

## Getting Started Guide - Educational Rights Holders

After each “Getting Started” step:

*Update your Case Supervisor*

*Log your time and contacts in Advocate Link*

- ▣ **STEP 1: Review SFCASA webinars on “Holding Education Rights for Foster Youth” and “Getting Started with Education Rights”**
- ▣ **STEP 2: Meet with the social worker (PSW)**
- ▣ **STEP 3: Contact the youth’s attorney**
- ▣ **STEP 4: Contact current CASA, if applicable**
- ▣ **STEP 5: Contact the caregiver**
- ▣ **STEP 6: Meet the youth**
- ▣ **STEP 7: Meet with the youth’s educators/school staff**

## Getting Started

### 1. Complete (or Review) [SFCASA Educational Rights Holder Webinars](http://www.sfcasa.org/educational-advocacy-webinars/)

<http://www.sfcasa.org/educational-advocacy-webinars/>

- a. "Holding Education Rights for Foster Youth"
- b. "Getting Started with Education Rights"

### 2. Contact the social worker (PSW)

- a. Introduce yourself as the recently assigned Educational Rights Holder for the youth.
- b. Schedule a meeting time to discuss the youth's education as well as review/make copies of education documents in the PSW's file.
- c. Give the PSW your contact information. Ask for their preference in communication.

#### **Prior to the meeting:**

- a. Review the provided education file of your assigned case. Generate a list of questions!
- b. Create a list of documents to review and make copies of, including:
  - All Educational Records
  - IEP and/or 504 Plan (if student has a disability)
  - Health and Education Passport (ask for most recent)

#### **After the meeting:**

- a. Send copies of all documents to your Case Supervisor.
- b. Log your time in Advocate Link.

### 3. Contact the youth's attorney (by phone)

- a. Introduce yourself as the recently assigned Educational Rights Holder.
- b. Give the attorney your contact information. Ask for their preference in communication.
- c. Confirm the date, time, and department of the next court hearing.
- d. Ask about the youth's pertinent education history.
- e. Email the updated hearing information to your Case Supervisor.
- f. Log your time in Advocate Link.

### 4. Contact the youth's CASA, if applicable

- a. Set up a time to discuss youth's educational history, educational strengths, and areas where the youth needs more educational support.
- b. Ask the CASA for any recent educational records. Send all copies to your Case Supervisor.
- c. Establish a preferred method of communication.
- d. Log your time in Advocate Link.

### 5. Contact the youth's caregiver

- a. Introduce yourself as the recently assigned Educational Rights Holder; answer any questions they have about your role.
- b. Ask them if there is anything in particular they feel you should know prior to meeting the youth.
- c. Schedule your first visit with the youth.
- d. Give the caregiver your contact information. Ask for their preference in communication.
- e. Log your time in Advocate Link.

### **Additional Information**

Caregivers have the most contact with the young people and are a source of valuable information. In addition to any information about the youth's likes and dislikes, you should also ask this person about preferences or limitations around arranging visits—taking into account curfews, school schedules, therapeutic obligations, and visits with family members. Be respectful of the many commitments that come with being a caregiver for a foster youth. Model good communication practices for the youth in your interactions with the caregiver.

### **6. Meet your youth at their placement**

- a. Plan to spend only 20-30 minutes with the youth during the first visit. Introduce yourself and explain your role as the Educational Rights Holder. Ask if they have any school-related issues they would like to discuss, but don't ask too many questions during this first visit.
- b. Being mindful of confidentiality, spend a few minutes also getting acquainted with the caregiver. Log your time in Advocate Link.

### **7. Contact your youth's school**

- a. Call the school and ask to speak with the Foster Youth Liaison (FYL).
  - Introduce yourself
  - Ask to be put in touch with appropriate staff members (identify lead teacher/person or people for initial meeting)
- b. Provide the school with a copy of your JV-535 order. Give the school the following contact information for all school records:
  - Mailing: Your Name, c/o SFCASA (never provide your personal addresses, including home or work):
    - 2535 Mission Street
    - San Francisco, CA 94110
  - Phone and Email: The contact information you use for CASA purposes.
- c. Schedule a team meeting with the FYL & any other appropriate staff members.
  - Obtain copies of progress reports, grades, etc.
  - Request to be set up with a School Loop (or whatever platform the district uses) account in order to access attendance, grade and assignment information, and communications with teachers.
  - Discuss:
    - Academic strengths and concerns & behavioral strengths and concerns
    - Current enrollment in, or need for, tutoring or support activities
    - Attendance record
    - Special education services and/or accommodations (if relevant)
    - Discipline history and records (if relevant)
  - Establish a regular check-in schedule
- d. Log your time in Advocate Link.

Be advised that the school official may (and should!) ask for a copy of your court order. Be prepared to discuss your role and why you are requesting the information. Be proactive and ask for the fax number and to whom the fax should be addressed. If you do not have the ability to send and receive confidential faxes, contact your CS.

