



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

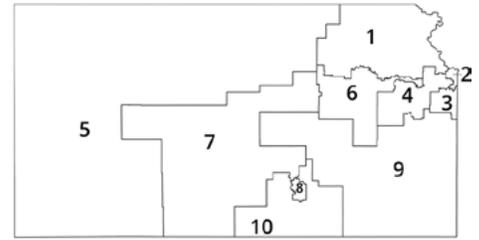


MISSION

To prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student's gifts and talents.



900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 600
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3203
www.ksde.org/board



VISION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

MOTTO

Kansans Can

SUCCESS DEFINED

A successful Kansas high school graduate has the

- Academic preparation,
- Cognitive preparation,
- Technical skills,
- Employability skills and
- Civic engagement

to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

OUTCOMES

- Social-emotional growth
- Kindergarten readiness
- Individual Plan of Study
- Civic engagement
- Academically prepared for postsecondary
- High school graduation
- Postsecondary success



<p>DISTRICT 1</p>  <p>Danny Zeck dzeck@ksde.org</p>	<p>DISTRICT 2</p>  <p>Melanie Haas Chair mhaas@ksde.org</p>	<p>DISTRICT 3</p>  <p>Michelle Dombrosky mdombrosky@ksde.org</p>	<p>DISTRICT 4</p>  <p>Ann E. Mah Legislative Liaison amah@ksde.org</p>	<p>DISTRICT 5</p>  <p>Cathy Hopkins chopkins@ksde.org</p>
<p>DISTRICT 6</p>  <p>Dr. Deena Horst Legislative Liaison dhorst@ksde.org</p>	<p>DISTRICT 7</p>  <p>Dennis Hershberger dhershberger@ksde.org</p>	<p>DISTRICT 8</p>  <p>Betty Arnold barnold@ksde.org</p>	<p>DISTRICT 9</p>  <p>Jim Porter Vice Chair jporter@ksde.org</p>	<p>DISTRICT 10</p>  <p>Jim McNiece jmcniece@ksde.org</p>



900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3201
www.ksde.org

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION



Dr. Randy Watson

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services



Dr. Frank Harwood

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER Division of Learning Services



Dr. Ben Proctor

The Kansas State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, KSDE, Landon State Office Building, 900 S.W. Jackson, Suite 102, Topeka, KS 66612, (785) 296-3201

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

Contents

4	Overview
5	About the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
5	State Contact Information
6	McKinney-Vento Requirements for LEAS
8	McKinney-Vento Act Definition of Homeless
9	Applying the Definition
10	How the Local Homeless Liaison Can Help
12	General Strategies for School Personnel
14	Strategies for School Principals
16	Strategies for Secretaries, Registrars, Clerks and Administrative Assistants
18	Strategies for Teachers
20	Strategies for School Counselors and Social Workers
22	Strategies for School Nurses and Health Room Assistants
24	Strategies for Food Service Staff
26	Strategies for School Support Personnel, Librarians, Paraeducators and Custodial Staff
27	Strategies for School Resource Officers (SRO)
28	Strategies for School Bus Drivers
30	For More Information

Developed October 2019 for the Kansas State Department of Education by The SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.

The SERVE Center operates the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE), the federal technical assistance center for the U.S. Department of Education's Education for Homeless Children and Youth program.

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

Overview

The **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act**, reauthorized in 2015 as Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, provides for the delivery of services to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools. Every school district or local education agency (LEA) is required to implement the **McKinney-Vento Act**, including appointing a local homeless liaison who is responsible for ensuring that homeless children and youth are identified, enrolled immediately in school and linked to services.

School administrators, teachers and support personnel encounter children and youth experiencing homelessness every day and play a critical role in ensuring that

these children and youth are identified and served. School personnel are often the ones who develop trusting relationships with students and families and can be the eyes and ears to identify vulnerable students and ensure that they are linked to services and support.

This booklet will guide school personnel in ways to support homeless families, children and youth. Included are a summary of requirements of the **McKinney-Vento Act**, the role of the local liaison, general strategies for school personnel and strategies for specific role groups to help homeless students enroll in school, attend regularly and succeed academically. Also included are links to additional information and resources.



About the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program addresses challenges that homeless children and youth face in enrolling, attending and succeeding in school. Through the implementation of the **McKinney-Vento Act**, state educational agencies (SEAs) must ensure that each homeless child has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a preschool education, as children who aren't homeless. States and school districts or LEAs are required to undertake steps to remove educational barriers for children in homeless situations.

STATE CONTACT INFORMATION

Maureen Tabasko
Education Program Consultant
Kansas State Department of Education
Special Education and Title Services
(785) 296-1101
mtabasko@ksde.org

Resources

[Kansas State Department of Education \(KSDE\) EHCY Program website¹](#)
[State list of McKinney-Vento Contacts²](#)
[National Center for Homeless Education \(NCHE\) State Profile Pages – Kansas³](#)



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

McKinney-Vento Requirements for LEAS

An understanding of the requirements that LEAs must carry out to serve homeless children and youth will enable you to know both what you must do to follow the law and what you should do to help homeless children and youth succeed in school.

