

## Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The term “homeless children and youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes

-  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; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement
-  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
-  Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
-  Migratory children (as such is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii)

—from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001, Title VII, Subtitle B, Section 725 as modified by Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

## What Are the Educational Rights of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness?

Children and youth experiencing homelessness have the right to

-  Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there. They must be given access to the same public education, including preschool education, provided to other children.
-  Continue in the school they last attended before they became homeless or the school they last attended, if that is the parent’s or youth’s choice and is feasible. If a staff member of a school sends the child or youth to a school other than the one requested, the staff member must provide a written explanation and offer the right to appeal the decision.
-  Receive transportation to the school they attended before the family or youth became homeless or the school they last attended, if the parent or youth requests such transportation.
-  Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
-  Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
-  Enroll and attend classes in the school of choice even while the school and parent or youth seek to resolve a dispute over the selected school. (The school district local liaison for homeless education will assist youths with the dispute process.)
-  Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children or youths served in these programs.
-  Receive transportation to school and to school programs.



P.O. Box 5367  
Greensboro, NC 27435



# Linking Resources for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

## SERVE

*Improving Learning through  
Research & Development*

# The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

is a national resource center of research and information enabling communities to successfully address the needs of homeless children and youth and their families.

The goals of the NCHE are to

-  Collect and disseminate important resource and referral information related to the complex issues surrounding the education of homeless children, youth, and their families
-  Provide rapid-response referral information
-  Foster collaboration among various organizations with interests in addressing the education of homeless children and youth
-  Synthesize and apply existing research and guide the research agenda to expand the knowledge base on the education of homeless children, youth, and their families

The National Center for Homeless Education is housed at SERVE, a consortium of educational organizations associated with the School of Education and headquartered at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the NCHE provides services to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for homeless children and youth in our nation's school communities.

*"What homeless children need most of all is a home. While they are experiencing homelessness, however, children desperately need to remain in school. School is one of the few stable, secure*

*places in the lives of homeless children and youth—a place where they can acquire the skills needed to help them escape poverty."*

*—National Coalition for the Homeless*

## Functions of NCHE

- Operate a Clearinghouse for Information on Homeless Education
- Develop and Disseminate Public Awareness Materials
- Disseminate Information on Effective Practices
- Provide Information and Assistance to State Coordinators, Local Liaisons for Homeless Education, Service Providers, Educators, Parents, and Advocates
- Conduct Annual National Symposium on Homeless Education
- Operate a Toll-Free HelpLine and Website

## Call our NCHE HelpLine 1-800-308-2145

The center will provide important resource and referral information for

**Parents** seeking contact information about

-  School enrollment, transportation
-  Homeless shelters, soup kitchens
-  Social and community services

**School personnel** seeking information about

-  Homeless programs, resources
-  Best practices
-  McKinney-Vento legislation

**Shelter providers** seeking assistance for homeless families with school enrollment and access to appropriate educational opportunities

**Community organizations and individuals** interested in networking on behalf of homeless children and their families

**All persons** with interest in federal/state legislation protecting the rights of homeless children and youth to free and appropriate public education

## Visit the NCHE Website [www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)

The website provides current and comprehensive information on

-  Understanding McKinney-Vento legislation
-  Contacting State Coordinators of Education for Homeless Children and Youth
-  Accessing state & local resources
-  Linking to other organizations that address homeless issues
-  Linking to current documents and reports
-  Accessing information by topic
-  Linking to the ERIC database

For further information about NCHE, contact  
**Ms. Diana Bowman, Director**  
National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE  
P.O. Box 5367  
Greensboro, NC 27435

**1-800-755-3277**  
E-mail: [homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org)  
or [dbowman@serve.org](mailto:dbowman@serve.org)

*"As the cornerstone of communities and a focal part of children's lives, schools are in a unique position to*

*respond effectively to family and youth homelessness."*

*—Making the Grade, 1999*