## **Staying Active Guide - Education Rights Holders**

**After each “Staying Active” step:**

*Update your Case Supervisor  
Log your time in Advocate Link*

- ✓ **Meet and/or communicate regularly with your youth.**
- ✓ **Submit the JV-537 draft to your Case Supervisor **3 WEEKS** prior to the court hearing.**
- ✓ **Maintain regular contact with your Case Supervisor.**
- ✓ **Submit Advocate Link Logs each time you work on the case.**
- ✓ **Submit Advocate Link Surveys by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month.**
- ✓ **Check in with the foster youth liaison, teachers, school staff, social worker, attorney, caregiver(s), and other adult supports as needed.**
- ✓ **Monitor the youth’s educational progress.**
- ✓ **Complete 12 Units of Continuing Education per year.**

## Staying Active

### **1. Meet regularly with the youth and communicate by phone/email.**

As the Educational Rights Holder, the frequency of in-person visits with the youth will depend on the location of the young person and the number of meetings at their school. At SFCASA, we recommend (if the youth is receptive) doing something fun together at least once every two months to establish a relationship and learn more about their educational desires. Depending on the young person, we also recommend regular contact by phone and/or email with the youth to understand their educational needs and wants.

### **2. Submit a JV-537 draft to your Case Supervisor 3 weeks before the hearing.**

The JV-537 is a form required by the court for status review hearings (essentially the ERH equivalent of a CASA court report). The form asks the ERH for educational progress, school placement, discipline, and therapeutic and developmental needs updates. While the submission of JV-537 is required by law, it is also an incredible opportunity for the ERH to conduct direct educational advocacy with the court.

The JV-537 can be found [here](#), or on the SFCASA website under Resources → Advocacy Center → Educational Advocacy Resources → Holding Education Rights. As an ERH, you must submit a draft of the JV-537 to your Case Supervisor 3 weeks prior to the hearing date.

### **3. Maintain regular contact with your Case Supervisor.**

Check in with your Case Supervisor after each stage of your onboarding process, before and after school meetings, and before court hearings. You must also have a (minimum) monthly check-in call with your CS.

Please remember that your CS will counsel and guide you in what may be a challenging, yet rewarding, advocate experience. Case Supervisors are able to provide you with advice, support, and answers to your questions about the myriad issues you will encounter in your work with foster youth.

*Regular contact with your CS is crucial for maintaining accurate records, keeping the lines of communication open, and most of all, maximizing the opportunity for satisfactory and positive outcomes for your youth.*

Please remember to let your CS know when you will be out of town for periods of a week or longer. We ask that you let SFCASA know when you will be unavailable so that we know to be available to your youth's support and service-provider team in your absence. Finally, please do not forget to update your CS with any changes to your personal contact information or preferences for contacting you.

### **4. Submit Advocate Link Logs after each time you do work on the case.**

Advocate hours are required by the Judicial Council. Advocate Link Logs inform your CS what you are doing and with whom you are working. These logs will also be used in your JV-537 form. Finally, reported advocate hours also provide program data to funders and partner organizations.

### **5. Submit Advocate Link Surveys by the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month.**

The Survey is the monthly summary of your Logs. Surveys are important to track progress in the SFCASA advocacy areas.

**6. Maintain regular contact with the foster youth liaison, teachers, school staff, assigned social worker, attorney, caregiver(s) and other adult supports.**

This contact is on an as-needed basis, but regular communication with the youth's team is an important part of your role and greatly impacts your ability to effectively advocate for the youth's best interests. As the person in the youth's life with the ability to make legal educational decisions, it is important to maintain consistent communication with the team and educators.

Attend school meetings. Schedule school meetings, if necessary.

Confirm with the attorney the date of the next court hearing.

**7. Monitor the youth's educational progress.**

In order to be an effective Educational Rights Holder, you must closely monitor the young person's educational progress by staying on top of the following school records: grades, attendance, disability services/accommodations, discipline, and extracurricular activities. Upload all documents to Advocate Link.

**8. Complete 12 Units of Continuing Education.**

As an active Advocate, you are required to complete *12 hours of continuing education credit from January through December annually*. SFCASA will pro-rate the number of continuing education credits you must earn when first coming onto your case, depending on your swearing-in date.

We offer a variety of continuing education classes throughout the year. We also partner with other agencies in the community to offer collaborative continuing education opportunities. **4 of your credits** must be earned through participation in classes at our office. You may also earn credits by reading books and articles or attending training sessions and conferences related to your work. Movies, such as "Waiting for Superman," "Precious" and "Short Term 12" have also counted toward partial fulfillment of the requirements for continuing education. Please contact the Training Specialist with any specific questions (415) 398-8001x101 or Training@sfcasa.org