The law requires state plans to ensure that LEAs:

- Give homeless children and youth opportunities to meet the state's challenging academic standards.
 - Identify homeless children and youth.
 - Resolve disputes promptly.
 - Increase the awareness of all school personnel of the needs of homeless children and youth.
 - Enable homeless children and youth to participate in federal, state and local nutrition programs for which they are eligible.
- Ensure that preschool-aged homeless children have access to public preschool programs.
 - Identify unaccompanied homeless youth and youth separated from public schools and link them to appropriate secondary education and support services.
 - Remove barriers to receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.
 - Remove barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if available.



- Address problems resulting from enrollment delays caused by requirements for:
 - Immunizations or other required health records.
 - Residency requirements.
 - Lack of birth certificates.
 - School records or other documents.
 - Guardianship issues.
 - Uniform or dress code requirements.
- Revise policies to remove barriers to identification and school retention of homeless children and youth, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees or fines or absences.
- Ensure that homeless children and youth are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their homelessness.
- Provide transportation, at the request of the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth, to and from the school of origin.
- Ensure that school counselors advise homeless youths to prepare for college. [42 U.S.C. § 722(g)(1)].

The law also mandates that LEAs:

- Continue a child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, according to his or her best interest or enroll the child or youth in any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area where he or she is living are eligible to attend.
 - The term *school of origin* means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a public preschool.

McKinney-Vento Requirements for LEAS

- *School of origin* includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools when a child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin.
- Immediately enroll a child or youth even if he or she is unable to provide records normally required for enrollment or has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.
- Contact the last school attended to obtain relevant records if enrolling a homeless child or youth.
- Assist with obtaining immunization records, other health records or immunizations, if needed.
- Make any record ordinarily kept by the school available when a child or youth enters a new school or school district.
- Conduct disputes over eligibility, school enrollment or school selection according to the LEA's and SEA's dispute resolution policy, providing written notice to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth with the school district's decision and instructions for how to initiate a dispute.
- Treat information regarding a student's living situation as a student educational record and not directory information. [42 U.S.C. § 722(g)(3)].

Resources

[Education for Homeless Children and Youths, Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) of 2015⁴](#)

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

McKinney-Vento Act **Definition of Homeless**

The term *homeless children and youth*:

- A. Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and
- B. Includes:
 - i. Children and youth 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 youth 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 youth 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 because the children are living in circumstances described above. [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)]

The term *unaccompanied youth* includes a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)]



Applying the Definition

The definition of homeless in the **McKinney-Vento Act** is broader than including only children, families and youth who live in shelters or on the streets. Federal data on homeless students show that most children and youth experiencing homelessness live in situations where they are temporarily staying with friends, relatives or acquaintances due to the loss of their housing.

In early conversations with families or unaccompanied youth who may be experiencing homelessness, school personnel will need to discretely find out about the family's or youth's living situation and determine if it fits the definition. The local homeless liaison will be instrumental in helping you apply the definition or gather more information when the determination of homelessness is not clear-cut.

Resources

[NCHE Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness: An Introduction to the Issues⁵](#)

[NCHE Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services⁶](#)

Is living doubled up with another family or friend easy?

How would you feel if you were a guest in someone's home knowing that if this person asked you to leave you would have nowhere else to go?



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

How the **Local Homeless Liaison** Can Help

The LEA's local homeless liaison plays a key role in implementing the **McKinney-Vento Act** and supporting school administrators, educators and staff members in their efforts to identify homeless children and youth and ensure that they are enrolled in school immediately, attend regularly and succeed academically.

The local liaison in your LEA will:

- Conduct outreach in the community to identify homeless children and youth, including displaying educational rights posters in places where homeless families are likely to go.
- Develop policies and procedures for serving homeless children and youth so that you will know when to make a referral and what services will be provided.
- Provide posters on the educational rights of homeless children and youth for display in your school.
- Provide awareness information and training on the needs of homeless children and youth and the requirements of the **McKinney-Vento Act**.
- Provide customized technical assistance on specific situations related to a homeless child or youth in your school.
- Provide information on effective practices in serving homeless children and youth.
- Revise LEA policies that pose barriers to the education of homeless children and youth.
- Facilitate the **McKinney-Vento Act** dispute resolution process when a disagreement occurs between the LEA or school and a homeless parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth over eligibility, school enrollment or school selection.
- Communicate with the state coordinator to keep updated on laws, policies, and



How the Local Homeless Liaison Can Help

resources related to serving homeless children and youth, and communicate these to you.

- Collect data on homeless children and youth to provide to the state and U.S. Department of Education, and provide information on numbers and trends of homeless children and youth in the LEA.
- Coordinate with programs such as:
 - Title I
 - Special education
 - Child nutrition
 - Pupil transportation

To ensure that homeless children and youth are linked with services expeditiously.

