

## **Did you know that children who change schools often are less likely to do well in school?**

- ❖ Over a period of six years, students who have moved more than three times can fall a full academic year behind students who do not move around.
- ❖ Nationally, while 86% of high school students graduate, the graduation rate is only 60% for students who changed high schools at least twice.

## **The federal McKinney-Vento Act protects children who don't have a permanent place to live, such as:**

- ❖ Children living with friends or relatives due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason
- ❖ Children living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or campgrounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- ❖ Children living in shelters
- ❖ Children living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- ❖ Children abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement
- ❖ Children of migrant workers

## **The McKinney-Vento Act allows your children to:**

- ❖ Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there;
- ❖ Choose the school that best fits your child's needs. Your choices are:
  - the school closest to your child's temporary home,
  - the school in which your child was last enrolled, or
  - the school your child last attended when you had a permanent place to live;
- ❖ Enroll in school without proof of residency, immunizations, school records, or other documents;
- ❖ Get free transportation to your school of choice; but if you decide that the school closest to your child's temporary home is best, transportation must be provided **ONLY** if it is available to other children attending that school.
- ❖ Participate in and receive free transportation to and from special education services and after-school programs if provided to other students;
- ❖ Be automatically and immediately enrolled in free school meal programs;
- ❖ Get additional school services they need; and
- ❖ Be free from harassment and isolation.

## **Don't forget the little ones!**

- ❖ Pre-school age children of families without permanent living situations also have rights under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, Part C, and are automatically eligible for Head Start.

## **There are people you can call to help keep your child in her school and/or to enforce your other rights under the McKinney-Vento Act:**

### **Local Homeless Education Coordinators**

#### **Harford County:**

**Stephen Richards**  
**Supervisor of Psychological & Pupil Personnel Services**  
**410-588-5282**

For other counties or additional help contact:

**State Homeless Education Coordinator**  
William Cohee (410) 767-0945

**National Homeless Children's Hotline:**  
**1-800-308-2145**

**Or, contact the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty!**

**(202) 638-2535**

## What you can do to protect your child's rights:

- ❖ If you've lost your place to live and have no permanent residence, immediately contact your child's school.
- ❖ Meet with the principal to discuss whether it would be best for your child to stay at her school or to transfer to the school serving your child's temporary address. You should also request free transportation to your school of choice.
- ❖ If the principal decides to send your child to another school against your wishes, ask that you be provided with a written explanation.
- ❖ File a letter with the principal stating your complaints if your child is denied any of these rights.
- ❖ Call the Homeless Education Coordinator for your school district or the State Homeless Education Coordinator at the phone numbers indicated if you are still experiencing a problem.
- ❖ Seek legal assistance from the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty.

**Your child has the right to be immediately admitted to the school in which you want your child enrolled until a final decision on your appeal is made.**

**Remember that your child cannot be forced to change schools!**

**Have questions?  
Need help?**

**NATIONAL LAW CENTER  
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY**

1411 K St, NW, Suite 1400  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 638-2535

[WWW.NLCHP.ORG](http://WWW.NLCHP.ORG)

*This brochure contains general information about your rights.*

*If you have specific questions, please contact our office to consult with a legal advocate.*

**Your landlord or bank can force your family to move...**



**But can't force your children to switch schools!!!**

***If you have to move out of your home and have no permanent place to live, federal law allows you to keep your child in the same school at no added cost to you.***