



National Center for Homeless Education
Supporting the Education of Homeless
Children and Youth
<https://nche.ed.gov>



Students Living with Caregivers: Tips for Local Liaisons and School Personnel

This NCHE brief:

- explores living situations where children and youth are staying with caregivers or on their own,
- discusses access to education and other services for students living with caregivers or on their own, and
- offers strategies that local homeless education liaisons (hereafter referred to as *local liaisons*) and school staff can implement to ensure these students and caregiver families receive appropriate services.

Context

Each year, instead of living with a parent or legal guardian, thousands of students live on their own or reside with someone who serves as a caregiver. The caregiver may be a relative, friend, school employee, or other individual.¹ Some caregivers provide little to no support for youth staying with them, while others, especially with younger children, often assume more responsibility – even seeking legal guardianship in some cases. While some caregiver living situations are considered permanent housing, others may result in students meeting the definition of homelessness and thus being eligible for services under Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (hereafter referred to as the McKinney-Vento Act) (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)), which is the primary federal law addressing the educational needs of students experiencing homelessness.

There are multiple reasons for children to live apart from their parents, but Vandivere, Yrausquin, Allen, Malm, & McKlindon (2012) say most fall into one of the following broad categories (p. 13):

- The parents pose a danger to children due to domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse, or dysfunction.
- The parents are unavailable because of military

¹ For relative caregivers that include grandparents, visit the GrandFamilies Technical Assistance Center at <https://www.gu.org/what-we-do/technical-assistance/>.

Who is Homeless?

McKinney-Vento Act Definition of Homeless
(42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2))

The term “homeless children and youths” —

A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and

B. includes —

i. children and youths who are sharing the 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 accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;

ii. children and youths 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...

iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public places, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

iv. migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

deployment, illness, incarceration, deportation, or death.

- The parents lack resources to care for children because of teen pregnancy, economic crisis, family homelessness, or the child’s health or mental health needs.

Caregivers comprise a diverse population that varies in age and access to financial resources. Research indicates that non-parental caregivers tend to be older than parental caregivers, particularly when grandparents are the caregivers, and they tend to have lower household incomes and lower educational attainment (Vandivere, 2012). Based on the National Survey of Children in Non Parental Care (NSCNC), 62.2% of children in nonparental care had caregivers who were over age 55, (Radel, et al., 2016, p. 8) and only 32.8% of children lived in households where the nonparental caregiver(s) earned more than 200% of the federal poverty level (Radel, et al., 2016, p. 9). Therefore, many caregivers will benefit from extra support and referrals to an array of services to ensure positive outcomes for both the caregiver and the student.

Understanding the Risk of Children Living Apart from Parents

Children and youth living with caregivers and those who are living on their own face substantial and unique risks related to their living situation. Many children living apart from parents experience multiple transitions. Family instability can negatively affect children (Vandivere, 2012). The number of transitions a child experiences can impact cognitive and socioemotional wellbeing (Bzostek & Berger, 2017) including mental health, emotional insecurity, and behavioral problems (Lee & McLanahan, 2015).

Multiple moves not only can cause ongoing negative effects that escalate over time (Sun & Li, 2011) but a sudden change in caregivers along with the accompanying change in household makeup and expectations can compound a child’s stress, making life feel out of their control. When children feel that life is chaotic and out of control, their negative emotions may exacerbate transition difficulties and lead to serious developmental consequences (Gleeson & Seryak, 2010). In addition, living apart from both biological parents has long been related to reduced school engagement (Vandivere, et al., 2012) and decreased educational attainment because of a lack of financial and emotional resources (Harkonen, et al., 2017) for both the child and the caregiver.

Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility

The McKinney-Vento Act requires every school district or local education agency (LEA) to appoint a local homeless liaison (hereafter referred to as a local liaison). Local liaisons must ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness, defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, are identified by school personnel and receive the educational services for which they are eligible [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)].

Thus, when a student moves away from a parent or legal guardian and begins living with a caregiver or is on their own, the local liaison or the front office or enrollment staff trained and assigned to the task by the local liaison should determine if the student fits the definition and is eligible for McKinney-Vento services.

