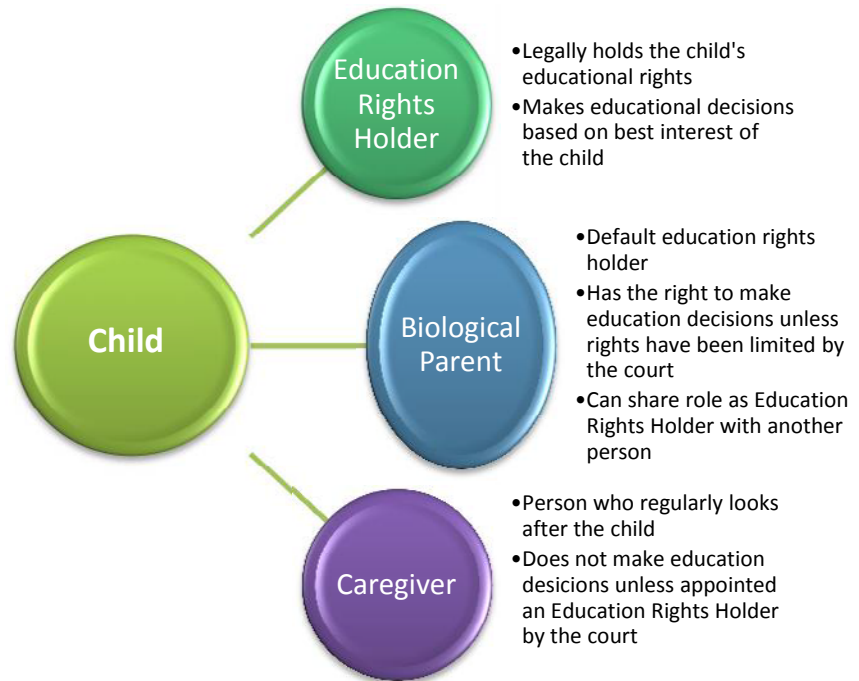




**As a PARENT you have the RIGHT to make decisions about your children's education. This applies even if your family has an open case, and even if your children have been removed from your home.**

Being an active participant and advocate in your children's education can help show the court you are following your case plan and being a positive force in your child's life. If you are not able or willing to make these decisions, the court can limit your education rights and appoint another person to be the child's Education Rights Holder (ERH).

If you do not want this to happen, it is important to stay involved in your child's education.



## WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION DECISIONS NEED TO BE MADE?

- Every child needs a parent or other adult to keep track of the child's progress in school and make decisions about what school the child should attend, whether the child needs special education services, what to do about attendance and behavior problems, etc. This includes young children before they are school-age, because children need parent consent for preschool and developmental services.
- **Biological parents who need support can ask the court to appoint another person to co-hold education rights with the parent. It may not be necessary to limit parent's education rights if there is a co-holder.**

This flyer gives you some tips and suggestions for how to stay involved and help your child succeed in school

## THE BASICS:

- Talk to the child about education; help the child set goals
- Keep a folder with the child's education records, contact persons, etc.
- Talk to the child's caregiver about how the child is doing in school
- Review all report cards, progress reports, grades, attendance records, so you can see the child's strengths and areas where the child may need help. Many school districts have online systems where parents can log in and see grades, attendance, and other information; contact your child's school to ask about getting access to their system.
- Track attendance – make sure the child is getting to school every day, on time, and if there are problems with attendance, find out why – this is important even for young children.
- Attend all school meetings concerning the child – back to school night, parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings, etc.
- Ask about tutoring, afterschool programs, and summer programs if the child needs to catch up in school or needs help with schoolwork.
- Encourage the child to participate in school activities (sports, music, clubs, etc.)





## If the child is moved to a new placement ...

- Children in foster care are allowed to stay in their “school of origin” even if they move outside the area for that school. Talk to your social worker and attorney to make sure every effort is made to keep the child in their school of origin, if that is best for the child (by finding a placement close to that school or arranging for transportation) or at least delaying a move until the end of the semester or school year.
- If the child does move to a new school, talk to your social worker and attorney to make sure the child is promptly enrolled in the new school, all their records and credits are transferred to the new school, and the new school placement meets the child’s needs. If the child is in high school, talk to the child to make sure they are enrolled in the right classes in the new school.

## If the child has behavior problems at school ...

- Address problems early on – meet with teachers and principals and ask about ways to help the child with behavior problems,
- Keep notes about all contacts with the school about behavior issues.
- Talk to the child about any behavior problems; ask the child what would help.
- School suspensions and expulsions are very serious -- if the child is suspended, make sure the school gives you and the child’s attorney written notice, and informs you what the suspension is for and when the child can return to school. Contact the child’s attorney for help if the child has long or repeat suspensions, or is referred for expulsion.

