



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION**

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Dear Early Start Program Managers and Family Regional Center Directors:

THE EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM

The California Department of Education (CDE) Homeless Education Program is reaching out to you and your centers to provide information and resources as it relates to children and youth experiencing homelessness in California.

It is estimated that over 1.6 million children experience homelessness each year, and over 40 percent of children living in shelters are under the age of five. Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in 2015 by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.; hereafter the McKinney-Vento Act), guarantees educational rights and supports for all children and youth experiencing homelessness. Because of their often-uncertain living situations of these children and youth, school and other programs, like yours, may be their only opportunity to benefit from a stable environment, consistent adult attention, positive peer relations, academic support, and access to regular meals.

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youth as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This definition also includes:

- Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Children and youth who may be living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, shelters
- Children and youth 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
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings, or
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are children who are living in similar circumstances listed above.

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program under the McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law designed to ensure that children experiencing homelessness receive the educational services they need, as well as including early intervention and special education. Every local educational agency (LEA), which include county offices of education (COEs), school districts, and charter schools, is required to have a homeless liaison, who must identify children experiencing homelessness and connect them with early childhood programs. In addition, every state agency, the California Department of Education (CDE), has a State Coordinator for homeless education. And lucky for us, we have four staff members that share the responsibility of the State Coordinator. We are required to oversee the implementation of the law at the LEA level, provide technical assistance, and coordinate with other state agencies to facilitate collaboration at the local level.

It is important for you to have resources regarding serving and supporting homeless children and youth. You can access a list of all 58 COE homeless liaisons on the CDE Homeless Education website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/documents/ehcycoeliaison.xlsx>. We

July 20, 2022

Page 2

encourage you to reach out to your county homeless liaison to start collaborating on the homeless issues, implementation, and concerns. The COE homeless liaison will have a listing of the homeless liaisons from each school district within the county. There are a lot of other resources that you can access such as:

- CDE Homeless Education website at [Homeless Education - Specialized Programs \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)
- CDE Resources for Homeless Children and Youth website at [Resources for Homeless Children and Youth - Homeless Education \(CA Dept of Education\)](#)
- Homeless Education Listserv at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/homelesslistserv.asp>

Lastly, it is important to the identification, enrollment, and services of homeless children, to have educational rights and protections posted at each of your sites. Please displayed them at your centers to further assist homeless families with accessing education. You can download the poster at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/homelesspostereng.pdf>, as well as all of the available translations at <https://inet2.cde.ca.gov/cmd/translatedparentaldoc.aspx?docid=9959-9965>.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact the Homeless Education Program, Integrated Student Support and Programs Office, at HomelessEd@cde.ca.gov.

In partnership,

The Homeless Education Team