Not every student who lives with a caregiver will qualify for McKinney-Vento services;² rather, eligibility determinations should be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the individual living arrangement. While some caregiver and youth living situations are considered permanent housing, others fit the definition of *homeless*, thus qualifying these children and youth for services under the McKinney-Vento Act.

To determine the McKinney-Vento eligibility of students living with caregivers, local liaisons and enrollment staff should consider:

- the nature of the relationship between the child and caregiver, including factors such as the type, quality, and length of the relationship;
- the length of time the child is expected to stay with the caregiver;
- where the child would be if not staying with this caregiver;
- whether the living situation is adequate to meet the child’s physical and psychological needs; and
- what prompted the child’s move.

For instance, if the move was to escape an unsafe or unstable situation, or if the child was abandoned, it is likely that the child would be eligible for McKinney-Vento services. Conversely, if the parent and caregiver mutually agreed in advance that the caregiver would house and care for the child for a specified period, it is unlikely that the child would qualify for McKinney-Vento services. Also, if the parent continues to provide support for the child and remains involved in the child’s care while the student resides in a temporary arrangement designed to meet an education goal, it is unlikely the child would qualify for McKinney-Vento services. This may occur when a parent allows a child to stay with someone else in order to finish the semester or school year in the same school after the rest of the family makes a planned move, such as when a parent takes a new job in a different area.

It is important to distinguish between the terms homeless children and youth and unaccompanied youth. An unaccompanied youth includes “a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian” (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)). Students who meet the homeless criteria and do not live with a parent or guardian are

² For more information about determining McKinney-Vento eligibility and understanding the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless, see the NCHIE brief *Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services* at https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/det_elig.pdf.

considered *unaccompanied homeless youth* and may be eligible for some additional supports and assistance from the local liaison guaranteed in the McKinney-Vento Act.³ Most children and youth on their own or living with caregivers, particularly in unplanned situations, would qualify for services. Some important considerations when determining eligibility for McKinney-Vento services for youth who are on their own or with a caregiver include:

- The McKinney-Vento Act does not specify an age limit for eligibility. Youth who are unaccompanied and homeless who meet a state’s age criteria for public education can qualify for McKinney-Vento educational services.
- It is possible for a parent or guardian to be permanently housed while the child living with a caregiver is homeless, and vice versa.
- A youth may be homeless but not unaccompanied, such as youth who are living with a parent, guardian, or caregiver and lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- A youth may be unaccompanied but not homeless, such as youth who are not in physical custody of a parent, guardian, or caregiver but who have a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- An unaccompanied homeless youth can be eligible for McKinney-Vento services regardless of whether the student was asked to leave the home or chose to leave.

Access to Educational Services for Students who are Unaccompanied and Homeless

The McKinney-Vento Act mandates that state education agencies (SEAs) develop strategies to address problems resulting from delays in enrollment of homeless children and youth experiencing homelessness caused by lack of documentation or guardianship issues (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1) (H)(iii-iv)) and that both SEAs and LEAs review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness with specific consideration given to issues concerning school records and other documentation, such as proof of guardianship (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(iii)). The Act further requires LEAs to immediately enroll all homeless children and youth experiencing homelessness (including youth who are unaccompanied and homeless whether or not they are living with caregivers) in schools, even if they lack records normally required for enrollment (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C)(i)).⁴

³ See the NCHIE brief *Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students Experiencing Homelessness* at <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/youth.pdf>.

⁴ For more information about McKinney-Vento Act requirements to remove enrollment barriers for unaccompanied homeless youth, see 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(H)(iv), 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C)(i), and 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(7).

Despite the above requirements, caregivers sometimes encounter difficulty when attempting to enroll a student for whom they do not have legal guardianship, school records, or other documents typically required for enrollment. For example, some caregivers have been told that they must obtain legal guardianship to enroll the student. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, however, a school may not condition enrollment of a youth who is unaccompanied and homeless on receiving proof of legal guardianship from a caregiver, nor require caregivers to become legal guardians after enrollment. Seeking guardianship has legal ramifications for parents and caregivers that extend far beyond the scope of educational decision-making.

