

# Signs of Homelessness

**It can be hard to tell if a child is experiencing homelessness. However, thousands of children experience homelessness each year. Below are some signs that might help you determine if a child in your classroom or school is experiencing homelessness.**

- ◇ The child has attended many schools
- ◇ There is more than one family living in the child's residence
- ◇ The child seems extremely hungry or hoards food
- ◇ The child has poor hygiene and is not properly groomed
- ◇ The child sleeps in class
- ◇ The child does not have appropriate attire for the weather
- ◇ The child makes statements about moving often, staying with friends or relatives, or that their family is going through a difficult time

## Resources

1. Better Homes Fund. (1999). America's homeless children: New outcasts. Newton Centre, MA: Author.
2. Homes for the Homeless. (1999). Homeless in America: A children's story, part one. New York: Institute for Children and Poverty.
3. National Center for Homeless Education. (1999). The education of homeless children and youth: A compendium of research and information. Greensboro, NC: SERVE. (available at NCHE website)
4. Project HOPE-Virginia. (2003). Bibliography of resources. Williamsburg, VA: Author. (Includes children's books; available at HOPE website)
5. Stronge, J. & Reed-Victor, E. (2000) Promising practices for educating homeless students. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

## Internet Resources

1. National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth  
<http://naehcy.org>
2. National Center for Homeless Education  
<http://www.serve.org/nche>
3. One Childhood Lasts a Lifetime  
<http://www.onechildhood.org/>
4. Project HOPE –Virginia  
<http://www.wm.edu/hope>
5. Mobile HOPE Loudoun  
<http://www.mobilehopeloudoun.org>

## Loudoun County Public Schools

### The McKinney-Vento Act

**What you need to know to support students and families in transition**



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## What is the McKinney-Vento Act?

The McKinney-Vento Act was established in 1987 to protect the rights of homeless students in the United States. It was revised in 2002, with the *No Child Left Behind* legislation, and reauthorized under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* in 2015 to focus on the educational rights of homeless students. The McKinney-Vento Act was designed to ensure that homeless students receive an equal education and have the same rights as other children. The McKinney-Vento Act provides homeless students with:

- ◆ The right to remain at the “school of origin,” or the school the child attended when they had a permanent residence
- ◆ The right to receive transportation provided by the school district to the “school of origin”
- ◆ The right to immediate enrollment, even if missing normally required registration documentation
- ◆ The right to receive free standard meals at school during the school day
- ◆ The right to access all school programs made available to other students
- ◆ The right to dispute disagreements about services related to McKinney-Vento

## Who is Considered Homeless?

Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence are considered homeless under federal law. This includes children and youth who are:

- ◆ Sharing the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (i.e. “doubled-up”)
- ◆ Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds, cars, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- ◆ Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- ◆ Unaccompanied youth, meaning youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, such as runaways and youth denied housing by their families

### Have questions or concerns? Email us!:



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## What You and Your School Can Do to Help:

- ◆ Make students feel welcome
- ◆ Ensure the McKinney-Vento eligible student or family completes the necessary program enrollment forms and submit the forms to the McKinney-Vento program for review
- ◆ Select a student to be their “buddy” on the first day of class
- ◆ Create an atmosphere that welcomes parents to participate in school activities
- ◆ Coordinate an educational plan with the school counselor
- ◆ Ensure that the homeless student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for before-school, in-school, and after-school programs
- ◆ Do not bring special attention to the fact that they are homeless in front of others
- ◆ Provide the school supplies necessary for the student to be successful
- ◆ Offer tools to complete any required task
- ◆ Try to give the child something that he/she can call their own or a class job
- ◆ Ensure that homeless children can participate in field trips, school-wide activities, and class projects even if they do not have the transportation or necessary fees
- ◆ Communicate with parents about the student’s school performance
- ◆ Hold the child accountable for what he/she can control (behavior, attitude, etc.); not for what is not in the child’s control (purchase of materials for a project, etc.)
- ◆ Have necessary toiletry items available to assure proper hygiene at school