

What is meant by the term “homeless children and youth”?

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youth as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

1. Children and youth who are:
 - a. sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as *doubled-up*);
 - b. living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - c. living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - d. abandoned in hospitals; or
 - e. awaiting foster care placement.
2. Children and youth 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;
3. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

What are a school’s responsibilities for enrolling homeless children and youth?

1. A school selected on the basis of a best interest determination must **immediately enroll** the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce the records normally required for enrollment such as:
 - a. previous academic records;
 - b. medical records;
 - c. proof of residency;
 - d. birth certificates; or
 - e. other documentation.
2. The enrolling school must immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic or other records.
3. To facilitate immediate enrollment, timely transfer of records from school to school should also take into account procedures for State-to-State record transfers.
4. The McKinney-Vento statute provides a broad mandate to States and districts to change policies or practices that act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, and school success of homeless children. It is important for them to review policies and practices on an on-going basis, so that new barriers do not prevent children from receiving the free, appropriate public education to which they are entitled.

For more information or questions call or e-mail:

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