LEAs should have policies and processes in place to enroll and serve youth living on their own or with caregivers, and many utilize caregiver forms to enroll unaccompanied students.⁵ Although the form is not a legal document, it can establish the school’s policies regarding youth living with caregivers and request the caregiver’s contact information. Some SEAs require districts to use caregiver forms provided by the state. In other states, LEAs have created their own caregiver forms.⁶ To facilitate an effective enrollment process, schools should consider using a caregiver form that addresses the following:

- where and with whom the student is staying;
- if the student can self-enroll, or if the caregiver, local liaison, or other school personnel should enroll the student instead;
- who may make school or class placement decisions and schedule changes;
- who has signing authority for such things as school absences and participation in extracurricular activities and field trips; and
- with whom records will be shared and in what manner in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)⁷ and in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

⁵ See Appendix B for “Caregiver Authorization” example.

⁶ For links to sample forms, materials, and policies, visit <https://nche.ed.gov/unaccompanied-youth/>.

⁷ The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 C.F.R. § 99) affords parents the right to access their children’s education records. FERPA defines parent to include a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian. When a student turns 18 or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, he or she is an eligible student and the rights previously afforded the parents transfer to the student. FERPA also permits an elementary and secondary school to provide students, who are not eligible students, rights in addition to those given to their parents, as long as doing so does not supersede the rights of parents under FERPA. For example, schools may use their judgment in determining whether an unaccompanied minor is responsible enough to exercise certain privileges, such as inspecting and reviewing education records and providing consent for disclosure (34 C.F.R. § 99.5(b)). For more information about FERPA, visit <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html> or <https://nche.ed.gov/legislation/ferpa/>.

(IDEA).⁸

Recognizing the special vulnerability of youth on their own, the McKinney-Vento Act includes special provisions for serving students who meet the definitions of both homeless and unaccompanied. For students living with caregivers, it is important that the local liaison determine the extent to which the caregiver wants to be involved in educational decisions for students who can make their own decisions and the extent to which the student wants the caregiver to participate. To ensure that youth who are unaccompanied and homeless receive all the educational rights and services to which they are entitled, local liaisons are charged with specific duties, including:

- assisting youth in school placement and enrollment decisions, giving priority to their views (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(B)(iii));
- providing the youth notice of appeal rights if a dispute arises regarding their enrollment or school placement (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(B)(iii));
- ensuring that they enroll in school immediately while disputes are resolved (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E)(iv)); and
- informing them of the right to receive transportation to and from the school of origin and assisting them in accessing such transportation (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A) (1)(vii)).

Referrals for Additional Services

State and local policies govern when youth living apart from their parents or guardians should be reported to authorities.⁹ Based on their individual circumstances, children living without their parents may need extensive support to access services because the needs of the caregivers and youth may not fit the standard program service delivery model and make it difficult to qualify for services (Radel, et al., 2016). Local liaisons can refer to Chapter 9 of NCHC's *Homeless Liaison Toolkit* at <https://nche.ed.gov/homeless-liaison-toolkit/> for strategies on how to support unaccompanied youth through obtaining vital records that may be required when applying for social services support.

The following resources can help local liaisons and school personnel create a process to refer caregivers and students for housing, food, and health services:

⁸ IDEA also contains confidentiality provisions in 20 U.S.C. § 1417(c), 20 U.S.C. § 1439(a)(2), 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.610-300.626 (Part B) and 34 C.F.R. §§ 303.401-303.417 (Part C), which provide parents the right to inspect and review their child's early intervention or special education records, as appropriate.

⁹ For reporting requirements related to youth living apart from parents, consult state and local laws and policies or download the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty's *Alone without a Home: A State-By-State Review of Laws Affecting Unaccompanied Youth* at <https://homelesslaw.org/alone-without-a-home-2019/>. For more information, contact your state coordinator for homeless education. Contact information is available at <https://nche.ed.gov/data/>.