- Develop and maintain community collaborations and business partnerships to increase resources for homeless children and youth and to make referrals for services, such as health care, dental services, mental health and substance abuse assistance, housing, and preschool:
 - Identify local clinics, physicians, dentists, eye doctors and psychological counselors who will treat homeless families and unaccompanied youth at low or no cost.
 - Arrange with local clinics or physicians to provide physicals for school sports participation.



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

General Strategies for **School Personnel**

- Have contact information for the local homeless liaison on hand and contact him or her to learn about LEA procedures and policies regarding homeless students.
- When you identify a student who is or may possibly be experiencing homelessness, contact the local liaison right away to ensure that the student is quickly linked to all needed services and placed in classes and able to participate fully in all school activities.
- Participate in trainings to increase your awareness of the needs of homeless students and provisions of the **McKinney-Vento Act** to address their needs.
- Become familiar with trauma-informed services, understanding that many homeless children and youth have experienced tremendous loss, stress, and in many cases, domestic violence.
- Be on the lookout for indicators that a child or youth may be experiencing homelessness, such as
 - Chronic hunger or fatigue.
 - Stress and concern about family or where they will go after school.
 - Erratic attendance at school.
 - Changes in behavior.
 - Poor grooming or clothing that draws attention or is worn for several days in a row.
 - Reluctance to part with belongings while at school.



General Strategies for School Personnel

- Encourage the student and build hope for the future.
- Discuss a child's or youth's possible homelessness with him or her or with parents or guardians in a discrete, respectful way, avoiding using the word **homeless**. You should use terms like:
“ Living in a temporary situation.”
“ Not having a stable place to live.”
- Do not disclose information about a student's living situation to anyone other than the local liaison and to other school administrators and school staff only as needed.
- Ensure that the child or youth **feels welcome** in the school and classroom and has **genuine connections to caring adults**.

Resources

[United Way 2-1-1 of Kansas⁷](#) or by phone: 211
[Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in American's Public Schools⁸](#)
[KSDE EHCY Program¹](#)
[NCHE Self-paced Online Training⁹](#)
[NCHE Group Training¹⁰](#)
[NCHE Potential Warning Signs of Homelessness¹¹](#)
[National Child Traumatic Stress Network¹²](#)
[Understanding Traumatic Stress in Children¹³](#)



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

Strategies for **School Principals**

- Promote a school climate that welcomes all students and supports students with the greatest needs.
- Ensure that posters and brochures on the educational rights of homeless children and youth are displayed in the school and announce information on the rights of homeless children and youth at school assemblies and parent meetings.
- Ensure that you and all school staff are familiar with the key provisions of the **McKinney-Vento Act** that remove barriers to the school enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless students.
- If you are a principal in a large school, designate a building point of contact who is responsible for identifying homeless and unaccompanied youth and connecting them to the local liaison.
- Ensure that all school staff and teachers are familiar with trauma-informed services for homeless families, children, and youth.
- Welcome new students.
- Invite homeless parents or guardians to be partners in their children's education, volunteer at the school, and share their ideas for improving school services.



Strategies for School Principals

- Ensure that homeless students have every opportunity that nonhomeless students have for academic and extracurricular activities.
- Maintain a school supply and clothing closet on-site where students may obtain items as needed to be prepared for classes and avoid being stigmatized as homeless.
- Ensure that discipline policies take into account situations over which homeless students have no control, such as absences and tardies that result from a parent's or youth's car breaking down.
- Implement discipline policies that reinforce positive behaviors and personal responsibility and that keep children and youth in their classes.
- If a homeless parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth disagrees with school or district policies, discuss the issue in person to attempt to de-escalate the situation. If the individual remains dissatisfied over an issue related to eligibility, school enrollment or school selection, refer him or her to the local liaison to initiate the dispute process.

Resources

[NCHE Research Summary: Supporting Homeless Children and Youth through Proactive and Positive Behavior Management and Intervention Practices¹⁴](#)



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

Strategies for Secretaries, Registrars, Clerks and Administrative Assistants

- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
 - Learn to identify indicators of possible homelessness during the enrollment process, such as:
 - A lack of records, such as a birth certificate, immunization records, school and preschool records, address verification.
 - Parents who do not know the last school their child attended.
 - Attendance at multiple schools.
 - A low-cost motel/hotel address on an enrollment form.
- Statements such as:
 - “ *It’s a new address.*”
 - “ *I can’t remember it.*”
 - “ *We’ve been having a hard time lately.*”
 - “ *We move a lot and are staying with friends until we find a place.*”
- Include a housing intake form with enrollment materials with a check-off for types of living situations that would indicate homelessness. (See the examples on the [KSDE homeless education website](#).¹⁾)



