HOMELESS CHILDREN HAVE THE RIGHT TO A FREE, APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION

(MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT and ILLINOIS EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN ACT)

Who is considered homeless?

If a family, out of necessity because of lack of housing, must reside in a shelter, motel, vehicle, campground, on the street, or doubled up with relatives or friends, they are presently homeless.

Does residency have to be proven?

NO. Proof of residency is not required for the enrollment of homeless children. However, a school may require the parents or guardian of a homeless child to submit an address or other information for contact purposes, as they would require from any non-homeless child enrolling in their school.

Which school can a homeless child attend?

There is a choice, whichever is in the child's or youth's best interest:

1. The school of origin, which is the school attended when last permanently housed, or the school in which the student was last enrolled, or
2. Any school in which non-homeless students living in the attendance area are eligible to attend.

Is there any reason to delay enrolling a homeless child?

NO. Lack of school records or immunizations CANNOT prevent a homeless student from enrolling in the new school. It is the responsibility of the new school to request health and academic records from the previous schools in a "timely manner" and to refer parents to a physician or to a free or low cost clinic for any required immunizations. Homeless students do not need to wait until academic and health records arrive to attend the new school. Law requires IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT of homeless children and youth.

Where can you call for more information?

There are many sources of information on the legal rights of homeless children and the responsibilities of schools. If you have questions about enrolling homeless children or providing services, please call your local school district, or your Regional Office of Education, or the

Illinois State Board of Education
1-800-215-6379
OR
Traci Hillen, Calhoun Unit District 40 Homeless Liaison
1-618-576-2341

Please visit Opening Doors for more information: www.homelessed.net