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps, provides benefits for use at grocery stores, certain retail stores, and some restaurants. No one may be denied benefits because they do not have an address or a photo ID. There are no age restrictions or guardianship requirements, so unaccompanied homeless youth are eligible. To find the local SNAP office, call 1-800-221-5689. For the SNAP State Directory of Resources, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>. For information on SNAP benefits for unaccompanied youth visit https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/Policy_Clarifications_Homeless_Youth_Issues.pdf.
- The 10 Myths and Facts about SNAP for Homeless Persons provides answers to questions on eligibility and program requirements, visit https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/myths-homeless.pdf.
- Children and caregiver families who are U.S. citizens or lawfully present immigrants may qualify for free or low-cost health insurance coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Use the insurance and coverage finder at <https://www.healthcare.gov/> to learn more about your state Medicaid program. For information on CHIP, visit <http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/> and select Learn About Programs in Your State or call 1-877 KIDS NOW (1-877-543-7669). For state specific laws on unaccompanied youth consenting to routine medical care, visit: <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/state-laws-on-minor-consent-for-routine-medical-care/>.
- Local Liaisons who receive the necessary training may affirm that a child or youth experiencing homelessness that is served by the LEA and their family meets eligibility requirements for a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(D)). Visit <https://nche.ed.gov/self-paced-online-training/> for a training video on this topic.
- For affordable rental housing including subsidized housing resources visit <https://www.usa.gov/finding-home>. The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) supports local communities in providing housing and other supports to youth who are unaccompanied and homeless or runaway youth. For information visit: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/runaway-homeless-youth>.

Supporting Students with Disabilities

Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*) is the section of federal law that provides assistance to states, and through them to LEAs, to help in providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible students with disabilities,

as defined by the IDEA.¹⁰ The law specifically includes students with disabilities who fit the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.

FAPE includes, among other components, the provision of special education and related services, at no cost to parents, in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP) (Definition of an Individualized Education Program, 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.320-300.324). IDEA provides several rights and protections to students with disabilities and their parents so that parents have a meaningful opportunity to participate in educational decisions regarding their children. Among these are the right of parents to receive written notice from schools fully explaining their procedural safeguards at least annually and the right of parents to receive prior written notice a reasonable time before the school either proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of their child or the provision of FAPE to their child.

According to the IDEA, a parent includes a biological or adoptive parent; a foster parent (unless a foster parent is prohibited under state law from serving as a parent); a guardian (but not the state if the child is a ward of the state); a person acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare; or a surrogate parent appointed in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 300.519 or section 639(a)(5) of IDEA (34 C.F.R. § 300.613).

If more than one person described in the IDEA definition of parent is qualified to act as the child's parent, a biological or adoptive parent who wishes to act as the child's parent is presumed to be the child's parent under IDEA, unless that individual does not have legal authority to make educational decisions for the child. If the child is not living with the parent, it may be prudent, if the parent agrees, to include the caregiver in any case conference or similar meetings even though the caregiver is not the educational decision-maker. Before implementing this practice, schools should consult with the IDEA coordinator and FERPA point of contact regarding the definition of parent and requirements for the release of information about a student to ensure the practice aligns with the laws.¹¹

An LEA must ensure that the rights of a child with a disability are protected by assigning a surrogate parent in the following circumstances: the parent cannot be identified; the public agency, after reasonable efforts, cannot locate the parent; or the child is a ward of the state under the laws of that state. Youth who

¹⁰ For more information about IDEA, visit <https://nche.ed.gov/legislation/idea/>.

¹¹ FERPA generally requires parental consent for disclosure of personally identifiable information in education records. However, disclosures without parental consent may occur under certain circumstances. The Uninterrupted Scholars Act (USA), Pub. L. 112-278 amended FERPA in 2013 and contains exceptions to FERPA's prior consent requirements for children in foster care. The USA can be downloaded at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/s3472/text>.

are unaccompanied and homeless, as defined in the McKinney-Vento Act, must appoint a surrogate parent if a parent cannot be identified or located. The SEA and LEA must make reasonable efforts to appoint a surrogate parent within 30 days of determining the need (34 C.F.R. § 300.519(h); 34 C.F.R. § 300.201). In the meantime, a temporary surrogate parent can be appointed (34 C.F.R. § 300.519(f)). Although a *surrogate parent* cannot be an employee of the SEA, LEA, or any other agency involved in the education or care of the student, the *temporary surrogate parent* is not subject to such prohibitions. Therefore, a local liaison or another school staff member, as well as a service agency staff member, can serve as a temporary surrogate parent until a surrogate parent is appointed. Once a student reaches the age of majority, educational decision-making rights may transfer to the student (unless the student has been declared to be incompetent under state law), allowing the student to make his or her own educational decisions (34 C.F.R. § 300.520(a)).

