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A **SECOND CHANCE** INC.



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News, Networking & Information for
Kinship Care Professionals & Advocates



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we are in a more hopeful place,”
Christine White-Taylor, Ed.D.,
Education Liaison,
A Second Chance, Inc.

Every Student Succeeds Act: Finding Hope and Needed Provisions for Students in Kinship-Foster Care

When the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was passed in 2015, it wasn't just about giving teachers and states a say on issues of school accountability, standardized tests and standards. Advocates for children in kinship-foster care

also had a reason to be hopeful and cheer.

That's because passage of the federal K-12 law ushered in major changes for some of public schools' most vulnerable and overlooked students—those in kinship-foster care. They are also some of the nation's most educationally disadvantaged students. Instead of school being a place of refuge and stability, frequent moves disrupt learning. The result, research shows, these students are expelled and suspended at higher rates compared to their peers who are not in kinship-foster care. Lower standardized test scores and grades are also common. And many end up dropping out, never graduating high school.

When President Obama signed ESSA, the law made school districts responsible for improving the educational stability of students in kinship-foster care and tracking their academic progress. Educational stability, a key provision of the law, is supposed to ensure that these students can enroll and or remain in their “school of origin,” even if it's no longer their neighborhood school.

Under ESSA, states must work with school districts and local child welfare agencies to provide transportation. Districts had until December 2016 to comply with transportation other mandates but the outcome has been “a mixed picture,” according to the Chronicle of Social Change, a national news site, that looked at all 50 states for whether they had a transportation plan in place. Of 44 states that responded to the survey, 33 said they were working with local school districts to comply with the law. The Los Angeles County's Office of Education, in 2017, secured a ride-sharing company to transport children.

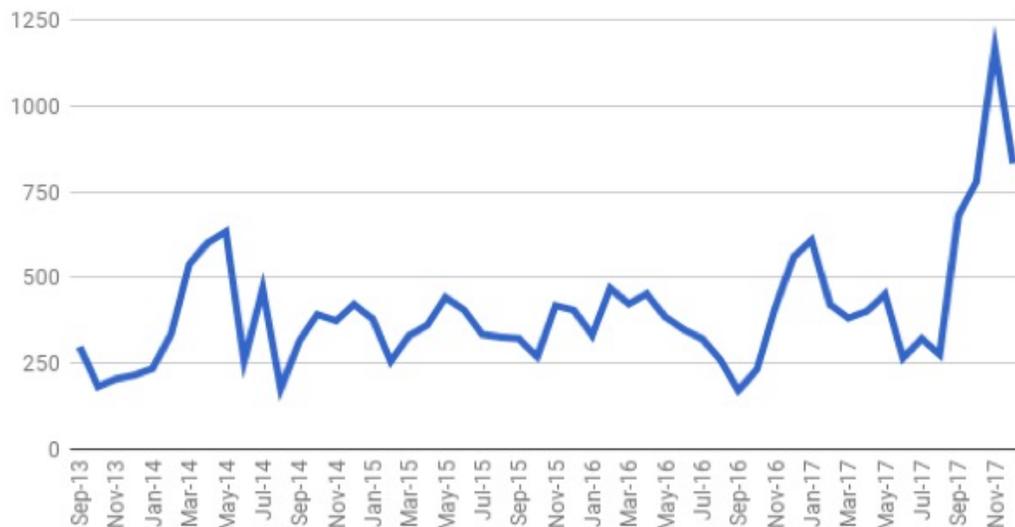
The state of Pennsylvania, home to A Second Chance, Inc. (ASCI), submitted its plan for complying with ESSA in September 2017.

“When it comes to our children and ESSA, we are in a more hopeful place,” says Christine White-Taylor, Ed.D., ASCI's Education Liaison. As this new federal legislation continues to unfold, ASCI has been present at the table in Pennsylvania's Allegheny County. Working in collaboration as providers, county officials, child welfare workers, school officials, counselors and educators on

ESSA, says White-Taylor, “We now have a chance to get it right and ensure that children in care not only have access to transportation, but that informed best interest decisions are made about where they go to school.”

Transportation is “a huge piece of ESSA,” she says. And as a provider, ASCI plays a major role in transporting the children it serves. Misty Patterson, the agency’s director of Family Services and Transportation, knows that it’s not just about the big yellow school bus. Responding to transportation requests from CYF, Patterson, the nimble dispatcher and her team of schedulers, can orchestrate over 1,000 round trip school and aftercare trips a month.

Scheduled School Trips - 2013 to 2017



That’s nearly double the number of scheduled trips that ASCI drivers made before ESSA in 2017 and intakes increased. But despite this increase, “ESSA is the best thing that could happen for children in kinship care and in traditional foster care,” says Patterson. “Providing them with safe and reliable transportation to get to and from school is a part of what it takes for them to have the stability they need.”

State Kinship Care News Roundup:

KENTUCKY: [Relatives of abused kids now eligible for pay as foster parents. Here’s](#)

[how to apply](#)

More than 1,500 Kentucky grandparents and other relatives who are caring for a child who has been abused or neglected can now receive monthly foster care payments thanks to a federal court ruling, state officials announced this month.

UNITED STATES: [U.S. budget deal grants \\$1.5 billion for drug-affected babies, families](#)

Though little noticed in the larger debates over defense and domestic spending, the section of law called the Family First Prevention Services Act fills more than 100 pages of the 652-page budget compromise. (Related News) Watch and listen to this month's Senate Hearing on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions: ["The Opioid Crisis: Impact on Children and Families"](#).

OHIO: [Many Ohio kids experience early childhood trauma](#)

A new report based on data from the 2016 National Survey of Children's Health found that Ohio is among five states with the highest share of children — as many as one in seven — who had faced three or more of the potential trauma measures known to researchers as adverse childhood experiences.

CYF: An agency that works, helping kids and their families

PENNSYLVANIA: [CYF: An agency that works, helping kids and their families](#)[CYF: An agency that works, helping kids and their families](#) (Editorial) Directed by Marc Cherner, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, which includes CYF, is a national leader in pioneering programs, including a new predictive risk modeling tool that helps CYF caseworkers more accurately determine which of the 14,000 allegations of child abuse and neglect the agency receives annually require investigation.

ALABAMA: [Adopting a child is hard. Adopting as an LGBT couple is harder](#)

In a state where there are more children than homes, the law known as HB 24 could prevent qualified same-sex couples from adopting, Katherine Webb-Hehn writes for Scalawag. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey signed HB 24 into law last May, making it legal for private adoption agencies to discriminate against same-sex couples by citing the agency's religious beliefs.

TEXAS: [Abbott announces sweeping plan to combat sexual misconduct, human](#)

[trafficking](#)

Gov. Greg Abbott announced a sweeping proposal aimed at better protecting people from human trafficking as well as tackling sexual misconduct allegations at the Texas Capitol and throughout state government. Abbott's "Preventing Crime, Protecting Texans, Punishing Criminals" plan includes allocating \$22 million to the Department of Public Safety for the creation of regional squads to investigate human trafficking cases and for training local law enforcement.

MARYLAND: [Md. child abuse bills aim for more accountability, welfare checks after threats](#)

Two bills stemming from recent cases of child abuse in Maryland are making their way through the state legislature, which would hold mandatory reporters — those who have to report suspected child abuse by law — accountable when it comes to preserving and protecting children.

INDIANAPOLIS: [Indiana Rate of Kids in State Care Double That of US](#)

Indiana removes children from their homes and places them in state care at more than twice the national average rate, according to a consultant reviewing the state's embattled child welfare agency. That's one of two primary findings the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group, which was hired by Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb to conduct a review of the agency.

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