

Middle School CHECKLIST

This checklist references sections found in the [Postsecondary Education Planning Guide for Adults Supporting California's Foster Youth](#). Visit jbay.org/resources/ed-planning-guide to access the complete guide.

Middle school can be an exciting and scary time as students enter a new educational environment and explore new friendships while navigating peer pressure and physical changes. While youth may be hungry for more space and freedom, it is important to remain present and engaged in ways that create interactive opportunities with youth. This is a perfect time to empower youth to learn more about themselves and their interests through exploration, and prepare for coursework in high school and college.

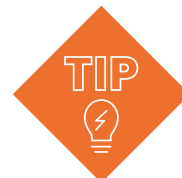
EXPLORATION



Expose youth to opportunities that help them discover their interests, talents, and passions and develop new skills. Activities such as these can also help youth cultivate curiosity about potential career paths and higher education. Encourage and support youth to:

- **Attend events at local college campuses** such as cultural celebrations, performances, speaker series, sports, and more.

- **Attend visual and performing arts events** by visiting galleries, plays, dance performances, craft fairs, and city-sponsored cultural events.
- **Identify camps available during school breaks** that focus on nature; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM); robotics; coding; dance; theater; cooking; sports; or other hands-on experiences.
- **Participate in extracurricular activities** like school clubs, sports, student government, and volunteering.
- **Attend college tours** to expose them to life after high school and start building their college-knowledge.
- **Explore mentorship opportunities available in your community.** Mentorships can provide a safe and nurturing relationship through which youth can connect with individuals to learn about a wide range of topics including career options. Big Brothers Big Sisters is one option. Learn more at bbbs.org.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

Additional information about the educational rights of foster youth can be found in the California Foster Youth Education Law Fact Sheets located at cfyettf.org/resources-publications.

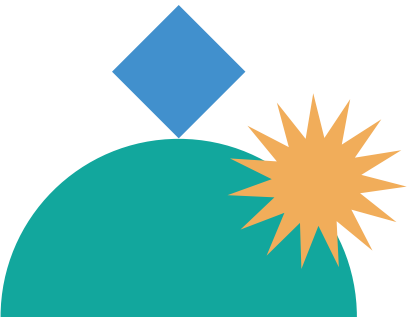


ACADEMIC PREPARATION



Understanding learning styles and developing skills in time management, organization, and self-advocacy creates a strong foundation to successfully complete education and career goals.

- **Practice time management skills.** Work with students to keep a calendar with important dates and deadlines. Set up a To-Do list for the week to identify activities that need to get done (homework, projects, chores, etc.) and those that the student wants to do (spend time with friends, play video games, watch a movie, etc.).
- **Work with students to complete learning style assessments** to determine approaches to studying. Understanding learning styles is an important part of helping students understand the types of study skills that will best benefit them. To learn more and complete assessments, visit educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments.
- **Encourage self-advocacy.** Students may not always feel comfortable advocating for their needs or asking for help. Self-advocacy is an important skill for all students, in particular students with learning needs. One helpful resource is imdetermined.org/youth/
- **Learn about high school options in the area.** Connect with the school counselor. See Section 6 for more information.
- **Find academic enrichment programs** to help your student succeed in high school and encourage college attendance. See Section 10 for more information.



COURSEWORK



- **Review the student's academic plan to ensure they are on track to be able to enroll in "a-g" courses once in high school.** Not sure what "a-g" courses are? Learn more in Section 6.
 - Taking Algebra 1 in middle school will place a student in an advanced math class upon entering high school and allow them to be better prepared for college.
 - Taking a foreign language as an elective in 8th grade may help the student advance one year of a foreign language for college eligibility requirements.
- **Regularly check the student's school work online.** Many schools use websites like Canvas or School Loop for parents and caregivers to track a student's grades, homework and important deadlines.
- **Request tutoring, as needed.** The school counselor, Foster Youth District Liaison, or County Office of Education Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP) can be great resources. Learn more in Section 10.
- **If applicable, discuss special education services.** Explore if services, such as an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan, should be requested or if services need to be updated because the current services no longer meet the youth's needs. 504 Plans and IEPs provide accommodations for students with physical or mental health disabilities to succeed in school, however only certain classifications of disabilities are eligible for an IEP.