Strategies for Secretaries, Registrars, Clerks and Administrative Assistants

- Ask the family if there are preschool-aged children and include this information in your referral to the local liaison.
- Provide a welcoming environment for families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness.
 - Ensure that posters with the educational rights of homeless children and youth are posted visibly in the registration area and brochures are readily available.
 - Have sensitive conversations in a private area; allow the family or youth to fill out forms in a private area.
 - Inform homeless families, children, and youth that homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin, if in their best interest, and receive transportation to and from the school of origin; providing this information is required by law.
 - Discuss a child's or youth's possible homelessness with him or her and with parents or guardians in a discrete, respectful way, avoiding using the word homeless. You should use terms like:
 - “ *Living in a temporary situation.* ”
 - “ *Not having a stable place to live.* ”
 - Discuss with the parent, child or youth school policies and routines; provide a tour of the school.
 - Enroll the child or unaccompanied youth immediately.
 - Ensure that the child or youth is placed in class on the day of arrival, and follow up with the local liaison, child nutrition staff, and pupil transportation department so that services are arranged without delay.
- You don't have to understand or agree with the reasons why an unaccompanied youth left home; youth often will not share the full details of their home situation. **Enroll an unaccompanied homeless youth, as any other homeless child or youth.**
- If the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth disagrees with your determination of homelessness, contact the local liaison immediately to provide written notice and initiate the dispute process; enroll the student.
- Provide a backpack with age-appropriate school supplies and clothing, if needed.
- Contact the parent or guardian when a homeless student is absent (or contact the unaccompanied youth) to identify any challenges with attendance.
- Before a student withdraws, prepare a parent pack with:
 - Photocopies of the student's records (e.g., academic, health, immunization).
 - Samples of the student's work.
 - Contact information for teachers, school counselors or social workers.
- Provide records immediately for a homeless student when requested by a new school to expedite appropriate placement.
 - Schools must remove barriers to enrollment due to outstanding fees or fines.

Resources

[NCHE Enrolling Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in School¹⁵](#)
[NCHE Educational Rights Posters and Parent Pack Pocket Folders¹⁶](#)

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

Strategies for **Teachers**

- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
- Make the classroom a welcoming place for homeless students.
 - Assure the student that you care.
 - Connect a newly enrolled student with other students, such as a lunch buddy.
 - Inform the student of extracurricular activities that may be of interest and arrange participation.
 - Do not hold homeless students accountable for situations over which they have no control, such as not having a place to do homework or not being able to pay fines.
 - Do not disclose the student's living situation.
- Encourage the student and hold him or her to high expectations.
 - Discuss with the homeless student what his or her school challenges are and connect the student with services or make appropriate accommodations.
 - Adjust assignments so students not living in permanent settings can complete them. (A student living in a hotel room or who has limited supplies may not be able to carry out science activities or bring in newspaper articles or information from the Internet.)
 - Provide a time and place before, during or after school for a student to complete assignments.



Strategies for Teachers

- Arrange tutoring, supplemental instruction or counseling expeditiously because many homeless students will be in your school for only a short period of time.
- Assist other students in understanding family homelessness and treating their peers with kindness and respect.
- Look for any signs that other students are teasing or bullying a student who may be experiencing homelessness and intervene or report the students to the principal.
- Assess students frequently so that you can determine progress even if the student is in your class only a short time.
- Communicate with a student's parents or guardians about their concerns or ways to help their child or youth be more successful in school.
 - Contact the parent or guardian if the student is absent or exhibits concerning behaviors.
 - Personal contact (in person or by phone) is often more effective than sending a letter or email.
- Do not take away students' possessions; homeless students may need the security of having their belongings nearby.
- Before you receive a new student:
 - Prepare a list of your class rules and routines and post the class schedule.
 - Prepare a new student folder with

information for parents and guardians.

- Maintain a supply of materials for students.
- Prepare a "*get-to-know-you*" activity when a new student arrives.

Resources

[NCHE Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Elementary Teachers of At-Risk and Highly Mobile Students](#)¹⁷

[NCHE Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Middle School and High School Teachers of At-Risk and Highly Mobile Students](#)¹⁸

