THE #FKLM FAMILY BLUEPRINT

Moving Schools Without Losing Ground

Educational & Scholarship Pathways · School Success

What to gather, ask, and confirm when a child changes schools mid-year.

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A free guide from My Fairy GodParents — for youth impacted by parental incarceration, justice-impacted youth, and the caregivers and families who support them.
myfairygodparents.org/resources/family-blueprint

Print, write on it, and share it with the people helping your family.

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> *What to gather, ask, and confirm when a child changes schools mid-year.*

THE DIFFERENCE THIS MAKES

Changing schools mid-year is one of the most academically costly things that can happen to a student, and families rarely get to choose the timing. A move, a change in who the child lives with, a housing disruption, or a new placement can all put a student in a new building within days.

The damage is mostly administrative. Credits do not transfer cleanly. A support plan is not passed along. The new school places a student in the wrong math level because nobody sent the right transcript. Each of those is fixable, but usually only if someone catches it in the first few weeks.

The family is the only party present at both schools. That makes the caregiver — or an older student themselves — the most reliable custodian of the record. This lesson is about what to gather, what to ask, and what to confirm so a transfer costs weeks instead of a year.

WHAT TO GATHER BEFORE YOU LEAVE, IF YOU HAVE ANY WARNING

Ask the old school's registrar for an unofficial transcript or the most recent report card, the current class schedule, attendance records, immunization records, any support plan or evaluation documents, and standardized test results if available. Most registrars can produce this in a day or two.

Photograph every page before you hand anything over or file it away. Documents get lost during a move more reliably than anything else in a household, and a photo on a phone is accepted almost everywhere as a starting point.

For high school students, the single most important document is the transcript showing credits earned so far. Credit loss is the main reason a transferring student fails to graduate on time, and it is far easier to prevent than to fix.

ENROLLING WITHOUT EVERY DOCUMENT IN HAND

Families sometimes delay enrollment because they do not have a document — a birth certificate, a proof of address, an immunization record. Delay is usually the worse choice. Public schools generally have processes for enrolling students who are moving under difficult circumstances, and students experiencing housing instability have specific federal protections around immediate enrollment.

Ask the new school directly: what can we start with today, and what can follow. Also ask whether the district has a homeless-student liaison or family-services office, because those offices exist specifically to remove enrollment barriers and can often resolve in an afternoon what a family has been stuck on for weeks.

Rules vary by state and district. The school district itself is the authority on what it requires, and asking the question plainly is faster than guessing.

THE FIRST-WEEK QUESTIONS AT THE NEW SCHOOL

Ask whether the transcript has arrived and whether all credits transferred. Do not assume. Request a copy of how the credits were applied, and compare it to the transcript you photographed.

Ask how course placement was decided. Students frequently land in a lower-level or duplicate course because a schedule was built before records arrived. This is easy to correct in week two and very hard to correct in month four.

Ask whether any support plan came over, and hand them your photographed copy if it did not. A new school cannot follow a plan it has never seen.

For seniors and juniors, ask explicitly whether the student is on track to graduate under this district's requirements, because graduation requirements differ between districts and states. Get the answer in writing.

HELPING A STUDENT LAND SOCIALLY

Academic tracking is only half the transfer. A student who knows nobody eats lunch alone, and lunch is where school either becomes bearable or does not. Ask the counselor to connect the student with one club, team, or activity in the first two weeks, and ask whether the school has a buddy or ambassador program.

Ask for one named adult who will check in briefly for the first month. New students slip through precisely because no one has known them long enough to notice a change.

Give the student language for the questions they will get. "I moved this year" is a complete answer. Deciding in advance what they will say — and that they never have to explain more — takes real pressure off a teenager.

BUILD A HOME FILE YOU KEEP FOREVER

After a transfer or two, most families realize they are the only continuous record of the child's education. Make that deliberate: one folder, physical or on a phone, with transcripts, report cards, support plans, immunization records, test results, and the contact information of each school.

Update it at the end of every school year, even in stable years. Ten minutes each June saves days later, and for a student heading toward college or a job application, that file becomes the evidence base for everything.

For students 16 and older, start handing the file to them. A young adult who can produce their own transcript and immunization record is dramatically more independent in every process that follows.

+ CATCHING A LOST CREDIT IN WEEK TWO

An 11th grader moved districts in January when his living arrangement changed. His caregiver enrolled him quickly and assumed the schools would handle the paperwork between them.

In the second week she compared the new schedule against the transcript she had photographed and noticed he had been placed in a science course he had already passed, while a required course was missing entirely. The transcript had arrived, but the credits had been read wrong.

One email to the counselor, with the photographed transcript attached, corrected both. Had she noticed in May, he would have lost a semester and likely a summer. She noticed in January and he graduated on time.

+ WORDS YOU CAN USE

Requesting records from the old school

Call or email the registrar as soon as you know a move is coming.

“Hi, I need to request records for _____ (grade __, DOB __/__/____), who will be transferring. Could I get an unofficial transcript, the most recent report card, the current schedule, attendance records, immunization records, and any support plan documents? I can pick them up or receive them by email — whichever is faster.”

Enrolling when documents are missing

Say this at the new school's front office.

“I'd like to enroll _____ today. I don't have every document yet because of a recent move — I have _____ and can get the rest. What can we start with now, and does the district have a family-services or student-services office that helps in situations like this?”

Week-two verification email

Send to the new school's counselor about ten days after enrollment.

“Hi Ms. _____, _____ started here on _____. Could you confirm three things for me: that the transcript arrived, how the credits were applied, and whether he's on track for graduation under this district's requirements? I have a copy of his transcript if it's useful. Thank you.”

Asking for a check-in adult after a transfer

Use in the first two weeks at a new school.

"_____ is new here and doesn't know anyone yet. Could you connect her with one activity or club, and is there an adult who could check in with her briefly for the first month? I'd rather set that up now than wait to see how it goes."

+ TRANSFER WITHOUT LOSING GROUND

- [ ] Request transcript, report card, schedule, attendance, immunizations, and any plan documents.
- [ ] Photograph every page before it leaves your hands.
- [ ] Enroll immediately, even without a complete document set.
- [ ] Ask whether the district has a family-services or homeless-student liaison.
- [ ] In week two, confirm the transcript arrived and credits applied correctly.
- [ ] Confirm graduation status in writing for 11th and 12th graders.
- [ ] Ask for one activity and one check-in adult for the first month.
- [ ] Start a permanent home education file and update it every June.

+ REFLECT AND WRITE

Where are my student's school records right now, and do I have copies?

What is the one document I would struggle to produce tomorrow?

Who at the new school has confirmed the credits are correct?

+ YOUR NEXT STEP

Start one folder, paper or digital, that holds every school document in one place.

+ WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Written by My Fairy GodParents — reviewed August 2026.
Official reference: U.S. Department of Education — Civil Rights Laws — linked for the official rules and forms, which MFGP does not set.
https://www.ed.gov/laws-and-policy/civil-rights-laws
This is general information and practice guidance — not legal advice, mental-health treatment, or a statement of any court, agency, or facility's rules. Policies differ by state, county, facility, school, and program, so always confirm details with the office involved.
For decisions with legal, medical, financial, or clinical consequences, work with a licensed professional or the organizations listed with each resource.

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You do not have to do this alone.

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