



Homeless Student Information

The Role of Education

The role of education in the life of a homeless child is crucial. In a life that is filled with uncertainty, school is a place of safety. Something as simple as a desk to call her own can provide a homeless child with a sense of routine and ownership. A free, appropriate, public education is also a right to which homeless children and youth are legally entitled. This right put into practice has the potential to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness that may otherwise continue. For a homeless child, the importance of a stable, quality education is immeasurable.

If you have questions regarding the education of homeless children, please call:

Priscilla (Pat) Bradley, McKinney-Vento Student Advocate,

West 40 ISC#2 – Region 6

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McKinney-Vento: Federal Homeless Education Legislation

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act ensures the educational rights and protections of homeless children and youth so that they may enroll in school, attend regularly, and be successful. The legislation requires a local homeless education liaison in every school district to assist children and unaccompanied youth in their efforts to attend school. This act guarantees homeless children and youth the following:

- The right to immediate enrollment in school, even if lacking paperwork normally required for enrollment.
- The right to attend school in his/her school of origin (if this is requested by the parent and is feasible) or in the school in the attendance area where the family or youth is currently residing
- The right to receive transportation to his/her school of origin, if this is requested by the parent.
- The right to services comparable to those received by housed schoolmates, including transportation and supplemental educational services.
- The right to attend school along with children not experiencing homelessness. Segregation based on a student's status as homeless is strictly prohibited
- The posting of homeless students' rights in all schools and other places around the community.

While having the opportunity to enroll and succeed in school may seem like a given to many of us, the McKinney-Vento Act was enacted due to the numerous barriers homeless children faced in obtaining a free, appropriate, public education. It is the goal of the Intermediate Service Centers to create public awareness of the rights of homeless children and youth and to ensure compliance with the law at the state and local levels.

Who is homeless?

The term "homeless children and youth" as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act;

Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and includes—

- Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Children and youths who are living in a cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus/train stations, or similar settings,
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above

More Information on Homelessness

- [Frequently Asked Questions](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/homeless/pdf/faq.pdf) <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/homeless/pdf/faq.pdf>
- [ISBE Homeless Policy](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/homeless/pdf/policy.pdf) <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/homeless/pdf/policy.pdf>
- [Other Homeless Resources](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/homeless/default.htm) <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/homeless/default.htm>

Should school fees be waived for homeless students?

Yes, school related fees should be waived for homeless students.