

Supporting Students in Temporary Housing:



McKinney-Vento Act: Meeting the Needs of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

We will begin shortly! Enjoy our jazz!



Presented By: NYS TEACHS
Thursday, October 23, 2025
9:30am-11:00am

Webinar Format



- Today's session will be recorded.



- Your microphone will be automatically muted.



- Your camera will be automatically disabled.



- The in-webinar chat will allow you to communicate with the panelists and host only.



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Housekeeping



- We will launch poll questions periodically throughout the session and ask you to respond to questions in the chat.
- We won't be able to answer questions about specific situations in the chat, but we welcome you to call the Help Line to discuss these issues at 800-388-2014.
- The Help Line is open 24 hours a day. Specialists are available from 9:00am – 5:00pm. If you leave a message, you will be called back by the next business day.
- Following today's webinar, today's recorded session, attachments, and Q&As will be posted/accessible on the NYS TEACHS website.

Who Is In The Room?

Are you a...

- New McKinney-Vento Liaison (1st Year)
- McKinney-Vento Liaison (2-4 years)
- McKinney-Vento Liaison (5 – 9 years)
- McKinney-Vento Liaison (10 + years)
- BOCES Liaison
- RHY Shelter Staff
- Other School/District Staff



Which region are you from?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| * Western | * Capital |
| * Finger Lakes | * Hudson Valley |
| * Central | * New York City |
| * Southern Tier | * Long Island |
| * Mohawk Valley | * North Country |

Session Outcomes



By the end of today's webinar, participants will be able to:

- Identify the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act as it relates to the rights of unaccompanied homeless youth.
- Describe the educational barriers that impact academic growth and determine strategies to ensure success.
- Employ strategies to support the education and social-emotional success of students experiencing temporary housing.
- Use resources to meet the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth.

Today's Agenda



Welcome! Who is in the Room?



Who Are Our Homeless Youth?



Risk Factors for Becoming an Unaccompanied Youth



Determining Eligibility



Strategies for Success



Summary, Resources, Survey



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Who Are Unaccompanied Homeless Youths?



[The Homestretch 2014 Official Trailer.mp4 on Vimeo](#)

Let's Talk About It

What aspect of the video resonated with you most?



Please respond in the chat. 😊

Prevalence of Youth Homelessness in America

1 in 10 young adults, ages 18-25, experienced a form of homelessness over a 12-month period.

That's 4.2 million youth and young adults.

1 in 30 youth, ages 13-17, experienced a form of homelessness over a 12-month period.

That's about 700,000 youth. About three-quarters of that youth explicitly reported homelessness including running away or being kicked out.

<https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/youth-homelessness-overview>

Chapin Hall: Voices of Youth Count

The lack of a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) is the number one risk factor for youth homelessness.

29% of homeless youth reported having substance use problems.

69% of homeless youth reported mental health problems.

33% of homeless youth had once been part of the foster care system.

50% of homeless youth have been in the juvenile justice system, in jail, or detention.

27% of LGBTQ homeless youth reported exchanging sex for basic needs compared to 9% of non-LGBTQ youth who reported having to exchange sex for basic needs.

62% of LGBTQ youth report being physically harmed while experiencing homelessness, while 47% of non-LGBTQ youth reported being physically harmed while homeless.



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Young People Most Likely to Become Homeless

Infographic from Chapin
Hall, Voices of Youth Count,
[Missed Opportunities: Youth
Homelessness in America](#)

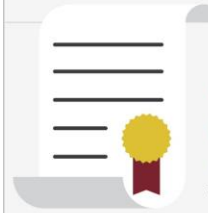


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Figure 5. Youth at Greater Risk of Experiencing Homelessness

Statistics describe the relative risk of certain groups of young adults, 18-25, having reported “explicit homelessness” in the last 12 months.



346%

Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED

had a 346% higher risk than their peers who completed high school.

162%

Youth reporting annual household income of less than \$24,000

had a 162% higher risk of reporting homelessness.

33%

Hispanic, non-White youth

had a 33% higher risk of reporting homelessness.

120%

LGBT youth

had a 120% higher risk of reporting homelessness.

83%

Black or African American youth

had an 83% higher risk of reporting homelessness.

200%

Unmarried parenting youth

had a 200% higher risk of reporting homelessness.



