

Homeless children have the right to a free, appropriate public education

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001

Who is considered homeless?

Children or youth and their families living in a shelter, transitional housing, motel, vehicle, campground, on the street, or doubled-up with relatives or friends due to a lack of housing are considered to be homeless.

Does residency have to be proven?

No, because homeless families are unable to establish a "home" on a permanent basis, a school cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay the enrollment of school-age children.

What choice of schools do homeless students have?

The law indicates that the local education agency shall, according to the child's best interest:

(i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness (I) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year;

OR

(ii) for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or (II) enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

Dedicated to Meeting the Needs of Pennsylvania's Homeless Children

Is there any reason to delay enrolling a homeless child?

No. The school selected shall immediately enroll the child/youth in school, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation. The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" are defined to include attending classes and participating fully in school activities. The enrolling school must immediately contact the last school the child or youth attended to obtain relevant academic and other records. Immunization records can be transferred over the phone from the school nurse of the sending school to the school nurse of the receiving school.

Where can you call for assistance?

The Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program exists to help homeless children with a wide variety of services. We can assist homeless children during this time of change and stress. If you are homeless with school-age children or you are a school, agency or shelter employee, please contact one of the persons listed below.

- 1) Call your local school district Homeless Liaison. If you do not know the name of the Homeless Liaison, call the superintendent's office for the name and number.
- 2) If you require further assistance, please contact:

Sheldon Winnick, State Coordinator
Education for Children and Youth
Experiencing Homelessness Program
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street, 5th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
(717) 783-6468



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION