Computer Buddies™*

by Nexuskids

Coordinator Training Presentation

Children's Law Office

USC School of Law

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Columbia, SC 29204

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Judge William R. Byars, Jr. (Ret.), Director

Staff

- Kathleen M. Hayes, Ph.D., Program Director
- Jutta K. Young, M.A., Communications and Education
- Roni L. Caw, Community Liaison
- David Fellows, Statewide Technical Manager

nexuskids.org

help-net.com/computer buddies

Nexuskids

Working across agencies, organizations and systems to better coordinate assistance for struggling students who have been abused and / or neglected

(Nexuskids is a program of the

Children's Law Office, USC School of Law)

Foster children lose
6 months of emotional development
for every move, and most foster children move more than one time

(The following five slides show national statistics.)

1/3 of school-age foster children are behind their age-appropriate grade levels

66% of youth leaving foster care have not completed high school

10% of foster children earn “Ds” or “Fs” in elementary school;

25% of foster children earn “Ds” or “Fs” in middle school; and

28% of foster children earn “Ds” or “Fs” in high school.

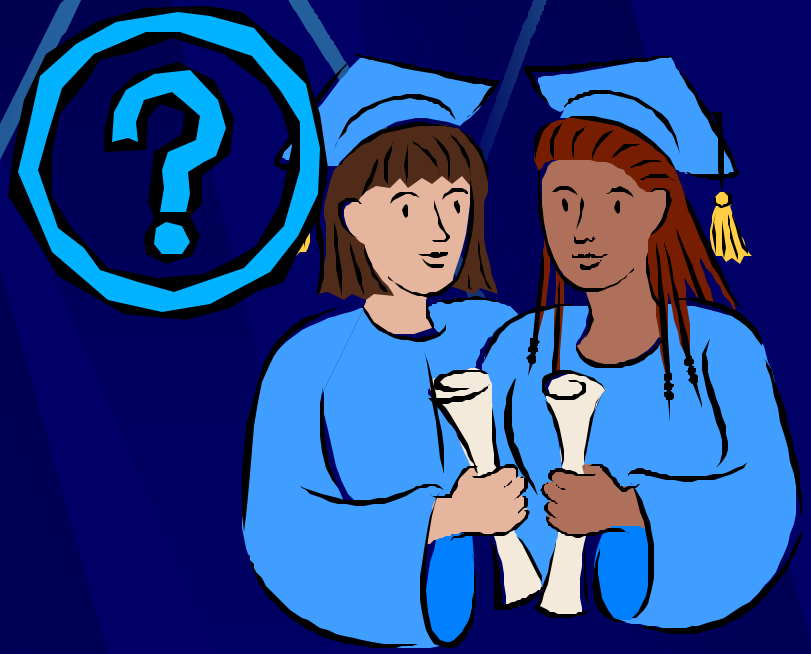
Educational failure is linked to increased unemployment and family problems.

Foster Care and Positive Outcomes

The more stability in foster care the better the adult outcomes for former foster children.