Youth Homelessness in NYS

Data reported to the U.S. Department of Education by New York State public schools during the **2023-24 school year** shows that an estimated **187,302** public school students experienced homelessness over the course of the year. Of that total, **5,775** students were unsheltered, **66,847** were in shelters, **6,750** were in hotels/motels, and **107,930** were doubled up. **Total # of Students Enrolled = 2,418,513**

Total Number of Homeless Students	187,302	7% of total enrollment
Nighttime Residence: Unsheltered	5,775	3% of homeless students
Nighttime Residence: Sheltered	66,847	35% of homeless students
Nighttime Residence: Hotels/motels	6,750	4% of homeless students
Nighttime Residence: Doubled up	107,930	58% of homeless students

<https://www.nysteachs.org/data-on-student-homelessness>

Youth Homelessness in NYC 2024

Citywide Youth Point-in-Time Count

Data based on the HOPE Count, NYC Youth Count and the census of all NYC shelters for youth ages 14-24.

Category	Unsheltered	Sheltered		Total
		Emergency	Transitional	
Unaccompanied (single) Youth	418	6,191	214	6,823
Parenting Youth	1	3,732	1	3,734
Children of Parenting Youth	1	3,565	1	3,567
TOTAL	420	13,488	216	14,124

[2024 NYC Youth Point in Time Survey](#)

Youth Homelessness in NYC

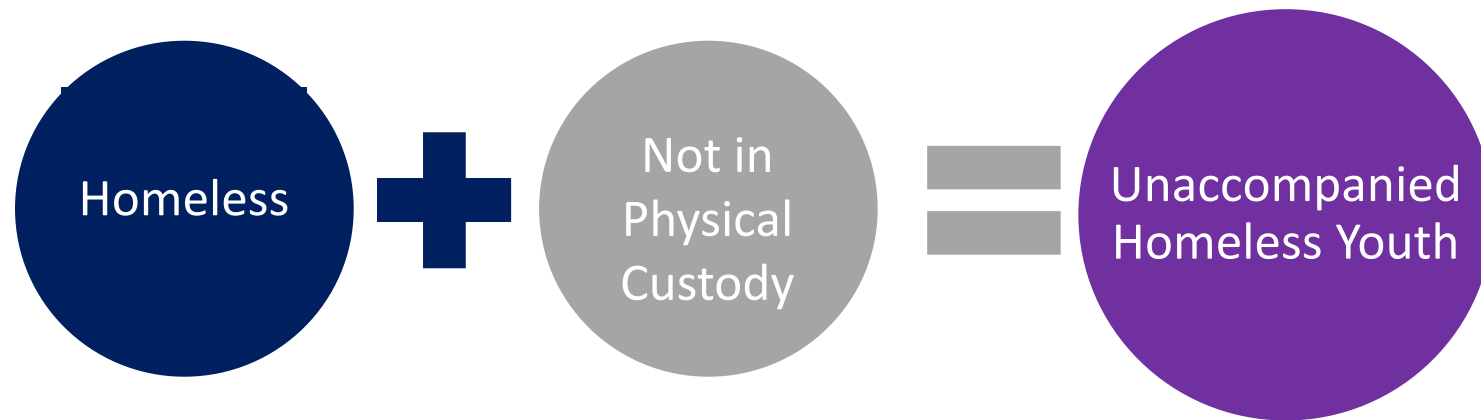
- In August 2025, **103,391** different homeless adults and children slept in the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter system. This includes **35,405 homeless children**.
- In August 2025, 69% of those in shelters were members of homeless families.
- More than **146,000** NYC schoolchildren experienced homelessness at some point during the 2023–2024 school year, representing one in eight children attending city schools.

source: www.coalitionforthehomeless.org

Definition of an Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

An unaccompanied youth is a child or youth that is not in the physical custody of/not living with a parent or guardian.

To be eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act, the youth must also meet the definition of homeless.



42 U.S.C. § 11434a[6]; Education Law § 3209[1][a][1][v]; and 8 NYCRR § 100.2[x][1][iii][6])

Risk Factors for Becoming an Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Substance
Abuse

Sexual
Activity/Sexual
Orientation

Parental
Neglect/
Abuse

Incarceration

Family
Homelessness

Runaways



McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

The McKinney-Vento Act states that children and youth who lack a “fixed, regular, and adequate primary nighttime residence” will be considered homeless.



Homelessness: Living Conditions

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Living in a public or private place not designed for sleeping
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, etc.
- Migratory children living in circumstances described above
- Unaccompanied youth living in circumstances described above

Education Law §3209(1)(a); 8 NYCRR §100.2(x)(1); see also 42 USC §11434A(2)(B)(i)

Eligible for McKinney-Vento Benefits



Homeless = lacking a “fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence”.



If any one of these criteria is missing, the student is eligible for McKinney-Vento benefits.



A student may be considered homeless for an unspecified amount of time as long as housing is not fixed, regular, and adequate.

Let's Meet Kimaya



Kimaya is a 10th grader, who lived with her parents in the Rochester School District. She left her parent's home to move in with her boyfriend in the Greece School District. She comes to the Registrar Office to enroll in school. They call the District Liaison to speak with Kimaya and assist in the enrollment process.

What information would you need to determine if Kimaya is an unaccompanied homeless youth?

Please respond in the chat. 😊

Quick Poll

1. Would Kimaya still be eligible for benefits if her parents say that she can return home?
A. Yes B. No C. Not Sure
2. Would Kimaya still be eligible for M-V benefits if her parents continue to provide her with financial support?
A. Yes B. No C. Not Sure



Youth Scenarios



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Scenario #1



Due to conflict with his stepfather, David does not live with his parent or a legal guardian, and instead, lives with his grandfather. This has been the living arrangement for the past few months, but because the grandfather lives in a senior residence, he is not sure how much longer David can stay. David is...

- A. An unaccompanied homeless youth
- B. An unaccompanied youth
- C. Not sure



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Scenario #2



A district liaison from Albany called and described a scenario where an 8-year-old girl previously in foster care was adopted. Recently, the adoptive mother passed away, and the adoptive dad said he could not care for the child. A family friend in Troy is taking the child on a trial basis. This student is currently...

- A. An unaccompanied youth
- B. An unaccompanied homeless youth
- C. Not sure

Scenario #3

A district liaison was informed at the start of the school year that the father of two students in the district was recently incarcerated. The 18-year-old 12th grader moved to another town, is working, paying rent and living independently. Her 16-year-old sister is living with her. Would both students be considered unaccompanied homeless youths (UHY)?

- A. Yes, both students would be considered a UHY because they are not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian.
- B. Yes, because it is uncertain how long they can pay rent.
- C. No, because one sister is taking care of the other in adequate housing.
- D. No, only the 16-year-old would be an UHY since her sister doesn't have custody of her.

Scenario #4



Olivia's parents died, and an aunt and uncle move into her house which is fixed, regular, and adequate. The aunt and uncle, who do not have custody, intend on remaining there until Olivia graduates. Which of the following best describes Olivia?

- A. An unaccompanied homeless youth
- B. An unaccompanied youth
- C. Not an unaccompanied youth
- D. Not sure

M-V Liaison's Role to Remove Barriers For...



Enrolling

Enroll in school immediately even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.



Attending

Continue attending the school of origin and receive transportation to and from school.



Succeeding

Equal access to the same free, appropriate public education and related services needed to meet State academic standards.



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Let's Talk About It

What are some educational barriers that unaccompanied homeless youth face when enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school?

Please
respond in
the chat.



Educational Barriers

Lack of safe
and stable
housing

Lack of
support from a
caring adult

Lack of school
supplies and
clothing

Difficulty
accumulating
credits due to
school mobility

Lack of basic
needs,
including food
and medical
care

Lack of
consistent
access to
bathing and
laundry facilities

Irregular
school
attendance

Concerns
about being
reported to
child welfare



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McKinney-Vento Act: School Selection

Like temporarily housed students, **unaccompanied youth** in temporary housing may have choices for school enrollment. They can choose:

They can choose:

- The school **attended or was entitled to attend** when circumstances arose which caused the child or youth to become homeless.
- The **school last enrolled**, even if the student was temporarily housed during that time, or
- The **local school** where the student is currently temporarily housed.

N.Y. Education Law § 3209(1)(c)

Best Interest Determination

In determining what is in the best interest of the child or youth, the local educational agency (LEA) shall –

- Keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent/guardian or youth;
- Provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, to the homeless child's or youth's parent or guardian, if the local educational agency sends such child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent/guardian or youth;
- Ensure that the homeless liaison assists the unaccompanied homeless youth in placement or enrollment decisions and provides notice to such youth of the right to appeal.

42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(B)

Enrollment

The terms “enroll” and “enrollment” include attending classes and participating fully in school activities [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(1)]

Unaccompanied homeless youth completes the [Housing Questionnaire](#).

3 Ways to Enroll:

- Unaccompanied homeless youth enrolls using self enrollment
- Adult caregiver enrolls using [caregiver authorization form](#).
- McKinney-Vento liaison enrolls the youth.



Enrollment: School District Responsibilities

LEAs must review and revise laws, regulations, policies, and practices that may act as a barrier to the identification of, or the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of, children and youths experiencing homelessness. [42 U.S.C. § 11431(2)]

Determine who can sign off on activities enabling the student to fully participate in school.

- ✓ Leaving school early for doctor's appointment
- ✓ School absences
- ✓ Permission slips for extra curricular activities and field trips

Quick Poll #1

Do schools need to notify the parents or guardians of unaccompanied homeless youth during the registration process?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Not Sure



Rights to educational records transfer to youth at age 18, with some exceptions.

Quick Poll #2

Do schools need to notify the police when enrolling unaccompanied homeless youth?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Not Sure



If you suspect kidnapping, you can immediately see if student has been reported missing at www.missingkids.org or 1-800-THE-LOST

Quick Poll #3

ENROLL



Can a school require that a caregiver obtain legal guardianship to enroll an unaccompanied homeless youth in school?

- A. Yes, in all instances
- B. Yes, if student is in elementary school.
- C. Yes, if enrolling in a new school district.
- D. No, the school district must enroll youth in school even if they do not have guardianship papers.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

- **Basic Center Program**- supporting emergency shelters for up to 15 days for unaccompanied youth under 18 years old.
- **Transitional Living Programs**- providing long-term housing for up to 18 months and life skills for young people 16-21 years old.
- **Street Outreach Program**- providing outreach and services to youth on the streets.
- The law funds the **National Runaway Switchboard**, trainings for youth workers, and other information and supports. More information about this program is available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb> and <http://www.1800runaway.org/>.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/grants/new-york-rhy>

42 U.S.C. §§5701 et seq.; 42 U.S.C. §5712(b)(3); 45 C.F.R. §1351.18(e)

Runaway and Homeless Youth: Transportation

- Transportation from Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Facilities is 100% reimbursable. [RHY Reimbursement Instructions](#)
- RHY facility or District may transport
- For students not staying at an accredited RHY facility are entitled to:
 - ✓ State aid for transportation
 - ✓ Title 1 Part A Set-Aside for excess costs



Transportation plays a major part in ensuring school stability!

On-Time Graduation from High School

Students experiencing homelessness - 68%

Economically disadvantaged students - 81%

NY State Average - 86%

Students Experiencing Homelessness



Economically Disadvantaged Students



NY State Graduation Rate (all students)



Source:

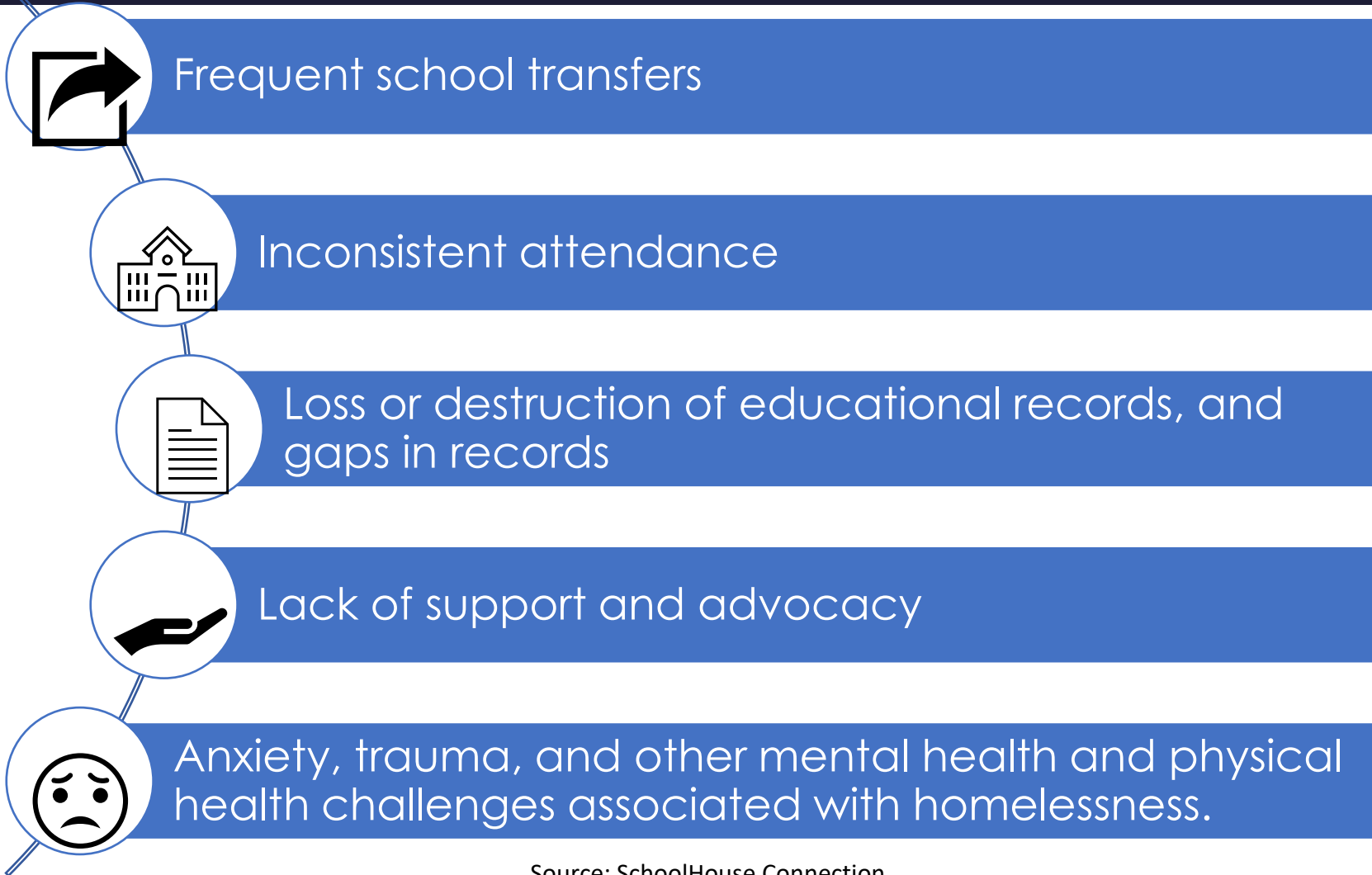
[New York State
Graduation Rate Data
2024](#)



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Challenges for Succeeding in School



Source: SchoolHouse Connection

Let's Talk About It

What are some ways to better engage unaccompanied youth in their education?

Please
respond in
the chat.



Access to Higher Education

- Identify and remove barriers that prevent youth from receiving credit for full or partial coursework, satisfactorily completed at a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies.
- Provide counselor assistance to advise youth and improve student readiness for college.
- Inform unaccompanied youth of their status as independent students when completing the [FAFSA](#) for college financial aid.
- More info on FAFSA and sample verification letters are available at: <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/learn/higher-education/>

8 NYCRR §100.2(x)(7)(iii)(a); see also 42 USC §11432(g)(6)(A); Non-Regulatory Guidance, Section F & Questions L- 3, Q-2

Outreach Strategies



Post outreach materials where youth gather.

Include contact information for the District Liaison.

I am your District Liaison; how can I help you?



Use social media platforms to communicate ways to support youth experiencing homelessness.

NCHE Brief: *Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students Experiencing Homelessness*

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth with Special Needs

- Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) who are homeless have the same options as other students experiencing homelessness: the student can **stay in their school of origin or transfer to a local school** where the student is temporarily housed. 42 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(2)(c)(i)
- Students in temporary housing have the **same right to special education services** as permanently housed students in the school district. The McKinney-Vento Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) work together to ensure that students in temporary housing with disabilities have their needs met. 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(5)(D); 20 U.S.C. § 1401(29)



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Unaccompanied Homeless Youth with Special Needs

- IDEA's surrogate parent provisions for unaccompanied youth help protect students' rights and provide the school district with an appropriate adult with whom to communicate about evaluations and services.
- The school district must appoint a person to serve as a **“surrogate parent”** for students who do not have someone to **act as a parent on matters related to special education**. 20 U.S.C. § 1415(b)(2)(A)(ii)
- [NAEHCY's Surrogate Parents and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth](#), under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, helps school districts ensure that unaccompanied youth who are homeless and who have disabilities can access special education services.