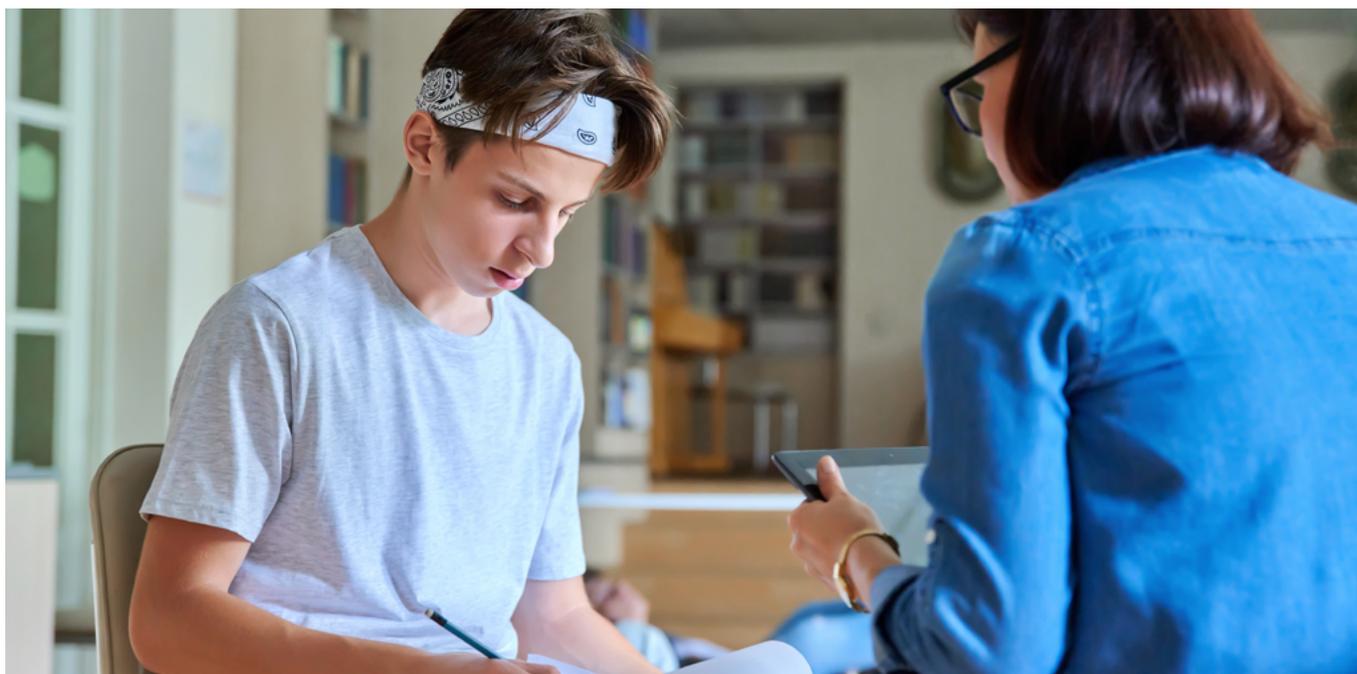
[NCHE Students on the Move: Reaching and Teaching Highly Mobile Children and Youth](#)¹⁹



If you had a student for only one day, what would you do to make his or her time in your classroom worthwhile?

Strategies for **School Counselors** and **Social Workers**

- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
- Build trust with students as a caring adult; listen carefully to their wishes and concerns.
- Contact the local liaison to make referrals for the student or family for needed services within the LEA and in the community.
- Examine a student's school record for missing credits and arrange for the student to recover credit for work partially completed.
- Ask the student what his or her interests are, in what extracurricular activities he or she participated in his or her former school, and then connect the student to appropriate activities.
- Work with the student from a trauma-informed perspective and link the student to counseling and other supports, as necessary.
- Be aware of risky and unsafe situations in which a youth might be involved; look especially for signs that an unaccompanied homeless youth is being trafficked or is in a dangerous relationship.
- Offer support for a student's physiological needs (food, clothing), as well as his or her social/emotional needs (safety, security, and belonging).
- Help older students with life skills, such as financial literacy and healthy choices.



Strategies for School Counselors and Social Workers

- Encourage the student and build hope for the future.
- Encourage students to plan to attend college.
 - Make sure they enroll in college preparatory classes.
 - Arrange for them to visit a college campus.
 - Help older youth with the college search, application, and financial aid process, including completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which allows unaccompanied homeless youth to apply for aid as independent students.

School is often the only anchor of stability in the life of a student experiencing homelessness. A scholarship winner who experienced homelessness said,

“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.”

Resources

[NCHE Ensuring Full Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities for Students Experiencing Homelessness²⁰](#)

[NCHE Maximizing Credit Accrual and Recovery for Homeless Students²¹](#)

[NCHE Sex Trafficking of Minors: What Schools Need to Know to Recognize and Respond to Trafficking of Students²²](#)

[College Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness²³](#)



Strategies for **School Nurses** and **Health Room Assistants**

- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
- Assist parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth with obtaining required health and medical records and completing health forms.
 - Assist them with obtaining medical information from clinics or the state Department of Health.
 - Contact the previous school to obtain immunization and health records.
 - Assist the family with arranging any needed immunizations for their child.
- Remind registrars that homeless children and youth must be enrolled in school immediately even if immunization or health records are not available at the time of enrollment.
- Notify the principal, school counselor, school social worker, and teachers of any serious medical condition of the child or youth.
- Be familiar with the Kansas state laws regarding under what conditions a school nurse, school counselor or local liaison is authorized to provide informed consent for nonemergency primary care services for an unaccompanied homeless youth.