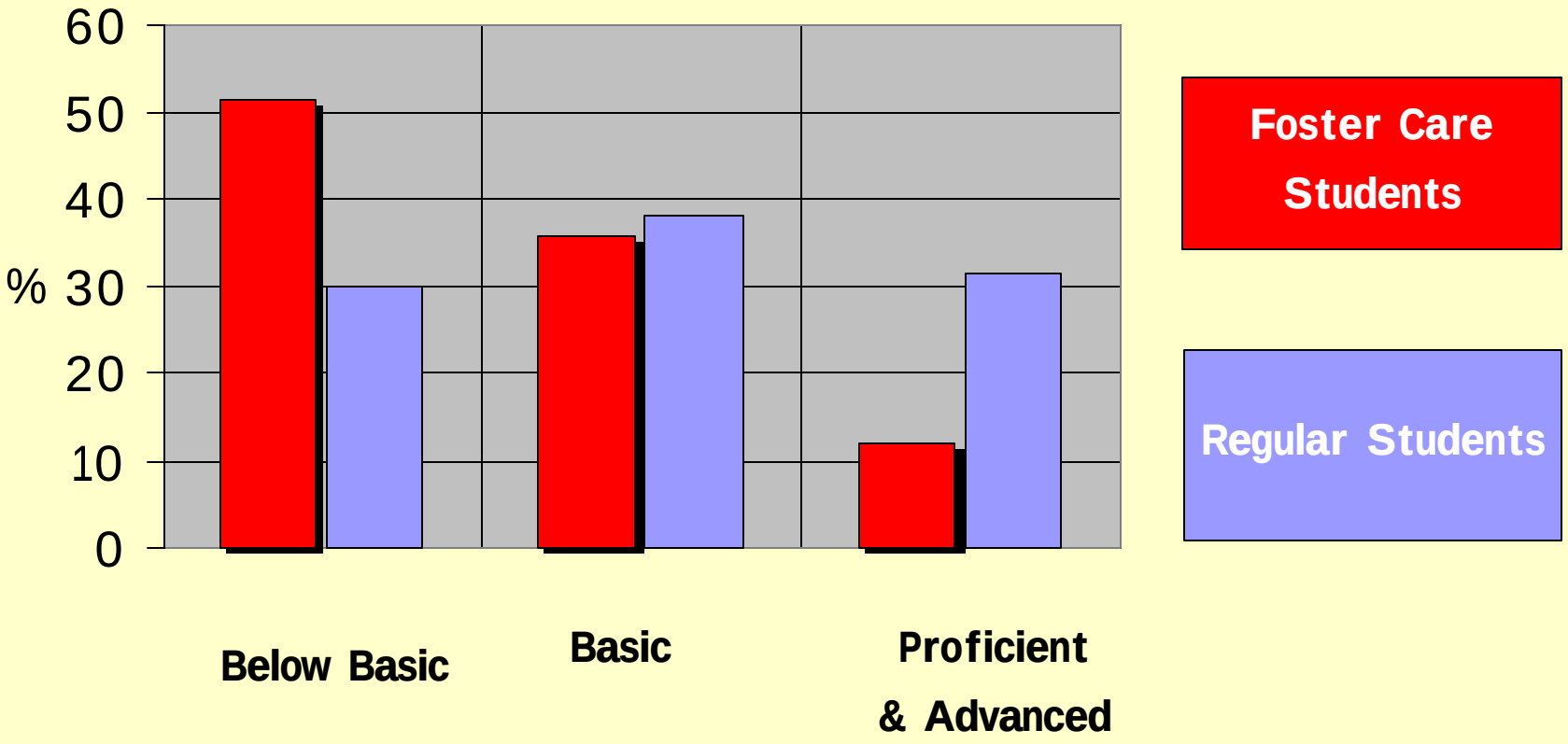
Education and Foster Care in South Carolina— The Nexuskids Initiative

- PACT scores are much lower than statewide averages



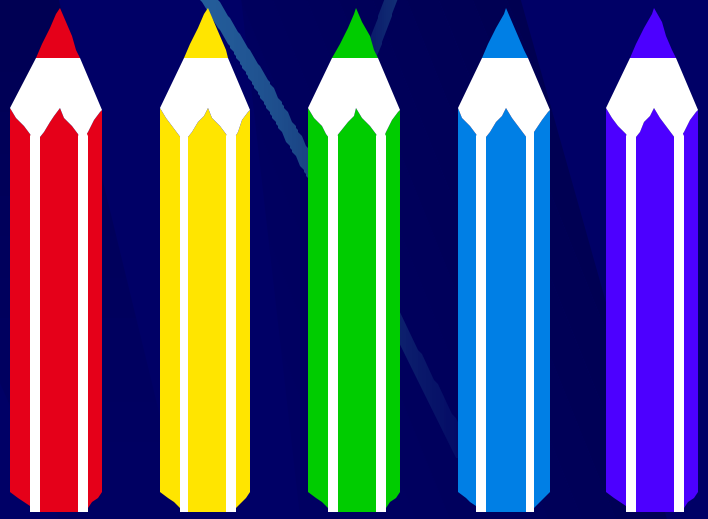
PACT Scores:

Foster Care Students vs. All Students



Educational Barriers Identified for Foster Children

- Too many foster homes and new schools
- School records are delayed
- Children have behavior & emotional problems
- Too few educational assessments completed



Educational Barriers Identified for Foster Children (con't.)

