

Rights and Services

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized by Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness

Students experiencing homelessness have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there.
- Get help enrolling and succeeding in school from the local homeless education liaison. Every school district must have a local liaison; the school district's central office can put families and youth in contact with this person. Local liaisons have a special responsibility to help youth who are living on their own (unaccompanied youth).
- Attend one of two schools: the *school of origin* or the *local school*.
 - The school of origin: Students experiencing homelessness can continue attending the school they went to before becoming homeless or the school in which they were last enrolled. This school is called the *school of origin*. Students can attend the school of origin even if they move outside of the school's residential zone, if this is feasible. Students can continue attending their school of origin the entire time they are homeless and until the end of any academic year during which they find permanent housing.
 - The local school: Children and youth experiencing homelessness can attend any public school that housed students living in the same attendance area as the homeless student are eligible to attend.
- Be enrolled in school immediately, even if lacking paperwork normally required for enrollment, such as proof of residency, proof of guardianship, immunization or other medical records, previous school records, or birth certificate. Unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) must be enrolled in school immediately, even if they do not have a parent or guardian to enroll them. Once immediate enrollment has occurred, the enrolling school must contact the student's previous school for records. The local liaison must help students get needed immunizations or immunization and medical records. The McKinney-Vento Act defines *enroll* and *enrollment* as "attending classes and participating fully in school activities".
- Receive transportation to and from their school of origin. If the student's school of origin and temporary residence are in the same school district, this transportation is to be provided or arranged by the school district of origin. If the student is residing in one district and attending the school of origin in another, this transportation is to be provided or arranged as a joint effort between school districts.
- Receive a written explanation from the school district if the district disputes that it is in the student's best interest to attend the school that the student has requested. In

this instance, the local liaison must help to settle such disagreements using the district's dispute resolution policy.

- Have disputes settled quickly. Homeless students can attend the requested school and receive all services for which they are eligible while disagreements are settled.
- Receive preschool services, free school meals, services for English language learners, special education, Title I services, vocational/technical education, gifted and talented services, and before- and after-school care, as needed.
- Go to school with children who are not homeless. Students cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Get information and referrals from local liaisons, including information about all available educational programs; information for parents on how they can support their children's education; and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other services.
- Have the opportunity to meet the same high academic achievement standards as all students.