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## What can I do to help my child in school?

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- Make sure your child goes to school every day and arrives rested and fed.
- ♦ Provide a quiet place for your child to do homework and set aside time every day to help your child with homework.
- Pay attention to your child's health needs and take care of problems early.
- ♦ Ask your child what he or she is learning in school; have him or her explain it to you. If you show interest in your child's education, he or she will know that it's important.
- Read to your child every day; for older children, set aside time each day for you and your child to read together silently. Talk about what you read.
- Praise your child for what he or she does well, like getting a good grade or playing on a school sports team.
- Listen to what your child shares with you and talk about any problems he or she is having. You can also talk about these problems with a teacher or school counselor.
- Encourage your child to participate in things like sports and music.

### GOOD QUESTIONS

### MAKE GOOD READERS!

Asking children about what they read will help them become good thinkers.

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## HELPFUL RESOURCES

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Barnstable School District  
Mary Beth Shea, Homeless Liaison  
508-862-4953 ext 1734  
[www.barnstable.k12.ma.us/](http://www.barnstable.k12.ma.us/)

Massachusetts Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth  
Sarah Slautterback, State Coordinator  
Elizabeth Harris, Student Support  
781-338-6315  
[HomelessEd@doe.mass.edu](mailto:HomelessEd@doe.mass.edu)  
[www.mass.doe.edu/mv](http://www.mass.doe.edu/mv)

Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless  
781-595-7570  
[www.mahomeless.org](http://www.mahomeless.org)

The National Center for Homeless Education  
Toll-free Helpline: 800-308-2145  
[www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)

Cape Cod Family Resource Center  
29 Bassett Lane, Hyannis  
508-862-0600  
[www.CapeCodFamilyResourceCenter.org](http://www.CapeCodFamilyResourceCenter.org)

Housing Assistance Corporation  
460 West Main St. #1, Hyannis  
508-771-5400  
[www.haconcapecod.org](http://www.haconcapecod.org)

Barnstable County Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Website  
<http://barnstable.ma.networkofcare.org/mh/>

## BARNSTABLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



BARNSTABLE, MASSACHUSETTS

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## What You Need to Know to Help Your Child in School

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### A Guide for Parents, Guardians and Caregivers

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If your family is in a temporary or inadequate living situation due to a loss of housing, your child might be eligible for certain educational rights and services.

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## THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT: THE BASICS

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If you lost your housing and now live in a shelter, motel, vehicle, camping ground, or temporary trailer; on the street; doubled-up with family or friends; or in another type of temporary or inadequate housing, your child might be able to receive help through a federal law called the McKinney-Vento Act.

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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.**
- **Enroll in school immediately, even if missing records and documents normally required for enrollment, such as proof of residency, previous school records, or immunization/medical records.**
- **Enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in all school activities while the school gathers records.**
- **Have access to the same programs and services that are available to all other students, including transportation and supplemental educational services.**
- **Receive transportation to and from the school of origin (within 1 hour).**
- **Obtain free lunch (and breakfast if offered)**
- **Receive Title 1, Part A services**

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **When I move, should I keep my child in the school of origin or transfer my child to the local school?**

Moving from one school to another can be very upsetting for children. They have to leave the friends and teachers they know and get used to new friends, teachers and classes. Because of this, it is usually best for your child to stay in his/her same school (the school of origin), even if you move to a different area.

Here are some questions to think about when deciding whether your child should stay in the same school or move to the new school where you<sup>1</sup>re living:

- How old is your child?
- How permanent is your current living arrangement?
- Do you plan to move back close to the school of origin or do you think you<sup>1</sup>ll stay near your current living arrangement?
- Is your child attached to his/her school of origin? {An older child who feels very connected to his/her school of origin and/or is about to graduate might have a harder time changing schools.}
- How anxious is your child because you have had to move? Would changing schools be overwhelming?
- Would changing schools cause your child to fall behind in school and receive poor grades?
- Is this a good time of year for your child to change schools, such as at the end of a semester or school year, after testing, or after an event that is important to your child?
- How much time would your child have to spend traveling back and forth to the school of origin? (A long bus ride might have a negative impact on your child's schoolwork.)
- Are there any personal safety issues to consider, making one school a safer choice for your child?

### **What if the school and I disagree on where my child should go to school?**

If you and the school disagree, the school district has to tell you in writing why it thinks your child should go to a different school. The district also has to tell you in writing how to appeal this decision. Your child-can still enroll in, attend, and participate fully in the school of your choice while the disagreement is being settled.

### **Whom can I contact to help with my child's education?**

- The homeless education liaison for the Barnstable Public Schools is Mary Beth Shea. Ms. Shea can help you decide which school would be best for your child and communicate with the school.
- When you enroll your child in a new school, you should ask to meet his/her teacher(s). You should also talk to your child's teacher(s) every so often to talk about how he/she is doing.
- The school counselor and/or social worker can help your child deal with changes and challenges. Share with this person any information about how your child is acting at home or things he/she is dealing with that might affect his/her schoolwork.
- Other good people to know are the school principal, attendance officer, bus driver and school nurse.

### **What other questions should I ask regarding services under McKinney-Vento?**

What transportation is available for my child to stay in the same school {school or origin)?

How can my child receive free meals at school?

If my child needs special education services, who can help and how quickly can these services be set up?

What academic help is available for my child, such as Title 1 programs or after-school tutoring?

How can my child receive required school supplies, go on field trips or participate in other school activities with fees if I can't pay for them?

Is there a preschool program for my younger children?