

# Students and Families in Transition

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## *McKinney-Vento Guidance for Parents, Guardians and Youth in transition*

**THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT:** • guarantees the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness to a free and appropriate public education • requires a local homeless education liaison in every school district ensures: • immediate enrollment • access to needed services • school stability • support for academic achievement

# McKinney-Vento Program Contact Information

Agency to Contact	Name of Contact and Phone Number	Role
<b>Ritenour School District Homeless Coordinator</b>	Julie Hahn (314) 493-6086 <a href="mailto:hahnj@ritenourschools.org">hahnj@ritenourschools.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure identification, enrollment and opportunity to succeed in school</li> <li>• Provide information of educational and related opportunities</li> <li>• Collaborate with state coordinator</li> <li>• Educate parents, personnel and advocates of the rights of youth in homeless situation</li> </ul>
<b>Coordinator for Special Education</b>	Dee Byrnes (314) 993-8100 <a href="mailto:byrnesd@ritenourschools.org">byrnesd@ritenourschools.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist homeless coordinator with supporting students with IEP needs and resources</li> </ul>
<b>Ritenour Student Services and Registration Department</b>	Robin Kern, Jennifer Schumacher, Yibeli Lopez (314) 493-6016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help facilitate the enrollment process and gathering of student records</li> <li>• Assists with cab transportation</li> </ul>
<b>College and Career Advisors</b>	Julie Kamshroeder, Cabrina Noonan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with college enrollment, applications, FAFSA and career opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>State Coordinator for Homeless Education</b>	Cheryl Kosmatka (573) 522-8763 <a href="mailto:Cheryl.Kosmatka@dese.mo.gov">Cheryl.Kosmatka@dese.mo.gov</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assists with disputes when not resolved at the local level</li> </ul>

## Services We Provide:

- Assistance with Ritenour School District enrollment and registration process
- Assistance to obtain transportation to the child's school of origin when possible
- Assistance with school supplies, clothing and other resources needed for school
- Assistance with fees related to the full participation of school and school activities (i.e. field trips)
- Transportation assistance to promote parental involvement
- Referrals to community resources that include medical, food, housing, mental health and others
- Interpretation and translation services as needed
- Assist with educational services for which students are eligible including special education, preschool programs, 504 plans and other appropriate services
- Assistance with obtaining immunization and medical records
- Assistance with postsecondary planning and enrollment to colleges
- Represent the needs of unaccompanied youth

## Definition of Homelessness

Ritenour School District recognizes that homeless students are particularly vulnerable and need special assistance to access and benefit from the education environment. Therefore, in accordance with state and federal law, Ritenour School District will attempt to promptly identify homeless students and ensure that they receive access to a free, appropriate public education and related services in the mainstream school environment.

For additional information see Policy ICBCA: <https://go.boarddocs.com/mo/rsdmo/Board.nsf/vpublic#>  
**The McKinney-Vento law says that homelessness includes individuals who do not have a fixed, regular and adequate home because they have lost their own home.**

### This means:

- Individuals who have lost their own home, suffering a financial hardship or similar reason;
- Individuals who are sharing the housing of others;
- Individuals who are living in hotels or motels or in campgrounds or trailer parks that are not viewed as year round homes because they do not have accommodations, such as heat or running water;
- Individuals who are living in emergency shelters or who have been abandoned in hospitals;
- Individuals who are living in cars, parks or public spaces.

## Unaccompanied Youth

Unaccompanied youth is defined as a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. The ACT does not provide an age range.

### These young people may include those who:

- Were asked to leave home by a parent;
- Left home with the consent of a parent;  
Have no formal custody papers or arrangements while their parents are in jail, the hospital, or a rehabilitation center; or
- Ran away from home.

**Youth on their own cannot be kept out of school because they do not have a parent or guardian to enroll them.**



# Rights of Homeless Parents and their Homeless Students

- Your child may stay in the school he or she was in before becoming homeless or enroll in a school where the child is living for the time being;
- You may make this choice of schools with the best interests of your child in mind;
- Your child must receive the transportation he or she needs;
- You can expect to enroll your child in school without delay, even if you do not have paperwork, such as your child's birth certificate or medical records;
- Your child has the right to receive free meals;
- Your child must receive the same special programs and services that other children receive, including special education, migrant education and vocational education;
- Your child must receive the same public education other children receive, including preschool.
- Your child cannot be separated from other students in a different school or different program because he or she is homeless;
- Your child may attend the school you choose, even if there is a dispute while the dispute is in the appeal process;
- After being placed in permanent housing, your child may stay in his or her original school for the rest of the school year and receive transportation to that school.