Strategies for School Nurses and Health Room Assistants

- Request information from the local liaison regarding a referral to a physician or medical clinic for a child or youth who needs medical care.
- If a homeless student is experiencing stress, fatigue or minor illness, allow the student to rest in the nurse's office.
- Talk to a parent or guardian about where the child or youth should go if he or she becomes ill and needs to leave school. Homeless shelters often require that families leave during the day, and homeless parents may be difficult to contact. Remember that when a homeless student is ill and must be sent home, the place he or she is going may not be stable or quiet.
- Provide hygiene items for homeless children and youth; make arrangements for them to take showers before or after school or wash their clothes in sports laundry facilities, as necessary.
- Provide a list of health care resources to homeless parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth.
- Conduct workshops at shelters or libraries for homeless parents on nutrition, hygiene, health needs or stress reduction.

Resources

[National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, Alone without a Home: A National Review of State Laws Affecting Unaccompanied Youth](#)²⁴

[Virginia's Project HOPE School Nurses: It's Not Just Bandages Anymore!](#)²⁵



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

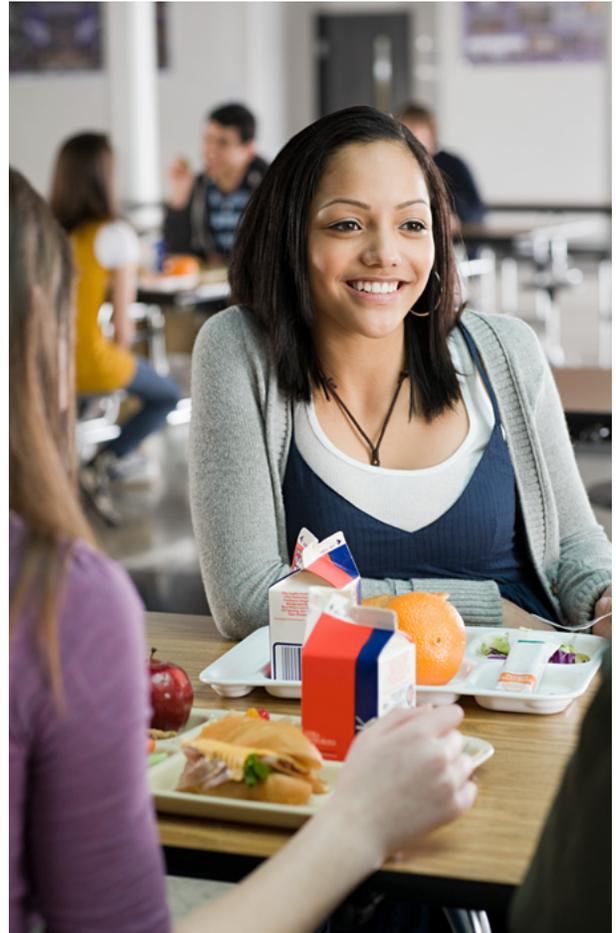
Strategies for **Food Service Staff**

- Look for indicators that a child or youth may be experiencing homelessness, such as someone who does not have lunch or money to purchase a meal, seems extraordinarily hungry and wants more food than is provided in the regular meal or begs food from his or her peers, and refer this student to the local homeless liaison.
- Build positive relationships with students and listen for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness; make referrals to the local liaison.
- Ensure that homeless students are able to receive free meals immediately upon identification, without the need for paperwork beyond a referral from the local liaison or shelter director, as required by law.
- Maintain students' confidentiality regarding their living situation.
- Do not implement practices that stigmatize homeless students or others receiving free meals, such as a creating a special line or a different colored ticket.
- Arrange for students to receive free food on weekends and in the summer through community backpack programs or other venues.



What should we do if there are delays in processing the free school meal paperwork for a student experiencing homelessness?

Due to the streamlined procedures for homeless students outlined by USDA statutes and policy, generally there should be no delay in determining their eligibility. An email with an electronic signature or a fax from the local liaison or director of the shelter where the student resides is sufficient to establish eligibility and start the provision of free school meals immediately.



Resources

[NCHE Access to Food for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students²⁶](#)

Strategies for **School Support Personnel, Librarians, Paraeducators and Custodial Staff**

- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness and make a referral to the local liaison.
- Look for any signs that other students are teasing or bullying a student who may be experiencing homelessness and intervene or report the students to teacher or principal.
- Build positive relationships with students.
- Listen for indicators that a student is experiencing hunger, neglect, stress; make appropriate referrals to school counselors or social workers.
- Encourage the student to succeed and stay in school and build hope for the future.



