

Automatic Benefits for Foster Children in Pennsylvania

WIC (Women, Infants, and Children): Foster children under the age of 5 are automatically eligible for free nutritional foods, infant formula, and health screenings

Free Child Care Subsidies: all families with foster children automatically qualify for ELRC/CCIS no matter what their income is. Families still need to meet work requirements (20 hrs/week or work 10 hrs and 10 hours of school)

Extended foster care support: through Act 91, youth can choose to stay in foster care until 21 years old

Health Care: children who were or are currently in foster care qualify for Medicaid until their 26th birthday

Free School Meals: every foster child automatically qualifies for free breakfast and lunch in school no matter caregiver finances

Automatic School Support

DHS Education Support Center: Any school age (kindergarten to college) in current or recent placement. Helps with enrollment, school stability, credit transfers, and IEP navigation.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Requires schools and child welfare agencies to work together to keep children in foster care in their "school of origin" to prevent learning loss

Post Secondary School Support

Financial aid for college: if a child is in foster care after turning 13 yo at any point, they can apply for FAFSA as an Independent Student which maximizes aid

Campus Support Networks: by law all colleges must have a dedicated foster care point of contact to help advocate and support

Chafee Grant: individuals who are in foster care after 14 years old have a right to *apply* for this federal grant that helps with college costs outside of tuition

Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program (FosterEd): for individuals who experienced foster care at age 16 and older, helps cover college tuition