



DID YOU KNOW

There are approximately 700 children in the foster care system in Santa Barbara County. National statistics* tell us that:

- Foster youth change schools about once every six months, and lose an average of four to six months of educational attainment each time they move schools;
- 75% of children and youth in foster care are behind grade level;
- Approximately 50% of foster youth do not graduate high school;
- 25% of former foster youth are incarcerated within the first 2 years of emancipation;
- Within 18 months of emancipation, 40-50% of foster youth are homeless; and
- At least 37% of surveyed former foster youth, aged 19-25, live below the poverty line, and nearly 50% accept some kind of public assistance.

These discouraging outcomes tell us our foster teens are leaving the system under-educated and lacking the skills so vital to their future.

**For sources on the national statistics and to learn more about educational outcomes for foster youth visit www.childrensprojectsb.org.*



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Improving outcomes for Santa Barbara's foster youth and transforming the vision of the Children's Project Academy into a reality requires the ongoing collaboration and support of the community. For opportunities on how you can become involved, or to make a donation, please visit our website at www.childrensprojectsb.org, or contact:

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The Children's Project is a proud member of the following organizations:

C . A . R . E .
CALIFORNIA ACADEMIES FOR RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION



**The Children's Project
ACADEMY**

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**The Children's Project
ACADEMY**

*Building a Residential Charter School
for Foster Youth, Grades 7-12*

Every Great
Achievement
Begins with a
VISION





OUR CHILDREN

“My teacher said I could go to college if I applied myself, but I don’t see how it would be possible, so what’s the point?”

– Jason, age 17

On any given day, there are more than 600 children in foster care in Santa Barbara County, and over 500,000 nationally. They are children like Jason, who has moved from one end of the county to another – attending 5 different high schools in the past 3 years, due to changing foster care placements. This frequent upheaval in their lives, usually coupled with a background of abuse or neglect, conspire to make academic success extremely difficult.

Jason is frustrated. At each new school, he discovers he is in a different place in the curriculum than his classmates. Teachers struggle to help him catch up, or to keep him challenged if he is ahead of the rest of the class. Jason is also reluctant to make friends. He knows from bitter experience that any friends he makes are likely to be gone forever when he moves – again. Jason has begun to give up on himself academically and socially, and certainly does not believe he could attend college, even if he could find a way financially.

Sadly, stories like Jason's are not unusual. Studies reveal that a typical adolescent foster youth moves between homes an average of 10 times, and attends five or six different high schools. As a consequence, national statistics find that:

- 83% of foster youth are held back by the third grade;
- 75% complete class work below grade level;
- 35% are in special education;
- On average, less than 50% of foster children graduate from high school; and
- Although 70% of foster teens express a desire to go to college, fewer than 3% actually enroll.



OUR VISION

Most people in Santa Barbara County are unaware of the challenges faced by foster children. The Children's Project is dedicated to transforming the lives of foster youth. We have created a revolutionary concept in foster care: a residential charter school for foster children in grades 7-12. Once built, the Academy will:

- Provide a year-round, academically rigorous program within a residential community of support, stability, and continuity;
- Ensure that every student will graduate with a high school diploma; and
- Empower every student to set and achieve the highest educational goals, as well as gain those vocational, social, and life-skills indispensable to a successful future.

We have the opportunity to be a leader, as communities across the state and nation recognize that this charter boarding school model is an ideal way to solve the problems of multiple moves and poor educational outcomes for our foster teens.

This academy will leave a lasting legacy as it enables our children to create and sustain happy and productive lives, which will benefit them, and all of us for years to come.

A great education equals a great future.



OUR ACADEMY

The Academy campus will nurture foster youth into educated, self-aware, passionate, responsible young adults with integrity and respect for others. **The vision for the Academy is firmly rooted in the conviction of Dr. Jane Conoley, Dean of the UCSB Graduate School of Education, that, “the single greatest therapeutic tool in overcoming adversity is a great education.”** A great education is cultivated in an environment dedicated in every way to the growth and support of its students. To this end, the Academy will provide an environment that includes:

- Administration, faculty, and personnel dedicated to the mission of the Academy;
- An innovative and creative curriculum;
- Housing for students, faculty and staff;
- Senior housing for a “Foster Grandparent” program;
- A student union building;
- A cultural and family center;
- Sports programs for players and student coaches;
- Art and music programs;
- A state-of-the-art technology/media center;
- A medical clinic; and
- An energy and resource efficient “green” campus that will be utilized as a community environmental classroom.

At full capacity, the Academy will serve approximately 120 children each year. Success will be measured with each child who graduates from the Academy and transitions into college, vocational school, or work and independent living. The Academy will serve as a life-long touchstone, a safe, supportive environment that will give its students a secure launching pad toward their future.