

Common Signs of Homeless

***Note:** While these are considered common signs, please recognize that they offer general guidance. There is significant variability within the school-age homeless population. Individual students may differ significantly from the following general characteristics.*

Lack of Continuity in Education

- Attendance at many different schools
- Lack of records needed to enroll
- Inability to pay fees
- Gaps in skill development
- Mistaken diagnosis of abilities

Poor Health/Nutrition

- Lack of immunizations and/or immunization records
- Unmet medical and dental needs
- Chronic hunger (may hoard food)
- Fatigue (may fall asleep in class)

Transportation and Attendance Problems

- Erratic attendance and tardiness
- Numerous absences
- Unable to contact parents

Poor Hygiene

Social and Behavior Concerns

Reaction/Statements by Parent, Guardian, or child

What to do if you suspect a child is homeless...

If you are a community member – inform the Federal Programs Director

If you are school personnel– inform the school counselor

If you are a bus driver – inform the Transportation Director

If you are a school food service employee – inform the Director of Food Services

If you are a social worker – inform the Federal Programs Director

If you are a homeless parent – inform the Federal Programs Director

Local Contact Information:

Christopher J. Williams, Sr., Assistant Superintendent
228-875-7707

State Contact Information:

LeDewayne Harris
601-359-3499



Homeless Quick Reference Guide

Supporting the Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Ocean Springs School District
2300 Government Street
Ocean Springs, MS 39564

IDENTIFYING HOMELESS STUDENTS

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized by Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This flyer explains the key provisions in the Act concerning the identification of homeless children and youth and offers guidance for implementing the Act in the Clinton Public School District.

Children and youth experiencing homelessness are difficult to identify for many reasons and often go unnoticed by school personnel. Students and parents may try to hide their situation because they are embarrassed by their homelessness. In addition, the fear of having children taken away often prevents families from revealing their living circumstances to school officials. Unaccompanied youth may not report their homeless status for fear of being returned to unsafe family environments. Homeless children and youth who are not reenrolled in school and are living in places other than shelters, such as doubled-up with another family or in a low-cost motel, are even more invisible to schools and their communities.

Who is homeless? (Sec. 725)

The term “homeless children and youth”

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and

(B) includes –

(i) children and youths who 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;

(ii) 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...

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children in homeless situations have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there.
- Attend either the local school or the school of origin, if this is in their best interest; the school of origin is the school the child attended when he/she was permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled.
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if missing records and documents normally required for enrollment such as a birth certificate, proof of residence, previous school records, or immunization/medical records.
- Enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in all school activities while the school arranges for the transfer of records.
- Have access to the same programs and services that are available to all other students including transportation and supplemental education services.
- Attend school with children not experiencing homelessness; segregation based on a student’s status as homeless is prohibited.