



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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DCF GROUP HOMES AND “NO-NEXUS” CHILD EDUCATION COSTS

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You asked (1) how many Department of Children and Family (DCF) group homes there are in Connecticut, (2) how many DCF group homes there are in Bristol and what is their capacity, (3) what criteria DCF uses to place “no-nexus” students (students with no identifiable home school district) and (4) who is responsible for paying such a child’s special education costs.

DCF GROUP HOMES

According to DCF, there are currently 70 DCF group homes and 16 temporary shelters in Connecticut. DCF defines a group home as “a facility that meets long-term community-based placement needs during which the facility attempts to transition the child toward reunification with family, independent living or long-term foster care.” It defines a temporary shelter as “a facility that meets short-term emergency placement needs during which the facility attempts to stabilize, assess and prepare the child for a more permanent placement.”

In Bristol, there is one DCF group home with a capacity of five and one temporary shelter with a capacity of six.

CRITERIA FOR PLACING “NO-NEXUS” CHILDREN

DCF classifies a child as “no-nexus” if any of the following applies to the child’s parents or guardians:

1. parental rights have been terminated,

2. the parent or guardian (a) is deceased or unknown or (b) resides as a patient in a treatment facility or inmate in a correction facility and does not maintain a Connecticut residence, or
3. the parent's or guardian's whereabouts are unknown.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR A "NO-NEXUS" CHILD WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

The responsibility for a "no-nexus" child's special education costs is shared between school districts and the state and depends on whether the court has (1) committed the child to DCF custody or (2) granted DCF the authority to place the child under an order of temporary custody (OTC). (In the latter case, the child is not actually committed to DCF).

If the "no-nexus" child is committed to DCF and placed in a foster or residential group home, the school district in which the home is located is responsible for the child's education costs. The district must pay the reasonable costs of the special education and related services or an amount equal to its average per-pupil educational costs for the previous year, whichever is less. The State Board of Education (SBE) is responsible for reimbursing any costs that exceed this basic contribution ([CGS § 10-76d\(e\)\(2\)\(A\)](#)).

If the "no-nexus" child is placed under an OTC, the district in which the child last attended school is responsible for his or her reasonable education costs, as described above, for one calendar year or until he or she is either committed to DCF custody or returned to his or her parent or guardian, whichever is earlier. The SBE is responsible for reimbursing any excess costs. If the child remains in the placement longer than a year and is still not committed to DCF, the department becomes responsible for 100% of the education costs. Once the child is committed to DCF, the school district where he or she is attending school is responsible for the education costs as described above ([CGS § 10-76d\(e\)\(2\)\(B\)](#)).

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