The School Counselor and Supporting Students in Foster Care
(Adopted 2018)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position
Foster youth represent an underserved, and often overlooked, student population. School counselors recognize these students may be in situations placing them at higher risk. School counselors strive to meet the academic, career and social/emotional needs of all students within the context of a comprehensive school counseling program.

The Rationale
Children and youth in foster care represent one of the most vulnerable student subgroups in this country. Of the approximately 415,000 children in foster care in 2014, nearly 270,000 were in elementary and secondary schools. Children in foster care experience much higher levels of residential and school instability than their peers. Children experiencing this type of instability, including many students in foster care, are more likely to face a variety of academic difficulties. (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016)

The School Counselor’s Role
School counselors are positioned to act as a resource for foster care students and their families. School counselors ensure they are knowledgeable regarding the following:
- Local, state and national policies and information concerning students in the foster care system including but not limited to:
  - health care resources
  - mentoring opportunities
  - scholarships and tuition vouchers
  - transportation options
  - housing information
  - individual benefits
- School and district policies/procedures regarding student records and confidentiality
- The legal statuses of the student, foster parents and biological parents

School counselors provide all students with college and career resources and keep in mind foster youth may need more direction and assistance as they develop their postsecondary plan.

Summary
School counselors recognize that students in the foster care system may require additional support in obtaining resources, social/emotional care, academic planning and college/career guidance. School counselors should serve as a resource for students in foster care situations and their families.

References