal using the DCS Proposal Form,

including a full description of the program and the procedure for conducting educational staffing.

- The DCS Division of Education, in consultation with a representative of the Department of Education and in consultation with the DCS Director of Resource Development, and/or other appropriate DCS staff will review all proposals. DCS will notify agencies of their status by April 8, 2003. After the review, agencies will be classified by the DCS Division of Education and recommended to Resource Development as one of the following:
 - Recognized as a vendor eligible to provide an in-house school serving children in DCS custody and meeting Department of Education (DOE) and DCS minimum standards.
 - Recognized as a vendor eligible to complete a corrective action plan in order to reach full compliance with DOE and DCS minimum standards for an in-house school serving children in DCS custody.
 - Recognized as a vendor, but not permitted to serve DCS custody children at an in-house school.
- DCS will assist the contract agencies by providing referral resources, including DOE referrals, for technical educational assistance, if needed to reach compliance to operate an in-house school eligible to serve children in DCS custody.
- The DCS Education Division and the regional education specialist will consult with contract agencies regarding needed assistance, including general education training sessions for staff, tailored to specific issues for children in DCS custody and similar to the training provided for DCS and CSA staff. The DCS Education Division and the regional education specialist will also try to assist contract agencies in getting needed support or training from the Department of Education. Agencies should look to DOE for general training on federal and state education law.
- Agencies not approved for an in-house school, serving children in DCS custody, must submit a transition plan for youth to move to public school in a planned manner, supported by agency treatment, liaison and case management.
- All agencies that seek in-house school approval must submit with the proposal, a methodology to ensure liaison and case support for all DCS custody youth enrolled in public school.
- Assessments and educational staffings should be completed so that children transitioning from level 2 in-house schools to public school are prepared at the start of the 2003-2004 school year. Prior to that time, some children at level 2 agencies may be found appropriate for public school, and they should be transitioned in a manner, which meets the child's unique needs.