Students who experience foster care are among the most vulnerable student populations in the U.S.

Challenges for Students in Foster Care

Academically behind when they enter foster care
Placement changes and school moves interfere with their growth
Fall even further behind their peers

On average, the academic achievement of students in foster care is below grade level.

Academic proficiency is on a 4-point scale:
3+ is at grade level

Students in foster care: in reading, writing, and math 2.3
CURRENT ACADEMIC SUPPORTS FOR THESE STUDENTS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

DURING AND AFTER FOSTER CARE
ACADEMIC GROWTH IMPROVES SLIGHTLY BUT NOT ENOUGH TO CATCH UP TO GRADE LEVEL

STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE WOULD NEED TO BE WELL BEYOND THE 50TH PERCENTILE TO CATCH UP

A PLACEMENT CHANGE COUPLED WITH A SCHOOL MOVE

TOOK THE AVERAGE FOSTER STUDENT FROM THE 43RD TO THE 39TH GROWTH PERCENTILE IN READING

THE EFFECT IS SMALLER FOR WRITING AND SIMILAR FOR MATH
STUDENTS NEED A LONG-TERM APPROACH THAT’S FOCUSED ON GROWTH OVER TIME

RECOMMENDATION #1
INTERVENE EARLY

PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC SUPPORT AS SOON AS THEY ENTER THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM BEFORE THEY ARE IN FOSTER CARE

RECOMMENDATION #2
PLAN FOR STABILITY

CONSIDER THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF PLACEMENT CHANGES AND SCHOOL MOVES EVEN STUDENTS WHO ARE ON GRADE LEVEL ARE LIKELY TO SLIP AND NEED SUPPORT

RECOMMENDATION #3
OFFER LONG-TERM SUPPORT

STUDENTS WHO EXIT FOSTER CARE ARE STILL AT RISK OF POOR ACADEMIC OUTCOMES THEY NEED TARGETED, LONG-TERM SUPPORT TO ENSURE THEIR FUTURE SUCCESS

Data Source: Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department of Human Services

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