

Educational Challenges and Resources Available to Homeless Children and Youth

For the first time, schools across the nation identified 1 million children and youth who experienced homelessness during the school year. The number of homeless children and youths has steadily increased over the past 10 years. The McKinney-Vento Act was passed to assist homeless families and youth.

What does it mean to be homeless?

The term "homeless children and youths"

- A. Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and
- B. Includes
 1. Children and youths who are sharing housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or 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.
 2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime and residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
 3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or similar settings.

Can the student go to the same place every night to sleep in a safe and sufficient space? No? Then the student likely meets the criteria of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and should be considered homeless.

Rights of Homeless Children/Youth

Homeless children automatically qualify for Head Start services

Eligible for free meal benefits/breakfast

Participating in extra-curricular activities free of waive fees. School based organizations, such as parent organizations and booster clubs, also often assist with other expenses.

School Guidance Counselor will assist homeless students with Academic and Career Planning including applying for colleges.

Transportation to the School of Origin-the child's or youth's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the local educational agency in which the school of origin is located. Transportation is provided.

Continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homeless.

Standards for homeless children/youth

All homeless students are identified by the school.

Homeless students demonstrate academic progress and are enrolled in school.

Homeless students experience stability in school.

All homeless students receive specialized and comparable services when eligible.

All preschool-aged homeless children enroll in and attend school.
Parents are informed of educational and related opportunities.

Resources Available to Homeless Families

Local Homeless Coordinator at Weston Schools. Please contact Dale Thoreson, 608-986-2151
Local Social Services or Human Services at Sauk or Richland County.
US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Community Action of Sauk County (608) 254-8353
Sauk County Housing (608) 355-4810, 608-356-3986
Reedsburg Hospital Mental Health-Community Care Program
Hope House of South Central Wisconsin
Richland County Economic Support
Sauk County Job Center
Richland and Sauk County Aging and Disability Center
Richland County Health and Human Services-608-647-8821
Homeless Prevention Program-Richland County, 608-647-8821
Catholic Charities-608-326-1616
Richland Community Free Clinic 608-647-6161
A Family's Place-Transitional Housing 608-935-2326
Lydia's House-Emergency Overnight Shelter 608-475-9479