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

Strategies for **School Resource Officers** (SRO)

- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
- Understand the **McKinney-Vento Act** definition of homelessness and what that means for students.
- Build and maintain positive relationships with students.
- Share pertinent information with the appropriate school personnel such as:

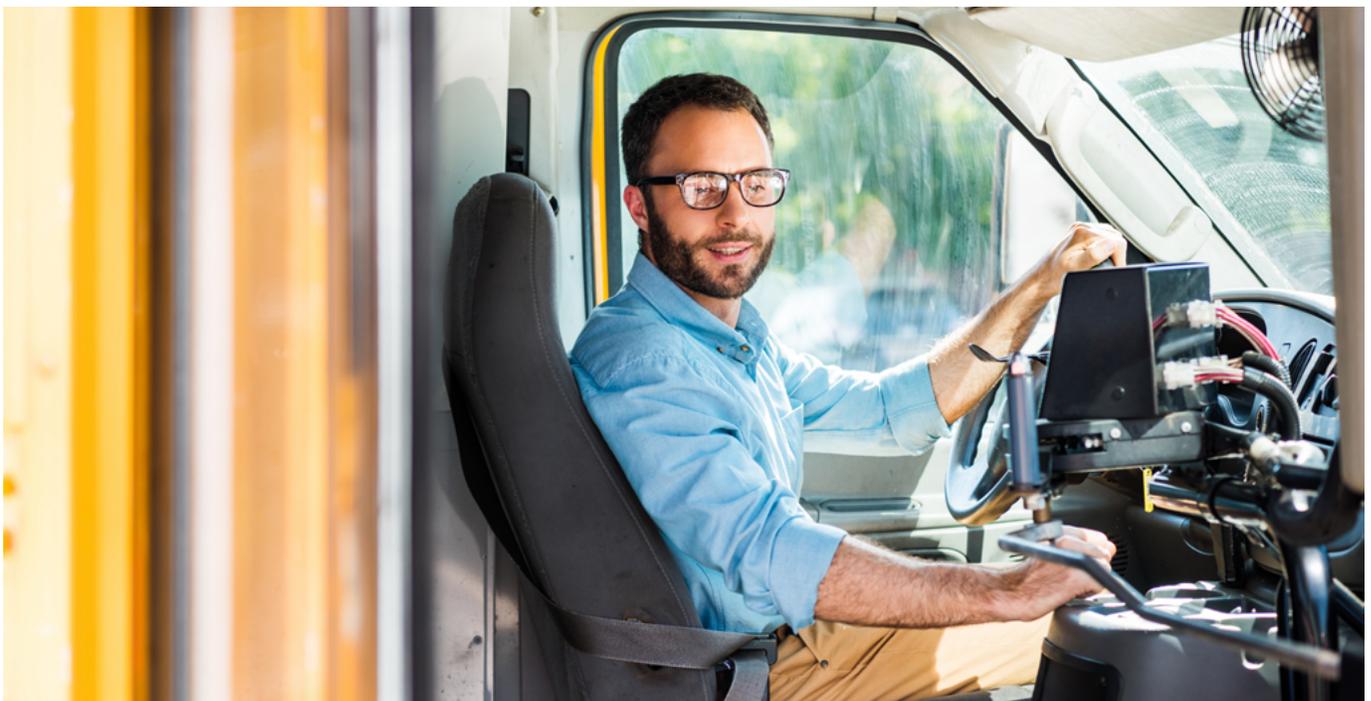
“Johnny may have a rough day.”

- Listen for indicators that a student is experiencing hunger, neglect, stress; know what resources are available and make appropriate referrals to school counselors or social workers.
- Ensure open communication with the local homeless liaison and participate in groups or teams that work with the **McKinney-Vento Act** homelessness program.
- Speak with the Homeless Liaison, School Counselors, and/or School Social Workers to ensure an understanding of the **McKinney-Vento Act** policies, procedures, and processes and your role in the system



Strategies for **School Bus Drivers**

- Look for indicators on the bus route that a student may be experiencing homelessness and make a referral to the local homeless liaison. Note students who:
 - Appear at a new bus stop.
 - No longer appear at a bus stop without having withdrawn from school.
 - Are now being dropped off/picked up by someone at a bus stop when they used to walk.
 - Are requesting pick up/drop off at the address of a hotel, motel or shelter.
 - Are showing up at the bus stop inappropriately dressed for the weather.
 - Are showing uncharacteristic behavior problems.
- May be experiencing hunger, neglect, stress.
- Build positive relationships with students.
 - Encourage the student to succeed and stay in school and build hope for the future.
 - Listen for instances of teasing and bullying of a homeless student; intervene and report this to the student's school.
 - Maintain a lost and found box and help return lost items to students; possessions are very important to homeless students.



- Inform your pupil transportation director if the bus route includes a pick up or drop off that would enable other students to identify a student as homeless, and request to adjust the route, for example, making a pick up at a shelter or hotel the first stop and drop off the last stop so that other students do not see where a homeless student is staying.
- Assist the pupil transportation director with creative routes that provide expeditious and economical transportation for homeless students to and from the school of origin.
- Inform the pupil transportation director of instances where a homeless student has not been at the bus stop arranged for him or her to be transported to and from the school of origin so that the director and local liaison can follow up with the family or youth.

Resources

[NCHE Transporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness²⁷](#)



EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE

For More Information

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

<https://nche.ed.gov>

NCHE at The SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth program. NCHE offers webinars and training materials, publications and briefs, and customized phone and email technical assistance through its homeless education helpline.

