



School Nurses and Health Personnel

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

You play a critical role in identifying students experiencing homelessness and giving them the support they need to succeed in school.

Nurses and health personnel play a vital role in addressing health needs and improving opportunities to succeed in school for students experiencing homelessness. From routine administration of medications to the unexpected emergency, school nurses are often the only health care providers who see these children regularly. Students experiencing homelessness may be at increased risk for illnesses, lack immunization records, and be long overdue for routine preventative physicals. School nurses can help identify those experiencing homelessness and provide them with the support they need.



Identify and Enroll Students Experiencing Homelessness

- Pay attention to the common health needs of students experiencing homelessness. These students are at an increased risk for:
 - Ear infections
 - Obesity
 - Vision difficulties
 - Dental cavities and oral health complications
 - Bronchitis
 - Lice
 - Gastrointestinal and dermatologic diseases
 - Asthma
 - Hunger and malnutrition

See the [McKinney-Vento Quick Guide](#) tip sheet for other common signs of homelessness.

- Students experiencing homelessness must be enrolled immediately. Obtain medical and immunization records **AFTER** the student is enrolled.
- Work with your division's local McKinney-Vento liaison and school staff to:
 - Contact the previous school to obtain health records and
 - Help families to schedule needed physicals and immunizations.
- Remind registrars and administrators that students experiencing homelessness must be enrolled in school immediately, even if these records are unavailable.



Create a Safe and Supportive Environment

- Allow students to rest in the clinic if they need a quiet or safe place to go when they do not feel well.
- Students experiencing homelessness may not always have a place to go during the school day if they are not well enough for school.
- Work with the appropriate school staff to offer healthy snacks to students, when needed.
- If available, provide hygiene items to students.





Connect Students With Your McKinney-Vento Liaison and Other Resources

- 🍌 Connect with your division's McKinney-Vento liaison who can assist by:
 - 🍌 Helping students stay in the same school, if it is in their best interest, or immediately enroll in the local school even without required documents.
 - 🍌 Assisting families with obtaining required documents and medical records;
 - 🍌 Removing barriers to learning such as lack of supplies or fees, access to tutoring, or transportation;
 - 🍌 Connecting students to free school meals;
 - 🍌 Making sure students have every opportunity to enroll in after school activities and in-school programs; and
 - 🍌 Helping families access community resources.
- 🍌 Make referrals and connections with the health care community to give students access to adequate healthcare.
- 🍌 Compile up-to-date and reliable list of resources related to insurance and funds for medical care.



Healthcare Resources for Students and Families

Affordable Care Act This website provides general information on coverage, eligibility, and financing under the Affordable Care Act.	https://obamacare-enroll.org/
Cover Virginia This web site provides information on Virginia's Medicaid, FAMIS, and Plan First programs. The program offers health benefits for eligible individuals, families, and children at low or no cost.	www.coverva.org/ 1-855-242-8282 1-888-221-1500
Bridge2Resources VA Search by zip code to connect to medical, financial, basic needs, and other supports.	https://bridge2resourcesva.org/
Department of Medical Assistances Services (DMAS) DMAS is the agency that administers Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in Virginia.	http://www.dmas.virginia.gov 1-804-786-6145
Healthy Families America This program is designed to help expectant and new parents get their children off to a healthy start. The goals are to promote positive parenting, enhance child health and development, and prevent child abuse and neglect.	http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org 1-312-663-3520
Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics Clinics use a volunteer/ staff model to provide a range of medical, dental, pharmacy, vision, and/ or behavioral health services to economically disadvantaged individuals.	http://www.vafreeclinics.org 1-804-340-3434
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services DBHDS operates 15 facilities across the state to provide services to Virginia residents who have mental illness, intellectual disability, or need substance abuse services.	https://dbhds.virginia.gov/ 1-800-451-5544



PROJECT
HOPE
VIRGINIA

Find Your Local
McKinney-Vento
Liaison



For More Information

Learn more about how to support children and youth experiencing homelessness with these resources:

- 🍌 [Project HOPE-Virginia](#)
- 🍌 [It's Not Just About Bandages Anymore!](#)
- 🍌 [Enrollment & Immunizations](#)