

Homelessness and Early Childhood Screening (ECS)

Frequently Asked Questions

Below information is from a Homelessness and Early Childhood Screening Open Office Hour January 24, 2023.

What is the correct form to use when collecting nighttime residence information?

Roberto Reyes, MDE McKinney Vento Coordinator notes the TransACT website has night time residence forms, or a student residency questionnaire. Another form that is the Public Notice: Education Rights of Children and Youth that are Homeless. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) partners with TransACT Parent Notices to provide free access to a library of parent notices translated into multiple languages to all educators in Minnesota. Email support@transact.com and request an account for access to Minnesota's parent notices.

If a child is in a preschool program such as school readiness, but they are not receiving school readiness funds, can their fees be paid if they are experiencing homelessness?

The district McKinney Vento Liaison would use a needs assessment to determine the best plan for the child and family. In general children who are homeless would be eligible for the same level of supports as others who are receiving the school readiness funding.

Do the same laws and resources apply for students whose fees are not covered by voluntary prekindergarten or school readiness plus?

Yes, the district McKinney Vento Liaison would use a needs assessment to determine the best plan for the child and family. In general children who are homeless would be eligible for the same level of supports as others who are receiving the voluntary prekindergarten and school readiness plus funding.

Would a child be eligible for transportation to a prekindergarten program if they are homeless?

The district McKinney Vento Liaison would use a needs assessment with the family for transportation.

Is there any connection to child protection through this process of identification as experiencing homelessness?

No, children experiencing homelessness should not be referred to child protection. The McKinney Vento Liaison will offer a needs assessment with the family to determine how to best meet their child's needs.

Where do we order the McKinney Vento or homelessness posters?

Ask your McKinney Vento Liaison about ordering homelessness posters for your area.

How is the McKinney Vento funding distributed throughout the state? For example, is one pot of funds all that the schools can access or is there a distribution plan where some parts of the state or school districts reach their allowed limit?

Minnesota has ten Continuum of Care (CoC) Coordinators familiar with housing resources, each assigned to a region. A map showing the counties included within each region may be downloaded from [Minnesota Housing](#). The [Housing Benefits 101](#) is an online resource that provides you with information on the types of housing and resources available in your area and possible services that can help you stay in your home.

What were some of the ideas the group came up with during the discussion for ways to improve early identification of homelessness and referrals to early childhood screening?

“In rural Minnesota we don’t have shelters, and I think we miss many homeless students as they are hopping and never on our radar to screen, so this is an area we could improve”. The term “doubled up” is the most common way families may describe their homelessness status so being sensitive to their situation goes a long way.

“In rural Minnesota also, we have many people that will not admit to being homeless as there is too much stigma around that word, so this is an area we can improve”. Sharing and emphasizing the benefits to families of completing the nighttime residence form may be one solution. For example, depending on their needs assessment, assistance with finding housing, assistance with enrolling in prekindergarten or child care programs, free transportation, assistance with meals and other benefits.

“Could Early Learning Administrators do more to work with school districts to help extend or access the funds between the two funding streams?”

How does information get shared between McKinney Vento staff and Early Childhood Screening staff?

One district reported there have been many staff changes. Districts could find ways to keep this important information sharing alive by creating a roster of area contacts, procedures and/or routine or quarterly meetings with staff.

Is there a time limit that a family experiencing homelessness can receive services?

No, a family may experience homelessness for many years. A family’s needs may be reassessed annually by McKinney Vento staff if not more often.