NCHE Homeless Education Helpline

(800) 308-2145

homeless@serve.org

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)

<https://naehcy.org>

NAEHCY is a national membership association dedicated to educational excellence for children and youth experiencing homelessness. NAEHCY advocates for change through state and federal policy; provides publications and resources; and sponsors an annual conference specifically for educators, service providers, policy makers, and researchers who work in the field of educating homeless children and youth.

Schoolhouse Connection (SHC)

<https://schoolhouseconnection.org>

SHC is a national nonprofit organization working to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and technical assistance in partnership with early childhood programs, schools, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth. SHC conducts an annual scholarship program for homeless youth and features youth voices in its advocacy projects.

Endnotes

- 1 KSDE EHCY webpage: <https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Special-Education-and-Title-Services/Title-Services/Educating-Homeless-Children-and-Youth>
- 2 State list of McKinney-Vento Contacts (PDF): <https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/Title/Homeless/McKinneyVento-Contacts.pdf>
- 3 NCHE State Profile Pages – Kansas (webpage): <https://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StatelD=20>
- 4 42 USC Chapter 119, Subchapter VI, part B: Education for homeless children and youths. (webpage): <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter119/subchapter6/partB&edition=prelim>
- 5 NCHE (2017). *Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness: An introduction to the Issues* (PDF): <https://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StatelD=20>
- 6 NCHE (2021). *Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services* (PDF): https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/det_elig.pdf
- 7 United Way 2-1-1 of Kansas (website): <https://211kansas.myresourcedirectory.com>
- 8 Ingram, E.S., Bridgeland, B.R., Atwell, M. (2017). *Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in American's Public Schools*. Civic Enterprises and Hart Research Associates, Civic Enterprises and Hart Research Associates (PDF): https://americaspromise.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/HiddeninPlainSightFullReportFINAL_0.pdf
- 9 NCHE Self-Paced Online Training (website): <https://nche.ed.gov/self-paced-online-training>
- 10 NCHE Group Training (website): <https://nche.ed.gov/group-training>
- 11 Common Signs of Homelessness (2019). NCHE (PDF): <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Common-Signs-of-Homelessness.pdf>
- 12 The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (website): <https://www.nctsn.org>
- 13 Bassuk, A.G., Mohile, N.A. and Stack, C. (2006). *Understanding Traumatic Stress in Children*. The National Center on Family Homelessness (PDF): https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/Understanding_Traumatic_Stress_in_Children_0.pdf
- 14 Thistle-Elliott, L. (2014). *Supporting Homeless Children and Youth through Proactive and Positive Behavior Management and Intervention Practices* (PDF): <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/res-summ-pos-beh.pdf>.
- 15 NCHE (2017). *Enrolling Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in School* (PDF): <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/enrollment.pdf>
- 16 Free orders NCHE Publications (website): <https://nchehelpline.org/pages/free-orders>
- 17 NCHE. *Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Elementary Teachers of At-Risk and Highly Mobile Students* (PDF): https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/eff_teach_elem.pdf
- 18 NCHE. *Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Middle Level and High School Teachers of At-Risk Mobile Students* (PDF): https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/eff_teach_mh.pdf
- 19 NCHE (2003). *Students on the Move: Reaching and Teaching Highly Mobile Children and Youth* (PDF): https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/highly_mobile.pdf
- 20 NCHE (2017). *Ensuring Full Participation in Extracurricular Activities for Students Experiencing Homelessness* (PDF) : https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/extra_curr.pdf

For More Information | Endnotes

- 21 NCHE (2024). *Maximizing Credit Accrual and Recovery for Homeless Students* (PDF): https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Maximizing-Credit-Accrual-Revised-Feb-2024_FINAL.pdf
- 22 NCHE (2014). *Sex Trafficking of Minors: What Schools Need to Know to Recognize and Respond to the Trafficking of Students* (PDF): <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/trafficking.pdf>
- 23 Dukes, C. (2013). *College Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness: A Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers*. NAEHCY; National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE (webpage): <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED558534>
- 24 *National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, Alone without a Home: A National Review of State Laws Affecting Unaccompanied Youth*, (2019). National Homelessness Law Center (PDF): <https://homelesslaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/AWAH-report.pdf>
- 25 Hindman, J. and Mincemoyer J., (2014). *Project Hope Virginia School Nurses: It's Not Just Bandages Anymore!* (PDF): <https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/publications/infobriefs/documents/SchoolNurse2014.pdf>
- 26 NCHE (2014). *Access to Food for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students* (PDF): <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/nutrition.pdf>
- 27 NCHE (2017). *Transporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness* (PDF): <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/transportation.pdf>

For more information, contact:

Maureen Tabasko
Education Program Consultant
Special Education and Title Services
(785) 296-1101
mtabasko@ksde.org



Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212

www.ksde.org

