



# apple bytes

a monthly news update from the  
Georgia Appleseed Center for Law & Justice

September, 2014

## Education Advocates Foster Educational Success for Children in Care

"Imagine starting your first day of school three times within two weeks", says **Education Advocate Coordinator Dmetria Gibson**. This recent experience by a fourth grader in foster care illustrates the challenges of educational stability faced by many children in DFCS care in Georgia. Multiple placements and changing schools often mean that educational progress and academic achievement are disrupted. School registration can be delayed and Individualized Education Plans lost. For children in foster care, school outcomes are startling: only 15% graduate from high school and just 3% go on to college.

Having an advocate in their corner is the goal of Georgia Appleseed's project, **Educational Stability for Children in Care**.



**Georgia Appleseed**, in partnership with **Families First** and **Georgia CASA** (Court Appointed Special Advocates), has created a first for Georgia: an Education Advocate program. It recruits and trains lay volunteers (similar to traditional CASAs, but with the education focus) to protect the education rights and needs of foster kids at school and in juvenile court. As 'voices from the field' relate in our new report, **Fostering Educational Success: Improving Academic Stability and Attainment for Georgia's Children in Care**, misapplied policy and convenience-driven practice often contribute to a rocky path through school.

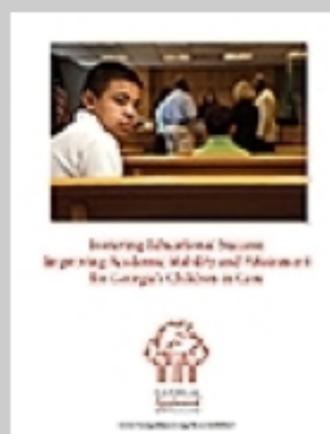
Thanks to a generous funder, a new CASA Education Advocate pilot program is underway in Fulton County. Volunteers work collaboratively with a school to improve academic success for the child, teach them self-advocacy skills and make recommendations in juvenile court to protect the educational needs of the student.

**Dr. Collette Hopkins, Project Director**, points to the heart of the issue when she says, "These kids have voices that have not been heard. But our efforts here are not just about solving the problem of one child. We want to affect the system and help policy makers understand it's about how *all* children are served."

Interested in becoming a volunteer Education Advocate? Next training is September 15-19, 2014, in Atlanta. [Learn more here](#). [Click here to apply](#).

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## Read the Report that Inspired the Project



## Meet the Education Advocate Project Staff



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Having an advocate in their corner is the goal of Georgia Appleseed's project, Educational Stability for Children in Care. Georgia Appleseed, in partnership with Families First and Georgia CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), has created a first for Georgia: an Education Advocate program. It recruits and trains lay volunteers (similar to traditional CASAs, but with the education focus) to protect the education rights and needs of foster kids at school and in juvenile court. As 'voices from the field' relate in our new report, *Fostering Educational Success: Improving Academic Stability and Attainment for Georgia's Children in Care*, misapplied policy and convenience-driven practice often contribute to a rocky path through school. Thanks to a generous funder, a new CASA Education Advocate pilot program is underway in Fulton County. Volunteers work collaboratively with a school to improve academic success for the child, teach them self-advocacy skills and make recommendations in juvenile court to protect the educational needs of the student. Dr. Collette Hopkins, Project Director, points to the heart of the issue when she says, "These kids have voices that have not been heard. But our efforts here are not just about solving the problem of one child. We want to affect the system and help policy makers understand it's about how all children are served." Interested in becoming a volunteer Education Advocate? Next training is September 15-19, 2014, in Atlanta. Learn more here. Click here to apply. We advocate that you like us on Facebook! E-Z click here Read the Report that Inspired the Project Meet the Education Advocate

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