Check for Understanding



Check for Understanding #1

The McKinney-Vento Act does not include a specific age requirement to qualify as an unaccompanied homeless youth. This may include children as young as five years old.

- A. True
- B. False
- C. Not sure



Check for Understanding #2

15-year-old Alyssa has been having conflicts with her dad, so she has moved in temporarily with her 16-year-old boyfriend and his mom. The district liaison has been notified that Alyssa is no longer living at home. Which of these individuals can sign permission slips for field trips or for Alyssa to leave school early for a doctor's appointment?

Indicate all that apply.

- A. Alyssa's boyfriend
- B. Alyssa
- C. The McKinney-Vento liaison
- D. A caregiver who has completed the Caregiver Authorization Form



Check for Understanding #3

17-year-old Noah and his mom got into a fight over the way mom's new boyfriend is treating him. He moved out and has been staying with different friends for the past 6 months. He needs to go to the doctor, and he is informed that his mom cancelled his health insurance. Can Noah still receive health care?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Not Sure



<https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/>

Check for Understanding #4

If there is no parent available to attend a CSE meeting to discuss the IEP of a 15-year-old Unaccompanied Homeless Youth in your district, can the district convene the meeting with no representative for the child present?

- A. Yes
- B. No, a parent must attend
- C. No, the district must appoint a surrogate parent
- D. Not Sure



Check for Understanding #5

An Unaccompanied Homeless Youth in your district is suspended. Does the district need to notify his parents?

- A. Yes
- B. Yes, but only if he is under 18
- C. No
- D. Not Sure



Check for Understanding #6

Your district needs to convene a CSE meeting to discuss the IEP of a 16-year-old Unaccompanied Homeless Youth. The youth does not want his parent at the meeting. Does the school district need to inform the parents of the meeting?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Not Sure



Role of McKinney-Vento Liaisons

MEETING THE NEEDS OF UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH BY:



- Removing all barriers pertaining to student enrollment and succeeding in school including school attendance policies, legal guardianship requirements, and transportation.
- Assisting with the immediate enrollment in school.
- Informing youths about their status as independent students for college financial aid and providing guidance/assistance in the process to receive financial aid.

Key Points ! ! ! !

What are some key points to remember to meet the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth?



TEACHS Resource to Support UHYs

Provided below is guidance for McKinney-Vento liaisons to support UHYs and prepare them for college and the FAFSA.



Liaison Responsibility	Implications for College & FAFSA	Relevant Laws/Regulations
Identify UHYs through outreach and coordination with school staff and community-based organizations.	UHYs who are successful in high school have enormous potential for success in college and beyond if provided with the proper supports, resources, and inspiration. • Liaisons should post outreach materials in places where youth gather or use social media so UHYs know their education rights. Order Outreach Materials here. • It is sometimes difficult to determine that a youth is a UHY, but if they are staying with friends or other relatives rather than with their parents or legal guardian, they may be a UHY. Most UHYs are "doubled up" rather than living in a shelter. • Some youth may be reluctant to provide details about why they are not living with their parent so the liaison must be sensitive when discussing this with UHYs. UHYs may be afraid the liaison will report them to the police or to Child Protective Services and/or force them to return to their stressful family situation. Liaisons should keep these fears in mind when interacting with UHYs.	42 U.S.C. 11431 (6)(A)(i)





- [NCHE Brief: Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Surrogate Parents and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection: How to Answer FAFSA Questions About Homelessness](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection: Higher Education](#)
- [NCHE Brief: Students Living with Caregivers: Tips for Local Liaisons and School Personnel \(ed.gov\)](#)



Technical and Educational Assistance Center

- **Help Line** (800-388-2014)
- **Website** (<https://nysteachs.org>)
- **Web-Based Trainings**
- **Outreach Materials**
- **Tales from the Field**



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Next Webinar:

**Supporting Students in Temporary Housing
with Title I Part-A Set-Aside Funds**

November 6, 2025

9:30am – 11:00am



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