# Enrollment Disputes

Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with law. Parents/guardians or unaccompanied youth may appeal district decisions regarding eligibility, enrollment or placement in accordance with the Standard Complaint Resolution Process adopted by DESE.

- Parents/guardians or unaccompanied youth will **submit disputes to the district liaison**, who will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The liaison will provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth a written explanation of any decisions relating to eligibility, enrollment or placement.

The written explanation will include:

- A description of any other options the school considered;
  - The reasons other options were rejected;
  - A description of any other relevant factors to the district's decision and information related to the eligibility or best interest determination including the facts, witnesses and evidence relied upon and their sources;
  - Appropriate timelines to ensure any relevant deadlines are not missed; and
  - Contact information for the district liaison and the state coordinator for homeless children and youth (state coordinator) and a brief description of their respective roles.
- The district liaison will **discuss the explanation** with the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth and answer any related questions.
  - If the explanation provided to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth does not resolve the dispute, **the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth should notify the district liaison**, who will provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with the standard state complaint resolution process and ensure that the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth has the contact information for the state coordinator. If requested, the district liaison will assist any unaccompanied youth in submitting the appeal.

**The student will remain enrolled and will be allowed to attend and fully participate in all school activities during the dispute process.**

*If the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth are English learners, use a native language other than English, or need additional supports due to a disability, the district will make translators, interpreters or other support services available without charge and in the appropriate language.*

## Homeless Duration

The McKinney-Vento Act protects the rights of homeless children and youth for the duration of their homelessness. This means students have access to all rights and services from school year to school year if their living circumstance meets the definition of “homeless.”

Once a Ritenour School District student has been identified as homeless, he/she has access to services for one academic school year. If students experience homelessness beyond one academic school year, all services are still accessible to these students with proper documentation and re-enrollment to determine identification status.

## Transportation

Getting to and from school can create stress and an additional barrier to education for homeless students and their families. Ritenour School District provides transportation for homeless students to support student success and educational stability. If a child qualifies for transportation, arrangements are made for pick-up and drop-off to and from home and school.

Options:

- Mileage reimbursement (to and from home/school)-Reimbursements must be turned in on a monthly basis to the homeless liaison for payment.
- Cab transportation (to and from home/school)-Students must sign and comply with transportation agreement.
- Students residing in the district boundaries are bus eligible if they meet transportation qualifications.



# RESOURCES

Contact a Ritenour Social Worker, Counselor or the Homeless Liaison to access local resources for assistance with food, clothing, shelter and other needs. (See the Ritenour School District website for more resources.)

## Additional Resources:

Category	Organization	Title	Link	Description	Age range
Disaster response	National Child Traumatic Stress Network	Parent Tips for Helping Preschool-Age Children After Disasters	English: <a href="https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/pfa_parent_tips_for_helping_preschool_age_children_after_disasters.pdf">https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/pfa_parent_tips_for_helping_preschool_age_children_after_disasters.pdf</a> Spanish: <a href="https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/pfa_parent_tips_for_helping_school_age_children_after_disasters_sp.pdf">https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/pfa_parent_tips_for_helping_school_age_children_after_disasters_sp.pdf</a>	Recommendations of steps for caregivers to take and things to say to support children after a disaster.	Preschool
Trauma response, Coping with violence	Sesame Street in Communities	Difficult Times & Tough Talks	<a href="https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/">https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/</a>	Resources for caregivers to support children's health and wellness, social-emotional skills, and school readiness. Topics covered include community violence, coping with incarceration, dealing with divorce, family homelessness, and foster care.	PreK-2; Grades 3-5;
Trauma response	National Child Traumatic Stress Network	Resources for Families and Caregivers	<a href="https://www.nctsn.org/audiences/families-and-caregivers">https://www.nctsn.org/audiences/families-and-caregivers</a>	Resources for families and caregivers to keep children and teens safe and support them in understanding their responses to trauma, including resources in diverse languages. Topics covered include hospital visits, sexual abuse, domestic violence, deportation and separation, and traumatic grief.	Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8; Grades 9-12
Coping with violence	Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs	Healing the Invisible Wounds: Children's Exposure to Violence A Guide for Families	<a href="https://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/safestart/HealingTheInvisibleWounds.pdf">https://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/safestart/HealingTheInvisibleWounds.pdf</a>	Guide for families and caregivers to "understand children's behavior", "encourage children to express what they're thinking and feeling", and "help children feel safe and in control."	Preschool, PreK-2; Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8; Grades 9-12