- Child's educational status is not clear to parents, teachers, & DSS
- Foster parents need more support for their child's education
- Transportation
- Enrolling children in school
- Tutoring (expense and availability)
- Lack of knowledge about the child

The Digital Divide

Foster children are being left behind in access to computer technology.

Computer Buddies™*

- Community volunteers approved by DSS
- Encourage computer use by the child
- Educational “coach”
- E-mail friend of child and family

Computer Buddies™*

- Recruited to provide computer support to child and family
- Provides educational encouragement
- Aware of child's progress in school
- Knows when big tests are scheduled
- Acknowledges progress with grades and attendance

Computer Buddies™*

- Meets with parents and child, and takes his or her lead from the child or parent
- Serves various lengths of time
- Helps the child find a new Computer Buddy when time to leave
- Knows how rejection affects the child

Computer Buddies™*

- Is trained to understand confidentiality issues
- Signs DSS confidentiality form
- Lets caseworker know if child discloses information on abuse or neglect or identifies a problem that should be known by DSS
- Completes short monthly progress reports for DSS (with copies to go to Nexuskids and the parents)

Preparing Your County for Computer Buddies™*

- Inform your local foster parents association about the computers (one computer per foster home with school age foster children)
- Brief school district officials and DSS to determine how the schools can help

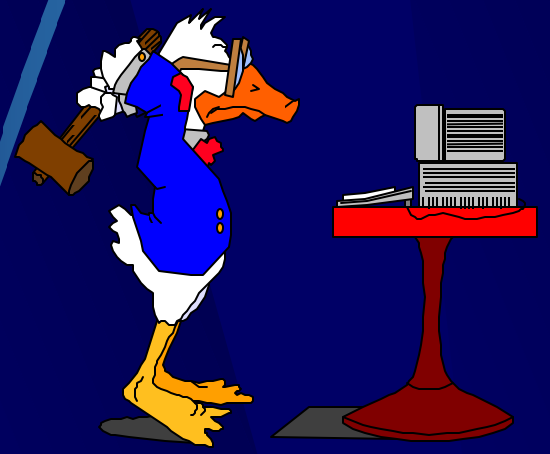
Preparing Your County for Computer Buddies™*

- Identify community partners to help recruit Computer Buddies
- Inform community that computers are the property of the SC Foster Parents Association
- Inform parents that DSS & the SC Foster Parents Association cannot maintain the computer, provide supplies or Internet access

Preparing Your County for Computer Buddies™*

- Identify storage facility that is secure
- Brief foster parents, education, and DSS staff at all levels
- Encourage flexibility in planning—computers will becomes available at different times

Preparing Your County for Computer Buddies™*



- Identify a DSS Nexuskids Computer Buddies Coordinator
- Identify a Nexuskids Computer Buddies Technical Manager
- Attend Nexuskids training for trainers

Computer Buddies™*
by Nexuskids

Dr. Patterson, DSS Director, is very interested in this vital effort! Please request that your DSS County/Region Office contact DSS State Office with your county's interest in this program.

Approval from State Office is required prior to receiving computers.

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Call Nexuskids for help or technical support:

(803) 576-5896

(803) 576-5574

(803) 576-5578

Visit our websites

nexuskids.org

help-net.com/computer buddies

Seeing Services Through the Eyes of the Child

*(*Trademark of the Computer Buddies program by Nexuskids is in process, March 2002.)*

Nexuskids
Children's Law Office

USC School of Law

in conjunction with:

SC Department of Social Services
SC Department of Education
SC Foster Parents Association
SC Educational Television
The United Way of South Carolina
SC Families for Kids