Transitioning to Higher Education

Youth who are unaccompanied and homeless, including those staying with caregivers, are considered independent students for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). An independent student can apply for federal financial aid without a parent's signature, and the amount of aid is based solely on the student's income and assets. The following are strategies to assist local liaisons and caregivers with the transition to higher education:

- Work with school counselors in your district to ensure that dropout prevention and graduation plans address the unique needs of youth who are homeless, including those staying with caregivers, and include support for transitioning to postsecondary education. The McKinney-Vento Act requires states to describe how youth experiencing homelessness will receive assistance from counselors to advise them and prepare and improve their readiness for college (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(K)). The non-regulatory guidance further explains: "The local liaison, along with guidance counselors and other LEA staff tasked with college preparation, should ensure that all homeless high school students receive information and individualized counseling regarding college readiness, college selection, the application process, financial aid, and the availability of on campus-supports" (U.S. Department of Education, 2018, p. 51).
- Consult the NCHES brief *School Counselor Supports for College Preparation and Readiness for Students Experiencing Homelessness* for partnership strategies to support college preparation and readiness: <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/counselor-brief.pdf>.
- See NCHES's Scholarships for Higher Education page at <https://nche.ed.gov/scholarships>.

- For information on helping youth access, pay for, and succeed in college, consult The Tips for Helping Homeless Youth Succeed in College: <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/tips-for-helping-homeless-youth-succeed-in-college/>.
- Inform students and caregivers about the types of documentation that financial aid staff may need, and ways they can provide the documentation: <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/financial-aid-for-unaccompanied-homeless-youth/>.
- Host a seminar for caregivers, who may not be familiar with how to support youth transitioning to postsecondary settings or who may be unfamiliar with the changes in financial aid. Include information on helping students prepare for life after high school graduation and facilitate discussions about the expectation of caregivers for students in postsecondary education.
- Help students and caregivers identify a plan for housing and meals during school holidays and breaks before the student leaves for postsecondary pursuits.
- Contact parents or legal guardians, when appropriate, to clarify their relationship with the caregiver and what authority they wish them to exercise. There is no federal requirement to notify parents of school changes.
- It may take multiple attempts to engage with unaccompanied students or caregivers. It is helpful to be patient and continue working on developing the relationship and gaining trust.
- Providing specific training to enrollment staff yearly to ensure they understand the McKinney-Vento law and the unaccompanied homeless youth rights.
- Include unaccompanied homeless youth in enrollment decisions such as school selection and emergency contact information.

Best Practices for Educators and Caregivers

The following are strategies to assist local liaisons and school personnel with meeting the needs of caregivers and students:

- Develop a caregiver form that establishes the responsibilities of caregivers and requests their contact information to replace traditional proof of guardianship. This form should be crafted carefully so it does not create further barriers or delay school enrollment.
- Become familiar with other state and local policies pertaining to unaccompanied youth and guardianship including mature minor doctrines that increase access to health care and behavioral health services.
- Review and revise LEA policies that may serve as a barrier to immediate enrollment for unaccompanied youth. See Appendix A for an “Enrollment Checklist” example.
- Establish a local task force that includes youth and caregivers as well as representatives from the homeless education program, LEA legal department, child welfare agency, youth agencies, Youth Action Board, and juvenile justice to develop consistent and agreed-upon policies and procedures for working with unaccompanied youth.
- Ensure that enrollment staff at all district schools understand the rights of unaccompanied youth and are familiar with the policies and procedures for immediate enrollment of these students.

Conclusion

Students live apart from their parents for diverse reasons and in a variety of situations. The success of each living arrangement depends on many variables, including the catalyst that prompted the disruption of the family’s living situation, the type of situation the student moved into, the presence and capability of a caregiver, and the student’s relationship with those in the living situation.

