



Educating the Community about the Need to Keep Local Kids Local

It quite obvious to DCF staff that children in care need stable school settings to reach their full potential, but the general public and many community and education partners, and legal partners are not necessarily tuned in to the problem. This section of the Rock the GRADES Toolkit is designed to provide information and strategies to help educate the community about the value of keeping children and youth in familiar surroundings.

How to get the word out:

1. DCF District Directors and Resource Coordinators, trained school personnel and a host of other knowledgeable individuals may all be in a position to share information about the challenging impact of school transitions on the lives of children in out of home care. This can be done informally through one-on-one conversations, or in an organized group setting such as staff meetings, public events, or speaking to a church or non-profit organization. Social media and traditional media are also effective avenues of communication. Online resources that people can view on their own time and refer back to when needed, are a valuable part of the education package.
2. Cultivating new or existing multidisciplinary recruitment networks will provide new partners to assist in this work.

What to say:

1. The Rock the GRADES Toolkit offers a range of materials that can be used to discuss and engage the community on how to support youth in state care along their school path. It is helpful to provide people with:
 - Data on the impact of school instability on youth and on how we do in Vermont. (See [FAST FACTS](#), [Vermont School Stability Summary](#) and [Youth Education Survey Summary](#).)
 - Stories – Use confidential examples to paint a picture of the value of keeping a student stable in their community and school.
 - Provide suggestions for how we can improve school stability and success
 - Work to recruit Foster/Kin families in the communities and school districts where they are needed. Community connections can also help local family members, organize transportation (if needed) and provide respite care.
 - Use the [Educational Best Interest Determination](#) to see if transitioning the child to a new school is the appropriate solution if they cannot be placed locally.
 - Improve communication between the child, the family, the school, social welfare and members of the legal profession so that necessary transitions cause as little disruption as possible. (See [Best Practice for School Transitions](#))





VT-FUTRES
Fostering Understanding To
Reach Educational Success

Educate Local Communities Toolkit

- Create a supportive and successful school program and environment for each student in state care.

Resources for Educating Local Communities:

There are a range of materials that can help you promote Educational Stability and Success for the children in care in your community. Some are included in this section of the website and there are many additional resources that have been posted on the [LINKS](#) page of the VT-FUTRES website. Different resources will be appropriate for different audiences. Teachers may wish to know how better to engage a child in the classroom, while DCF staff may need information on running a Best Interest Determination meeting.

Education and Training Resources in the Appendix include:

- [FAST FACTS](#)
- [Elevator Speeches](#)
- [What Can Teachers and Educators Do](#)
- *“No Decision About Us, Without Us” - Documentary video on youth experience available on Youtube*
- [School Presentation Request Letter](#)
- [Sample speech to school staff](#)
- *Powerpoints for [LIT Teams](#), [Legal Community](#), [Community Partners](#), and [School Clinicians and other Mental Health Workers](#)*
- [Family Centered Practice Powerpoint](#)
- *School Staff Powerpoints on Trauma Informed Supports - [long](#) and [short](#) versions*

Online Resources Specific to the VT-FUTRES Project include:

- The Casey Family Foundation’s [“Endless Dreams”](#) video and [curriculum](#).

