## Who is Homeless?

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act defines the term "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including

i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;

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).

For more information, download *Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services* at https://nche.ed.gov/resources.

## Educational Rights

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youth have the right to

- receive a free, appropriate public education.
- enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- enroll in the local school; or continue attending the school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), according to each student's best interest.

  * If the school district believes that the school selected is not in the student's best interest, the district must provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its position and inform the parent, guardian, or youth of the right to appeal its decision.
- receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested.
- receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to each student's needs.

NCHE publications are supported through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education.

# Supporting the Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

https://nche.ed.gov

National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

## About NCHE

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. NCHE is based at the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

NCHE works with schools, service providers, parents, and other interested stakeholders to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness can enroll and succeed in school.

## NCHE Resources

NCHE provides a variety of homeless education resources, available in electronic or hard copy format, including

- educational rights posters,
- enrollment reference foldouts,
- federal homeless education data reports,
- homeless liaison toolkits,
- issue briefs,
- NCHE brochures,
- parent brochures,
- parent pack pocket folders, and
- unaccompanied homeless youth booklets.

Visit https://nche.ed.gov/resources to download or order NCHE resources.

## NCHE Helpline

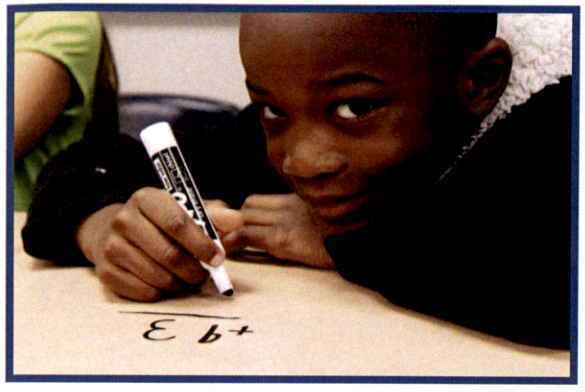
NCHE operates a toll-free helpline to assist educators, service providers, parents, community members, and others interested in the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Contact the NCHE helpline for assistance with

- understanding the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness,
- determining how the McKinney-Vento Act may apply to a particular situation, and
- locating contact information for State Coordinators for Homeless Education and local homeless education liaisons.

Contact the NCHE helpline at 800-308-2145 or homeless@serve.org.

## NCHE Listserv

Through its listserv, NCHE keeps the homeless education field informed of new resources and happenings, including federal policy and practice updates, new NCHE products, NCHE webinar registration availability, and more. Visit https://nche.ed.gov/resources to join.



## NCHE Website

The NCHE website serves as a comprehensive source of homeless education information. Visit the NCHE website at https://nche.ed.gov to

- download or order NCHE products;
- learn more about the McKinney-Vento Act and other laws pertaining to the education of students experiencing homelessness;
- search for information on topics such as McKinney-Vento eligibility, enrollment, transportation, preschool, higher education, and more; and
- learn more about homeless education in your state.

*"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."*

Formerly Homeless Student