

What does the McKinney-Vento Act require schools to do for children who have lost housing?



Florida's McKinney-Vento Program



Schools must

keep children in the school of origin (the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or where last enrolled), when that is in your child's best interest, except where contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian.

Schools must remove any barriers that contribute to exclusion or enrollment delay. This means schools are required to enroll immediately students who lost their housing due to economic hardship, such as eviction or foreclosure, or natural or man-made disasters, and then follow up to retrieve missing information, school records, immunization records, etc.

Each school must post the contact information of the district's Homeless Education Liaison.

Each school must post public notice of educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Schools must ensure enrollment with full and equal opportunity for students to succeed in school, including participation in such school district programs as Title I, exceptional student education, vocational and technical, Head Start, Even Start, preschool, and extracurricular activities.

State Coordinator:

Skip Forsyth

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Bureau of Federal Educational Programs
Homeless Education Program
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Program Website

<http://www.fldoe.org/policy/federal-education-programs/title-x-homeless-edu-program-hep.html>



Every Child Has the Right to an Education

If you lost your housing due to economic hardship, natural disaster, or other similar reason, and are living temporarily with friends or relatives, or in a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground; or on the street; in an abandoned building, then your children are eligible to receive benefits provided under the McKinney-Vento Act.

Your children (PreK –12) have the right to:

- Continue to attend the school they last attended before they lost their housing (school of origin), if that is the parent/guardian's choice and is in the child's best interest, or the school for which they are zoned for their temporary residence.
- Enroll and attend classes immediately while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records and other required enrollment documents.
- If necessary, enroll and attend classes in the school selected by the parent/guardian (school of origin or zoned school), while the school and the parent/guardian seek to resolve a dispute over which school is in the best interest of the child – NOTE: This does not mean any school in the district, only the school of origin or zoned school.
- Receive transportation to the school of origin (if a parent/guardian requests such transportation). NOTE: if the student lives within two miles of the school, then transportation is provided per district policy.
- Participate in any school programs and receive any school services for which they qualify.

Questions for Parents to Ask at School



Children can be encouraged by your interest in their day at school, their homework, and the papers they bring from school.

They also benefit when you take time to ask questions about school and visit their school.

Here are some questions for you to ask at your child's school:

- Who is the local liaison for homeless education?
- What transportation is available for my child to stay in the same school?
- If we have to change schools, who can help us quickly transfer records?
- Is there a preschool program?
- Is there a summer school program?
- What services are available for my child?
- If my child needs special education services, how do I get them evaluated?
- What classes or programs does this school offer to help develop my child's special talent (such as art music, math, writing, etc.)?
- What extracurricular activities are offered by this school? How can my child participate?
- How can my child receive free meals at school?
- What school supplies are available?
- How will my child be able to go on educational field trips if we are unable to pay?

Special Education Services

Florida children between ages 3 and 22, who are eligible for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Programs, may receive a variety of services provided through the public school system. If a child who lost their housing and qualifies for McKinney-Vento benefits has an identified disability, he or she may be eligible for special education services.

Parents who believe their child may qualify for special education should contact either the ESE or Student Services Department in their school district for additional information about programs for students with disabilities.

Free Lunch and Breakfast Program



Public school children benefit from federal school nutrition programs that provide nutritious meals. Free breakfast and lunch are available to children in public schools that offer them, when they qualify for McKinney-Vento benefits.