Students living apart from their parents may need additional services in school and beyond. Because many of these students fit the definition of homelessness in the McKinney-Vento Act, local liaisons and school personnel play a key role in ensuring that these students and their caregivers are referred to appropriate services within the school and in the community. Fortunately, receiving appropriate services can put children and youth on the right track to mental and emotional health and educational success. When students who are either unaccompanied living on their own or with a caregiver receive the necessary supports, they are far more likely to be successful both inside and outside the classroom.

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Appendix A*

SCHOOL DISTRICT

STUDENT RESIDENCY QUESTIONNAIRE



The McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), defines the rights of students who live in housing situations that are not fixed, regular or adequate. Your responses to these questions will help staff determine what residency documents are necessary for enrollment of your child(ren) or yourself if you are an unaccompanied youth who does not live with a parent or legal guardian appointed through the court system. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. **Student name:** _____ **Birth Date:** _____

Person completing form: _____ Relationship to child: _____

2. **In what type of setting is the student living now?**

Check one box below –

SECTION A	SECTION B
<p><input type="checkbox"/> In an emergency or transitional shelter, including hotels used as shelter</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, financial hardship, safety issues, or similar reason (sometimes called: “doubled up” or “couch surfing”)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In a motel, hotel, campsites, a place with no no heat or water, due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In a car, park, public spaces, abandoned building, storage unit, garage, bus or train stations, or similar settings</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other places not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodations for human beings</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> You are a student separated from your parent or legal guardian due to conflict, domestic violence, safety reasons, abandonment, incarceration of parent, poverty, or runaway</p> <p>CONTINUE to Question 3 if you checked any box in SECTION A</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> None of the choices in Section A apply.</p> <p>If you checked this section, you do not need to complete the remainder of this form. Submit the form to school personnel now.</p>  

3. Contact number for person completing the form: _____

Alternate contact information: _____

Address where student is now living: _____

4. The student lives with: Check all that apply

- Parent(s) or court appointed legal guardian
- Relative, friend(s), or other adult(s)
- Alone
- Other: _____

5. School student attended last : _____

Address of school: _____

Telephone number of school: _____

Contact person at school (if known): _____

6. Does the student have an IEP, GIEP, or a Chapter 15/504 agreement?

- NO
- YES. Please explain: _____

The staff person who is helping you register will contact the McKinney-Vento Liaison to review the information provided. If your eligibility is verified, no additional information will be needed to complete enrollment. The McKinney-Vento Liaison will contact you by the end of the next school day (or sooner) to share the determination regarding status, to gather additional information and to discuss the plans for placement and transportation (if needed).

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian:

_____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Student if Unaccompanied Youth (14 years of age or older):

_____ **Date:** _____

Signature of "hosting" person if Unaccompanied Youth:

_____ **Date:** _____

Signature of District McKinney-Vento Liaison:

_____ **Date:** _____



[*This example was provided by the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV in Western Pennsylvania and is used regionally, not at the state level.](#)

Appendix B



Caregiver Authorization

This form is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (P. L. 107-110) requirement that homeless children have access to education and other services for which they are eligible. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states specifically that barriers to enrollment must be removed. In some cases, a child or youth who is homeless may not be able to reside with his/her parent or guardian; however, this fact does not nullify the child's/youth's right to receive a free, appropriate public education.

Instructions:

Complete this form for a child/youth presenting himself/herself for enrollment while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

- To authorize the enrollment in school of a minor, complete items 1 through 4 and sign the form.
- To authorize the enrollment and school-related medical care of a minor, complete all items and sign the form.

I am 18 years of age or older and have agreed to fulfill the role of caregiver for the minor named below.

1. Name of Minor: _____
2. Minor's Date of Birth: _____
3. My name (adult giving authorization): _____
4. My Home Address: _____
5. Check one or both (for example, if one parent was advised and the other could not be located):

_____ I have advised the parent(s) or other person(s) having legal custody of the minor as to my intent to authorize medical care and have received no objection.

_____ I am unable to contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) at this time to notify them of my intended authorization.

6. My Date of Birth: _____
7. My State Driver's License or Identification Card Number: _____

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

This brief was developed by:

National Center for Homeless Education
800-308-2145 | homeless@serve.org
<https://nche.ed.gov>

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For more information on issues related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness, contact the NCHE helpline at 800-308-2145 or homeless@serve.org.

Local Contact Information:

