DeKalb County Regional Office of Education

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Who Are Homeless Children and Youth?

The McKinney-Vento Act defines a homeless student as:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:
  - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
  - Living in emergency or transitional shelters
  - Abandoned in hospitals

- Children and Youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.

- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public places, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus and train stations, or similar settings.

- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in the circumstances described above.

- Unaccompanied Youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This would include runaways living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing: children and youth denied housing by their families, and school-age unwed mothers living in homes for unwed mothers because they have no other housing available.

Determination of whether a student is homeless is the responsibility of the school district homeless liaison (see the list on this website). It is to consider the relative permanence of the living arrangements. Decisions on homelessness should be made on a case-by-case basis. Effective December 2016, students awaiting placement with or placed through DCFS for less than one year are no longer covered under the McKinney-Vento Act unless they qualify under one of the areas described above. They should contact the school district liaison for information as students in DCFS care qualify for services under every Student Succeeds Act.