

ACCESS TO EARLY LEARNING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, BIRTH TO FIVE

Preschool programs funded or administered by a local educational agency (LEA)

- Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children experiencing homelessness can remain in the preschool they attended when permanently housed, or the preschool in which they were last enrolled, if that is in their best interest. This includes the right to receive transportation to preschool (even if preschool transportation is not typically provided), and continues for as long as the child is homeless, and until the end of the academic year in which the child moves into permanent housing.
- LEAs must enroll children experiencing homelessness immediately, even if they do not have typically required documents, or have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness. Therefore, if a preschool program has space, children experiencing homelessness must be enrolled immediately, even if they cannot produce proof of age or immunizations, or have missed an application or enrollment deadline.
- In order to ensure that preschool programs can accommodate children experiencing homelessness who come into the area after the enrollment period, LEAs should allocate and hold open slots for such children, or prioritize them on wait lists. LEA liaisons should help families experiencing homelessness enroll in preschool programs as early as possible, as these programs often begin enrollment well before the start of the school year.

Head Start and Early Head Start

- Children experiencing homelessness are categorically eligible for Head Start (preschool) and Early Head Start (infants and toddlers). Programs must locate and recruit homeless children and prioritize them for enrollment, and may reserve up to 3% of their capacity for homeless children. Homeless children can start attending without proof of age or immunizations.

Find [more information](#), your [state contact](#), and [local programs](#).

Child Care Subsidies

- States must prioritize children experiencing homelessness for child care services. Children can begin attending while the family works to assemble immunization, health and safety, and eligibility documents. Child care subsidy agencies must do specific outreach to identify and enroll homeless families and improve their access to child care.

Find [more information](#) and your [state contact](#).

Early Childhood Home Visiting

- Home visiting programs give pregnant women and families, particularly those considered at-risk, access to resources and parenting supports to raise children who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and ready for school.

Find information about [home visiting in your state](#).

Support for Young Children with Developmental Delays or Disabilities

- Early Intervention programs are available for children birth to three with disabilities and their families. Find [more information](#) and your [state contact](#). For children three and older, LEAs must identify and evaluate children with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Find [more information](#) and your [state contact](#).