

EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT: Back to School Prep

BY AMY HUGLE



School will be starting again in a couple of weeks! This is probably welcome news for parents and dreaded news for our kids. For children in foster care, a new school year can be especially challenging. But there are things that you can do at the beginning of the school year or when taking a new placement that can help your child get the most out of their academic experience.

In [Navigating the Clark County School District](#), a Just in Time Training offered by QPI, Dr. Leslie Strasser-Murdock offers several suggestions for things you can do in the beginning to help your child have a successful school year.

One of the most important things to do early on is to build a relationship with your child's teacher and the school staff. Go on the CCSD website and find the link to the website for your child's school. There you will find information about open houses, parent teacher conferences, school events and lots of other helpful stuff.

Next, find the contact information for your person of contact at the school. For children in elementary school this will be the child's classroom teacher or teacher of record. For high school youth, the person of contact will be the child's counselor. Once you have that information, send an email to them introducing yourself and your child.

Dr. Strasser-Murdock recommends that you also mention that your child is in foster care and let the teacher or counselor know anything else that can help them support your child's success in the classroom. Ask the teacher or counselor the best way to get in touch with them and let them know the best way to get ahold of you.

Every school has a School Based Foster Care Advocate who will be an important resource for support and information. Once you have introduced yourself to the teacher, find out who this person is and introduce yourself and your child to them.

It is important to reach out to your child's teacher or counselor before there are any issues. You can also review the Common Core standards to find out what your child is learning. A few weeks after the semester has begun, or at the end of the quarter, it is a good idea to reach out to your child's teacher or high school counselor and request a meeting with all of your child's teachers, particularly if you notice that your child is struggling. This will give you a chance to hear from multiple sources at once and allow you to problem solve as a team to help mitigate any issues.

And as always, communicate with your child! Talk about what they might expect for the new school year-fears and excitement! Discuss the drop off and pick up plans so everyone is prepared. If the child is new to the school, consider a practice-run before school starts. If they are going to eat a school lunch, make sure the paperwork is completed. Good luck to all families and children as we head back to school later this month!

Here are more ways that you can get involved as recommended by Dr. Strasser-Murdock:

- Visit the CCSD Website and click on the Parent tab to find information about enrollment, school contact information, and other relevant material.
- Review the *Back to School Reporter*, published by CCSD at the beginning of every school year, to learn about important and updated policies, procedures, and laws.
- Attend School District Trustee Meetings (ask school staff to put you on the list for notifications).
- Visit your child's school website.
- Attend your child's Back to School Night, Academic Night, and School Conferences (ask school staff for a copy of the school calendar and put these dates in your agenda so that you can plan for them early).
- Sign up for Infinite Campus (CCSD's parent portal).
- Consider volunteering in your child's classroom or school.

Here is another list of tips about how to help your child succeed:

<http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/Circuit/circuit13/BackToSchoolTips.pdf>

Additional Resources:

<http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/qpi/nevada/NavigatingSchool/start.html>

<http://www.qpinevada.org/clark/documents/QPINevadawebsiteinformation.pdf>

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

<http://www.ccsd.net/>

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