

What Families Need to Know about Homelessness and Public Education



Definition of Homeless

Local school districts must ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to free appropriate education programs. Homeless children and youth are defined as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence. This includes students who are:

- living in motels, hotels, FEMA trailers, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; are waiting foster care placement;
- living in nighttime residence that is not designated for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;
- migrant students, living in a situation described above.

Becoming homeless is highly disruptive to students in many ways. Whenever possible, use the following guidelines when moving is necessary.

- Inform your child's teacher, guidance counselor, and principal that you are moving and give them the new address.
- Ask for a copy of your child's school records, including immunizations.
- Safeguard and keep a copy of school records, birth certificates, and all health and immunization records accessible.
- Have a reliable person keep a second copy of these important records.
- Enroll your child(ren) in school as soon as possible.

Ask About School Services

Breakfast and lunch programs
Transportation
School Supplies



Your Children's Rights

The federally-funded McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act established educational rights and protections for students experiencing homelessness. Homeless children and youth are entitled to:

- enroll in school without having a permanent address;
- enroll and attend school while arranging for required school records or documents;
- remain in the school attended before becoming homeless;
- receive special programs and services for which they are eligible;
- attend school and participate in school programs with students who are not homeless;
- receive assistance with transportation to school.

Resources for Families

**Florida Department of Education
Homeless Education Program**
Lorraine Allen
(850) 245-0668

Florida Coalition for the Homeless
www.flacoalitionhomeless.com

**Florida Department of Children
and Families**
www.dcf.state.fl.us/homelessness

**Calhoun County Health
Department**
19611 SR 20 West
Blountstown, FL 32424
(850) 674-5645

Calhoun County Public Library
Rita Maulpin
17731 NE Pear Street
Blountstown, FL 32424
(850) 674-8773

Calhoun County Sheriff Office
David L. Tatum, Sheriff
20776 Central Ave East
Blountstown, FL 32424
(850) 674-5049

National Center for Homeless
(800) 308-2145
www.serve.org/nche

**National Association for the
Education of Homeless
Children and Youth**
(763) 545-0064
www.naehcy.com

For more information contact:
**Calhoun County Schools
Homeless Education Liaison**
Vicki Davis
Special Programs Office
16651 SE River Street
Blountstown, FL 32424
(850) 674-8734 ext. 225