## If the child has, or may have, special needs ...

- If the child is struggling in school, consider asking for an assessment to find out if the child needs special education services. If the child does need special education, ensure that the child has an up-to-date and adequate IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and the plan is being carried out.
- If the child is under 5 years old and you have concerns about their development (for example, if they are not able to do things other children their age can do), talk to your social worker or attorney about asking for developmental assessments and services.

## If the child is in high school ...

- Make sure the student's transcript includes all his/her credits, and the child is taking the classes needed for graduation.
- Talk to the student about college and career goals, and help the student get information about college applications, financial aid, job training programs, etc.



## If the child is under 5 years old

- Preschool and Headstart programs can help young children develop, learn, and be ready for school. Talk to your social worker about enrolling your child in these programs.
- Four-year olds may be eligible for Transitional Kindergarten in their local elementary school.





## Need Assistance?

If you are struggling to help your child access appropriate early intervention, special education, general education, or regional center services, the following people may be able to help you:

- 1. Your child's social worker**
- 2. Parent's Attorney:** Parents can contact their court appointed attorney from the Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers Inc:
  - a. Law Offices of Katherine Anderson - (323) 262-2950
  - b. Law Office of Marlene Furth - (323) 262-3071
  - c. Law Offices of Jolene Metzger - (323) 262-2353
  - d. Law Offices of Rachel Ewing - (323) 262-3028
  - e. Law Offices of Danielle Butler Vappie - (323) 859-3730
- 3. Minor's Attorney:** if you are a caregiver without an attorney and need additional assistance with seeking early intervention, general education, and/or special education services for your child please discuss your concerns with the child's attorney in court. If appropriate, they can complete a WIC 317e referral to have your child appointed a free education attorney.
- 4. Your service coordinator at the regional center or the **DCFS Regional Center**** Support email: [RegionalCenterSupport@dcfs.lacounty.gov](mailto:RegionalCenterSupport@dcfs.lacounty.gov)
- 5. At your child's school:**
  - a. Pupil Services & Attendance Counselor
    - i. LAUSD: <http://achieve.lausd.net/site/Default.aspx?PageID=7366> (tab 2 under Pupil Services Staff Directory)
  - b. Special Education Office
  - c. AB 490 Foster Youth Education Liaison
    - i. LAUSD: Silvia Navarro, 5th Floor, Edelman Courthouse (213) 408-5303 or by school: <http://achieve.lausd.net/Page/7339> (under 2015-2016 FYAP Directory)
    - ii. All other district liaisons can be found at: <http://www.lacoe.edu/StudentServices/HomelessFosterYouth/FosterYouth.aspx>
- 6. Community Advocacy Agencies** include:
  - a. Grandparents as Parents: Laura Carson, 626-277-2602
  - b. Project Fatherhood: 213-260-7604
  - c. CADRE: 323-752-9997
  - d. Shields for Families: 323-526-6359 or 323-242-5000
- 7. Other Legal Agencies:** you can also contact the legal agencies found on the reverse side who may provide additional assistance for children in the child welfare system



Legal Agency Name	Legal Agency Provides Help With:			
	Early Intervention/ Regional Center	Regional Center Ages 3+	Special Education	General Education
Alliance for Children's Rights (213) 368-6010 3333 Wilshire Blvd. Ste 550 Los Angeles, CA 90010 <a href="http://www.kids-alliance.org">www.kids-alliance.org</a>	X		X	X
Disability Rights California, Los Angeles Regional Office (213) 213-8000 350 South Bixel Street, Suite 290 Los Angeles, CA 90017 <a href="http://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org">www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org</a>	X	X	X	
Disability Rights Legal Center (213) 736-1334 800 S Figueroa St. Los Angeles, CA 90017 <a href="http://www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.org">www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.org</a>		X	X	
Learning Rights Law Center (213) 489-4030 205 S. Broadway, Suite 1008 Los Angeles, CA 90012 <a href="http://www.learningrights.org">www.learningrights.org</a>	X	X	X	
Mental Health Advocacy Services (213) 389-2077 3255 Wilshire Blvd., Ste 902 Los Angeles, CA 90010 <a href="http://www.mhas-la.org">www.mhas-la.org</a>	X		X	
Public Counsel Children's Law Project (213) 385-2977 x. 500 601 S. Ardmore Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90005 <a href="http://www.publiccounsel.org">www.publiccounsel.org</a>	X	X	X	