



Kentucky should...

keep foster youth safe and supported by ensuring every young person in care has a state-issued ID

Youth in foster care too often go without a state-issued ID, leaving them unprepared for adulthood and more vulnerable to exploitation.

Obtaining an ID requires the youth's social worker to gather multiple vital documents and requires the youth's foster parent to accompany them to a regional licensing office. Although Kentucky requires IDs to be provided at no cost before youth exit care, many remain in care without identification and age out of care without one.

Without an ID, youth may have difficulty obtaining employment, securing housing, or accessing certain benefits/services.

Rural youth face additional challenges in traveling to one of 34 regional licensing offices, while long wait times discourage foster families statewide from completing the process.



IDs are a critical safety tool. Considering that foster youth face a higher risk of being trafficked, storing valid IDs in the Kentucky Driver Licensing Information System (KDLIS) ensures law enforcement has current photos and information to issue alerts and help locate missing children.

Foster Youth and Trafficking

- Service providers working with youth report that traffickers often **target youth in foster care**, who lack consistent family connections and supports, by offering housing, money, or other resources.
- In 2023, **67%** of the cases that the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) handled in Kentucky were children missing from social services facilities.
- Nationally, **nearly 1 in 5** children missing from care reported to NCMEC were likely victims of child sex trafficking.

Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Policy Solution:

Reduce bureaucratic hurdles, improve child safety, and support independent living by automatically issuing state IDs at no cost for youth in foster care.

Kentucky can reduce barriers to adulthood while strengthening safeguards against human trafficking and exploitation among youth with a foster care experience by:

- Ensuring every youth in foster care automatically receive a state-issued ID when they enter care.
- Guaranteeing that IDs are issued at no cost to youth in care.