



# Budget Priority

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK

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## GUARANTEE BUSING FOR STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE

More than 7,000 New York City students spend time in foster care each year; they are disproportionately Black and from the City's poorest communities. When children are removed from their homes and families and placed into foster care, school is often the only source of stability in their lives. And [the data show](#) that school stability matters: **students in foster care who transfer schools during the year are even less likely to score proficient on the grades 3–8 state math and reading tests** than their peers in care who do *not* change schools.

While federal and state law require school districts to provide transportation to students in foster care so they can stay in their original school, unless it is in their best interest to transfer, **New York City currently does not guarantee bus service or a comparable mode of door-to-door transportation to students in the foster system.** The Department of Education (DOE) provides busing to students in care who require special education transportation and those who can be added to existing routes—though delays in the approval and routing process are common, with students left waiting for weeks or even months for bus service to begin. As a result, students who cannot travel on their own may be forced to transfer schools mid-year, meaning they must adjust to unfamiliar peers, teachers, routines, and curriculum at the same time as they are experiencing the trauma of being separated from their parents.

This year, the DOE took an important step by launching its first-ever team focused on students in the foster system. Now, **the City should ensure children can get to school without delay when they are placed in foster care or change foster placements.** The DOE already guarantees yellow bus service to the thousands of kindergarten through sixth grade students living in shelter; this guarantee should be extended to include the relatively small number of students in foster care so they can continue to attend school without interruption.

The Fiscal Year 2024 budget should include and baseline \$5 million to guarantee door-to-door transportation—busing or a comparable alternative—for students in the foster system.

No student in foster care should be forced to change schools due to a lack of prompt, reliable transportation.