McKinney-Vento

Education of Homeless Children And Youth Act

The School Secretary

YOU ARE THE FIRST PERSON THAT MANY FAMILIES DEALING WITH HOMELESSNESS SPEAK WITH

YOU ARE A CRITICAL PERSON IN MAINTAINING THE STABILITY OF A HOMELESS CHILD

What you as the first line of contact need to know

- What to say
- What the law (Mckinney-Vento) says
- Who is homeless
- Who your school coordinator for McKinney-Vento is
- Who your district liaison is

School secretaries are the gatekeepers You

- Set the tone of the conversation
- Ask the right questions
- Provide the link for successful access to school
- Refer to your school coordinator or district liaison

SET THE TONE

- People don't want to be categorized as homeless
 - Respect is key
 - Tact is critical

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

You want to withdraw your child

- Are you moving?
- Is there something we could help you with?
- Where are you moving to?
- Is grandma's going to be a temporary stay?
- You know there are some instances when a child can stay in their school even when they change address

PROVIDE THE LINK FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL ACCESS

- So you want to enroll your child in our school?
 - We are so happy to have you
 - Provide parent, guardian with info such as registration form, brochure on the school or district and include a student's rights poster
 - which addresses homelessness. Provide this to all new registrants.
 - Are there any circumstances that we should be aware of

PROVIDE THE LINK FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL ACCESS

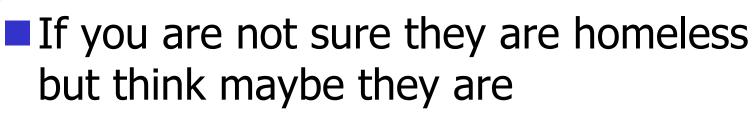
- Notice or ask if there are preschool children...they maybe eligible for Head Start
- If you are talking to an unaccompanied youth...refer to the liaison...they have special rights

IF THEY SAY THIS MAY BE TEMPORARY

- You are not you sure if you are staying?
- Are you just checking us out?
- Is there anything I can help you with?
- If they say that housing is an issue...(you could say) are you staying with relatives or friends temporarily?

REFER If they are in a homeless status

- Contact your school McKinney-Vento coordinator
- If you don't have a school coordinator, contact your district McKinney-Vento Liaison.
 - These are the people who will make the referrals for
 - Transportation
 - Free lunch
 - Services as needed



Refer

It is the liaison's responsibility to check it out, not yours

Local Homeless Liaisons District level

- Every LEA must designate a liaison for students in homeless situations
- Responsibilities
 - Ensure that students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, school
 - Ensure that children and youth in homeless situations are identified
 - Other duties, arranging transportation, posting notice, resolving disputes

Causes of Homelessness

- Lack of affordable housing
- Deep poverty
- Health problems
- Domestic violence
- For unaccompanied youth, abuse/neglect

REMEMBER

• Anyone can become homeless, you, your neighbor.

Hard times can hit us all

THE LAW: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Reauthorized 2002 by NCLB PROVIDES:

- School stability
- School access
- Support for academic success
- Child-centered, best interest decision making

McKinney-Vento

States who is homeless

School's responsibilities regarding

- Enrollment
- Transportation
- Services
- Dispute resolution
- Unaccompanied youth

Eligibility - Who is Homeless?

Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence—

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals

Who is Homeless, Continued

- Children in foster care placement
- Living in a public or private place not designed for sleeping
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, etc.
- Migratory living in circumstances described above



School Stability—Key Provisions

- Children and youth experiencing homelessness can stay in their school of origin or enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend, according to their best interest.
- School of origin—school attended when permanently housed or in which last enrolled.
- Best interest—keep students who are homeless in their school of origin, to the extent feasible, unless against the parents' or guardians' wishes.

School Selection—Key Provisions

- Students can stay in their school of origin the entire time they are homeless, and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.
- If a student is sent to a school other than that requested by a parent or guardian, the district must provide a written explanation to the parent or guardian of its decision and the right to appeal.

Transportation—Key Provisions

- LEAs must provide students experiencing homelessness with transportation to and from their school of origin, at a parent's or guardian's request (or at the liaisons request for unaccompanied youth).
- If the student's temporary residence and the school of origin are in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation. If the student is living outside of the school of origin's LEA, the LEA where the student is living and the school of origin's LEA must determine how to divide the responsibility and share the cost, or they must share the cost equally.

Transportation—Key Provisions

 In addition to providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students.

Enrollment—Key Provisions

- Children and youth in homeless situations can stay in their school of origin (to the extent feasible) or enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend.
- The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.



Enrollment—Key Provisions

- Children and youth have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if they do not have required documents, such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documents.
- If a student does not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the liaison must immediately assist in obtaining them, and the student must be enrolled in the interim.

Enrollment—Key Provisions

- Enrolling schools must obtain school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled in school while records are obtained.
- Schools must maintain records for students who are homeless so they are available quickly.
- Federal law supercedes state and local laws where there is a conflict. [U.S. Constitution, Article VI]
- SEAs and LEAs must develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations.

Resolution of Disputes—Key Provisions

- Every state must establish dispute resolution procedures.
- When a dispute over enrollment arises, the student must be immediately admitted to the school of choice while the dispute is being resolved.
- Liaisons must ensure unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled while the dispute is being resolved.

Resolution of Disputes—Key Provisions

- Whenever a dispute arises, the parent or guardian must be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision, including the right to appeal.
- The school must refer the child, youth, parent or guardian to the liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

Unaccompanied Youth—Key Provisions

- Definition: youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian
- Liaisons must help unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youth's wishes, and inform the youth of his or her appeal rights.
- School personnel must be made aware of the specific needs of runaway and homeless youth.

Access to Services

- Students who experience homelessness must have access to educational services for which they are eligible, including special education, programs for English learners, gifted and talented programs, voc./tech. programs, and school nutrition programs.
- Undocumented children and youth have the same right to attend public school as U.S. citizens and are covered by the McKinney-Vento Act to the same extent as other children and youth. [Plyler v. Doe]

Access to Services

- USDA policy permits liaisons and shelter directors to obtain free school meals for students by providing a list of names of students experiencing homelessness with effective dates.
- The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA includes amendments that reinforce timely assessment, inclusion, and continuity of services for children and youth who are homeless and have disabilities.

Title I and Homelessness—Key Provisions

- A child or youth who is homeless and is attending any school in the district is automatically eligible for Title IA services.
- LEAs must reserve (or set aside) funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to children in Title IA schools to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children may live.



"...Through it all, school is probably the only thing that has kept me going. I know that every day that I walk in those doors, I can stop thinking about my problems for the next six hours and concentrate on what is most important to me. Without the support of my school system, I would not be as well off as I am today. School keeps me motivated to move on, and encourages me to find a better life for myself." ie Arnold, LeTendre Scholar, 2002