

# Homelessness

## Children and Families

### Experiencing Homelessness

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### The Scale of Homelessness

- Up to three million people will experience homelessness this year in the United States
- In 2006, 50,692 Michigan residents were identified as homeless
- Of that number, 10,194 were children, most under the age of 10
- Single mothers and children are the fastest growing sub-population of homeless
- 45% of homeless families have experienced homelessness more than once
- One-half of homeless children attend 3 different schools in one year
- 75% of homeless children perform below grade level in reading
- 75% of homeless parents are unemployed
- The average annual income of a homeless parent is \$8,000
- 47% of homeless children have anxiety, depression, or withdrawal symptoms



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### Housing and Family Homelessness

Reasons for family homelessness



- Eviction
- Foreclosure
- No affordable housing
- Substandard housing
- Utility shut-off
- Loss of job
- Underemployment

In 2006, one-third of requests for shelter by homeless families were denied  
20% of families report that welfare reductions caused their homelessness

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**How vulnerable are you to becoming homeless?**

- Could you ever experience flood, fire, tornado, or other natural disaster?
- Do you work in an area where your job might become obsolete?
- Could you ever suffer from a long-term illness or accident without proper health benefits or other compensations?
- Do you live in a household with only one full-time wage earner?
- Are you behind on any monthly bills?
- Are housing costs in your area increasing faster than wages?
- Does anyone in your family struggle with addictions?
- Do you live in a household with other relatives (grandparents, aunts, sibling or friends)?

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**WHO IS HOMELESS**

Children who **lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence** -

- Sharing the housing of others (Doubled-Up) due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camp grounds, due to lack of alternative housing
- Living in emergency, domestic violence or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in Hospitals
- Temporary Foster Care placement or awaiting placement
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or bus/train stations
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they live in the circumstances described above
- Unaccompanied Youth - not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

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**Common Signs of Homelessness**

- Transportation & Attendance Problems
- Poor Hygiene & Grooming
- Poor Health & Nutrition (fatigue/hunger)
- Inappropriate Dress for the Weather
- Some common statements used by homeless students/parents include:
  - "I don't remember the name of my old school"
  - "We've been moving around a lot"
  - "We're going thru a bad time right now"
  - "We're staying w/ relatives, friends, grandparents right now"

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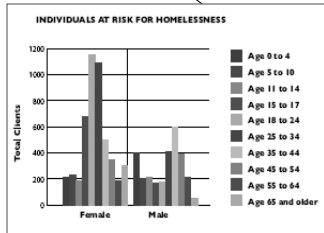
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## Individuals At Risk For Homelessness

In 2006 over 500 Unaccompanied Youth were reported as Homeless. Surprisingly many meet the criteria for being chronically homeless.



Homeless youth are at particularly high risk for teen pregnancy; research indicates as many as 20% of homeless young women become pregnant.

These pregnant and homeless teens lack financial resources and adequate health care, resulting in increased risk for low-birth-weight babies and high infant mortality.

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## Enrollment Barriers



The McKinney-Vento Act requires public schools to immediately enroll students experiencing homelessness even when lacking:

- Proof of Residency
- Guardianship
- Birth Certificates, School Records, or other documents
- Medical Records, including immunization records
- Required Dress code items, including uniforms
- Lack of Transportation
- Lack of School supplies, clothing, etc.
- Poor Health, Fatigue and Hunger
- Access to programs (before/after school, athletics)

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## Homeless Liaisons

- Every LEA must designate a liaison for students in homeless situations

### Responsibilities:

- Ensure that children and youth in homeless situations are identified (SRSD)
- Ensure that homeless students enroll in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school (usually within one day)
- Contact relevant social service agencies (DHS, Salvation Army)
- Student is enrolled in and receiving the Free/Reduced Breakfast and Lunch Program

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## Liaison Responsibilities Cont.

- Ensure that appropriate educational services are provided (Title I, Special Education, Gifted & Talented Programs, Athletics or extracurricular offerings)
- Responsibility to provide a homeless awareness training to all staff that are responsible for enrollment)
- Alert Teachers of student's living situation, respecting privacy
- Assist Unaccompanied youth with the opportunity to enroll in diversified learning opportunities (flexible school hours, CTE classes)

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## LEA Requirements

Children and Youth in homeless situations can stay in their school of origin (to the extent feasible) or enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend.



The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

Youth have the right to enroll in school **immediately**, even if they do not have required documents, such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation.

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## LEA Requirements Cont.

- Transportation
  - › LEAS must provide students that are homeless with transportation to and from their school or origin, at a parent's or guardian's request (or liaison for unaccompanied youth)
  - › If the student's temporary residence & school of origin are in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation

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### Transportation Requirements Cont.

- › If the student is living outside the school of origin's LEA, the LEA where the student is living and the school of origin's LEA must determine how to divide the responsibility and share the cost, or they must share cost equally.
- › In addition to providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services to/from after school programs.

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### Tips for Assisting Homeless Families and Youth

- Develop posters, brochure, pamphlets and fliers that explain McKinney-Vento rights information and how to access your district's Homeless Liaison. Make this information available at school attendance offices and distribute to youth service providers.
- Be sure that your district's enrollment forms are carefully crafted so they do not create further barriers or delay enrollment. For example, policy statements should clarify that identifying a caregiver is not a prerequisite to enrollment.
- Train school personnel on the rights of homeless children or unaccompanied youth.
- Ensure enrollment staff in all schools are knowledgeable with McKinney-Vento requirements and procedures related to enrolling homeless children or unaccompanied youth.

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### Tips for Assisting Homeless Families and Youth

- Revise or develop policies to address issues related to who signs for unaccompanied youth to participate in field trips or extracurricular activities.
- Provide a safe place at school that includes trained mentors, school counselors, or social workers that families or unaccompanied youth can access as needed.
- Recognize stressful environments outside of school and provide accommodations for homework. For example the child may not have the means to be able to make a collage or do a science project outside of school.
- Contact relevant social service agencies in your area and gather information, pamphlets and applications concerning valuable services such as food stamps.
- Provide supplies, time and space for school work and projects.
- Develop a list of shelters, youth hotlines and other family/youth services providers.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjluwsm39s>

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**RESOURCES**

- MDE Homeless Education Website  
> [www.michigan.gov/homeless](http://www.michigan.gov/homeless)
- National Center for Homeless Education  
> [www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)
- NCHE Helpline at 800-308-2145(toll free)
- United States Department of Education  
> [www.ed.gov/nclb](http://www.ed.gov/nclb)
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance  
> [www.naehcy.org/dl/m\\_v.doc](http://www.naehcy.org/dl/m_v.doc)
- National Runaway Switchboard  
Runaway Hotline: 1-800-621-4000 (24-hours)  
> [www.nrs Crisisline.org](http://www.nrs Crisisline.org)

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**RESOURCES, CONTINUED**

The Institute for Children and Poverty  
ICP's children's books help all children understand what it is like to be homeless  
> [www.icpny.org/index.asp?CID=5&PID=90](http://www.icpny.org/index.asp?CID=5&PID=90)



*Mango's Quest* tells the tale of a young, orange-colored hamster who must leave his safe and warm cage in Room 222.



When Saily the Snail loses his shell in a storm, he sets off on a journey to find a new home.



When two fat cats take over the cheese shop, Cooper the pink mouse suddenly finds himself homeless.

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**MPAAA Fall Conference, 2009**

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