

McKinney-Vento 101: Making Positive Impacts for the Future

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The McKinney-Vento Act

- Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
(42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.)
 - Originally passed in 1987
 - Reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
 - “Awaiting Foster Care” was removed from McKinney-Vento, Dec. 2016

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

- Works hand-in-hand with Title I.A and other federal education programs
- Establishes the definition of *homeless* used by schools
- Ensures that children and youth experiencing homelessness have immediate and equal access to public education
- Provides for educational access, stability, and support to promote school success
- Needed to address the unique barriers faced by many homeless students

What Causes Homelessness?

“Homelessness is a lack of permanent housing resulting from extreme poverty and/or unsafe or unstable living environments (e.g., conditions of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, natural or other disasters).”

Two trends are largely responsible for the rise of family homelessness over the past several decades:

- a growing shortage of affordable housing and
- a simultaneous increase in severe poverty.¹

¹ Issues of Homelessness and Education: Causes and Consequences. (2009). In *Educating Children Without Housing* (Third ed., p. 3). ABA Commission on Homelessness and Poverty.

Barriers to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

- Stereotypes and lack of awareness
- Under-identification
- High mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity
- Enrollment requirements (school records, health records, proof of residence, guardianship, etc.)
- Poor health, fatigue, hunger
- Emotional trauma, depression, anxiety
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.

Education is Critical for Homeless Students

- Connecting children to educational services is important especially in times of crisis
- Attending school allows children to regain a sense of normalcy
- Time away from school disrupts the students' academic development
- Schools can also provide students with important services such as free meals and counseling

Determining Eligibility

Is done on a case-by-case determination.

- Get as much information as possible (with sensitivity and discretion)
- Look at the MV definition (specific examples in the definition first, then overall definition).
- Considerations for families/youth who are staying with other people:
 - Where would you go if you couldn't stay here?
 - What led you to move in to this situation?
- *NCHE's Determining Eligibility brief is available at:*
 - ❖ *<https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/conf-elig.pdf>*

School Access

Students experiencing homelessness have the **right** to remain in their school of origin until the end of the academic year that they are permanently housed.

- **School of Origin:** The term “school of origin” means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool.
- **School of Residency:** The school designated for the attendance area in which the student currently resides.
- **Immediate Enrollment:** Expedite and remove barriers enrollment - (regardless of missing documentation) such as school records, medical records, proof of residence, etc.

School Stability

Transportation- provided to and from the “school of origin” (including preschool)

- Including extracurricular activities

Provide Appropriate Support Services

- The services you provide to students will be as unique as each student

Promote your community partners, your school district by providing training and outreach for your homeless families

Review and Revise Policies

- What works and what needs changing

Coordinate and Collaborate

Why do we provide support services?

Because, students who are highly mobile are also at a greater risk of:

- Lower academic achievement (changes between LEAs and curriculum)
- They are two times likely to repeat a grade
- Have higher drop out rates
- Have higher rates of behavioral problems - anxiety/depression
- Are sick two times as often as their peers

Support for Academic Success: Full Participation

States must have procedures to eliminate barriers to academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs. 11432(g)(1)(F)(iii)

- LEAs should anticipate and accommodate the needs of McKinney-Vento students to enter those programs and consider giving them priority on waitlists.
- SEAs and LEAs should develop policies to expedite full participation in extracurricular activities and work with athletic associations to adjust policies to facilitate participation.

Support for Academic Success: Credit Accrual and School Climate

LEAs must have procedures to ensure McKinney-Vento students receive appropriate full or partial credit, such as:

- ✓ consulting with prior school(s) about partial coursework completed
- ✓ evaluating students' mastery of partly completed courses
- ✓ offering credit recovery 11432(g)(1)(F)(ii), 11432(g)(6)(A)(x)

SEAs and LEAs should ensure school personnel consider issues related to homelessness prior to taking disciplinary action.

SEAs and LEAs should provide training on the traumatic impacts of homelessness and how to provide trauma informed support.

Child-Centered and Best Interest

The concept of best interest appears in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act in relation to a student's school selection options, which include the school of origin and the local attendance area school.

Changing schools (especially mid-year), greatly impedes a student's academic and social growth. What should guide these decisions?

- The student's age
- Transportation (how far is too far?)
- Personal safety issues
- The student's need for special instruction
- Length of stay in the temporary shelter or doubled-up home
- The time of remain in the school year

McKinney-Vento Liaisons

Every LEA must designate a McKinney-Vento liaison able to carry out his/her legal duties. 11432(g)(6)

Liaisons must ensure that—

- McKinney-Vento students, including preschool and unaccompanied youth enroll in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.
- McKinney-Vento students are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other entities and agencies.
- **Identification should be part of all LEA needs assessments and school improvement plans. (Guidance F4)**
- **Public notice of MV rights is disseminated in locations frequented by parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth, in a manner and form understandable to them.**

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McKinney-Vento Liaisons

Liaisons must ensure that (cont.)—

- **School personnel providing McKinney-Vento services receive professional development and other such services have access to and receive support.**
- Children, youth and families educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, **early intervention (IDEA Part C)** and other preschool programs.
- Children, youth and families receive referrals to health care, dental, mental health, **substance abuse, housing** and other services.
- Unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school and can receive credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school.

Resources

NAEHCY (National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth)

- <http://naehcy.org>

Facebook and Twitter

NCHE (National Center on Homeless Education)

- <http://nche.ed.gov/>

National Network for Youth

- <http://www.nn4youth.org>

SchoolHouse Connection

- <https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org>

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