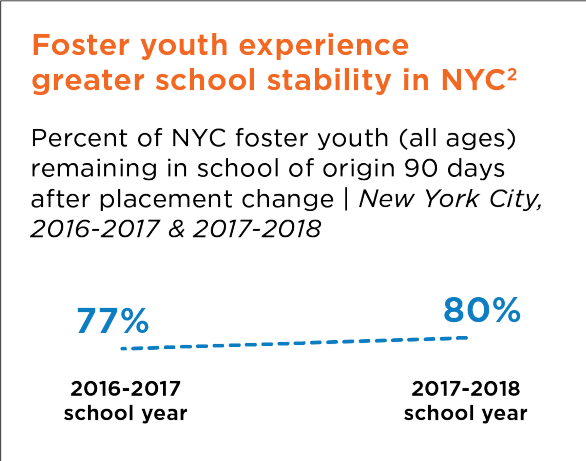
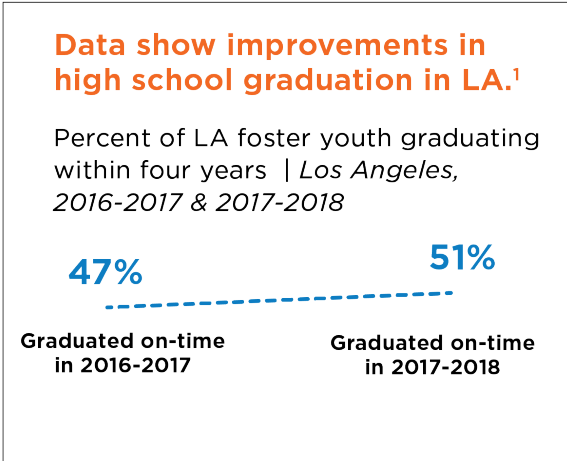


Foster Youth Strategic Initiative: 2019 Snapshot

Education (Grades 8-12): Accomplishments and next steps

To keep foster youth on a path for timely high school graduation and to open postsecondary and career opportunities, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation’s Foster Youth Strategic Initiative supports efforts to increase school stability and improve high school graduation rates.



Promoting school stability

School stability remained a priority in NYC and LA in 2019, with a focus on **policy implementation**. Child welfare and education stakeholders in **LA** concluded their school stability transportation pilot, transporting over 1,100 foster youth to their schools of origin and culminating in a long-term transportation plan and cost-sharing agreement between the child welfare agency and individual school districts.³ With Hilton support, an outreach coordinator is engaging school districts to sign onto the plan. Grantees and stakeholders in **LA** are working to address continuing challenges preventing stronger implementation of school stability policies, including timely notices to schools when home placements change, identifying and engaging education rights holders in decision making, and supporting timely enrollment and credit transfers.

In **NYC**, the **Juvenile Law Center** worked with state and local agencies to disseminate a statewide toolkit on school stability and transportation cost-sharing. School stability policy remains in draft form for both

¹ For foster youth entering high school in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. California Department of Education (n.d.). 2016-17 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Outcome: Los Angeles County Report. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohOutcome.aspx?agglevel=county&year=2016-17&cds=19&ro=y> and California Department of Education (n.d.). 2017-2018 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Outcome: Los Angeles County Report. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohOutcome.aspx?cde=19&agglevel=County&year=2017-18&initrow=&ro=y>.

² New York City Administration for Children’s Services. (n.d.). Educational Continuity of Children in Foster Care, School Year 2016-2017. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/citycouncilreport.pdf>. & New York City Administration for Children’s Services. (n.d.). Educational Continuity of Children in Foster Care (School Year 2017-2018). Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2019/LL142SY20172018.pdf>.

³ LA Department of Children and Family Services (2019). Foster Youth School Stability Transportation Pilot Outcome Report. Retrieved from [http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OC/PDF/Well-Being/Foster%20Youth%20School%20Stability%20Pilot%20Outcome%20Report%20\(DCFS\)%2008-09-19.pdf?ver=2019-08-12-151826-753](http://ocp.lacounty.gov/Portals/OC/PDF/Well-Being/Foster%20Youth%20School%20Stability%20Pilot%20Outcome%20Report%20(DCFS)%2008-09-19.pdf?ver=2019-08-12-151826-753).

the city child welfare and education agencies; once finalized, stakeholders plan to train child welfare, education, and private provider staff to ensure effective implementation. Implementation support is also needed for credit transfer policies, and [Advocates for Children](#) is developing resources to educate families on these policies. While the NYC Department of Education (DOE) has hired a transportation coordinator for students in foster care, grantees expressed continued concerns that foster youth do not always receive needed transportation to their schools of origin.

Increasing high school graduation rates

Several *innovative programs* in LA and NYC support foster youths' academic success, yet gaps remain. National Center for Youth Law's [FosterEd](#) began serving students in LA's Antelope Valley in 2018-2019 through its middle- and high-school based liaisons. [FosterEd](#) also builds relationships with school staff to enhance their awareness of and capacity to meet the needs of students in foster care. In LA and NYC, [First Star](#) continues to provide intensive summer and school-year programming to support academic progress to high school graduation, including team building, soft skill development, and regular coordination with students' school counselors. Grantees in LA and NYC raised concerns around the underrepresentation of young men of color in college preparatory programs and the geographic accessibility of tutoring services.

Training and trauma informed practices are essential to ensure that school-based staff understand and can respond to the unique experiences and needs of students in foster care. The NYC DOE has expanded the role of its school-based community coordinators to support students in foster care. They are developing training to support this expanded role in consultation with [Advocates for Children](#). [Children's Village](#) launched its School Success program in NYC, which trains school staff and foster parents to support students in foster care and recognize their special socioemotional needs. In LA, grantees expressed concerns that accountability through the Local Control Funding Formula has shifted from specialized counselors for foster youth to school-based counselors serving a larger population of vulnerable students and will be a detriment to foster youth at LA Unified School District.

Spotlight: School policy changes strengthen youth outcomes

Changes to policy and practice in a network of school districts facilitated by the [Alliance for Children's Rights](#) have led to measurable improvements for foster youth. For example, one school district's focus on ensuring foster youth were placed in comprehensive classrooms and awarded partial credits helped increase their graduation rate for students in foster care from 29 percent to 83 percent.¹ These efforts will serve as a model to other school districts through a forthcoming best practice guide.

¹ Alliance for Children's Rights & CA Collaborative for Educational Excellence (2019). *Professional Learning Network Report: Focusing on Foster Youth*.