Military families	National Center for PTSD	Children Coping with Deployment	<a href="https://www.ptsd.va.gov/family/support_child_deployment.asp">https://www.ptsd.va.gov/family/support_child_deployment.asp</a>	Information about the effects of deployment on children, how to talk to children about war, and how to help children cope with war.	Preschool, PreK-2; Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8; Grades 9-12
Trauma response	American Academy of Pediatrics	Parenting after Trauma: Understanding Your Child's Needs: A Guide for Foster and Adoptive Parents	<a href="https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/healthy-foster-care-america/Documents/FamilyHandout.pdf">https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/healthy-foster-care-america/Documents/FamilyHandout.pdf</a>	Tips for how to support children who have been adopted or placed into foster care who may have experienced early trauma.	Preschool, PreK-2; Grades 3-5
Trauma response	Child Welfare Information Gateway	Parenting a Child Who Has Experienced Trauma	<a href="https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/child-trauma.pdf">https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/child-trauma.pdf</a>	Resource guide that "discusses the nature of trauma, its effects on children and youth, and ways to help your child."	Preschool, PreK-2; Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8; Grades 9-12
Trauma response	Child Mind Institute	Helping Children Cope After a Traumatic Event	<a href="https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-traumatic-event/">https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-traumatic-event/</a>	Tips for how to help children cope and recover after a traumatic event.	Preschool, PreK-2; Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8; Grades 9-12
Separation and trauma	Zero to Three	Supporting Young Children Experiencing Separation and Trauma	<a href="https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2384-supporting-young-children-experiencing-separation-and-trauma">https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2384-supporting-young-children-experiencing-separation-and-trauma</a>	A list of resources in English and Spanish for families and caregivers to support young children who have experienced trauma.	Preschool
Mental health	Mental Health America	Children's Mental Health	<a href="https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/childrens-mental-health">https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/childrens-mental-health</a>	Information about what caregivers can do to identify mental illness and support children in caring for their mental health.	PreK-2; Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8; Grades 9-12
Coping with divorce	Kids In The Middle	Tips	<a href="http://www.kidsinthemiddle.org/tips/">http://www.kidsinthemiddle.org/tips/</a>	A list of articles for parents supporting children coping with divorce, including articles about stages and reactions of children going through divorce, co-parenting, and back to school tips.	PreK-2; Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8; Grades 9-12



# **Counselors and Social Workers**

## **Buder Elementary—493-6300**

### **Counselors**

Jennifer Espenschied  
Jeremy Kane

### **Social Workers**

Sadie Leyh-Pierce—493-6400  
Stephanie Gillen (SSD)—666-4191

## **Iveland Elementary—493-6330**

### **Counselors**

Christopher Pearson  
Angela Wiese

### **Social Workers**

Sadie Leyh-Pierce—493-6400  
Rachael Prewett (SSD)—764-7649

## **Kratz Elementary—493-6360**

### **Counselors**

Carla Theiss  
Elizabeth Winters

### **Social Workers**

Jennifer McKeown—369-6029  
Stephanie Gillen (SSD)—666-4191

## **Marion Elementary—493-6400**

### **Counselors**

Demetra Crocker  
Angela Weise

### **Social Workers**

Sadie Leyh-Pierce—493-6400  
Rachael Prewett (SSD)—764-7649

## **Marvin Elementary—493-6430**

### **Counselors**

Kim Dennigmann  
Jeremy Kane

### **Social Workers**

Jennifer McKeown—369-6029  
Rachael Prewett (SSD)—764-7649

## **Wyland Elementary—493-6460**

### **Counselors**

Donna Cain  
Elizabeth Winters

### **Social Workers**

Jennifer McKeown—369-6029  
Stephanie Gillen (SSD)—666-4191

## **Hoech Middle—493-6200**

### **Counselors**

Leah Jones  
Brad Black

### **Social Workers**

Karen Coughlin—493-6108  
Juan Tabb (SSD)—

## **Ritenour Middle—493-6250**

### **Counselors**

Kim Sagakhaneh  
Matthew Berry

### **Social Workers**

Karen Coughlin—493-6108  
Kathy Collier (SSD)—493-6239

## **Ritenour High—493-6105**

### **Counselors**

Dina Durnin—A-D  
Bethany Buescher—E-Les  
Shauna Cunningham—Let-Rod  
Amber Mitchell—Roe-Z

### **Social Workers**

Keaton Strong—493-6000 x 1018  
Karen Coughlin—493-6108  
Kathy Collier (SSD)—493-6239

## **International Welcome Center (IWC)— 493-6213**

### **Counselor**

Jaime Sansoucie