

**Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Approved High Need Characteristics beginning FY14**

Characteristic	Definition
Substance Abuse	Parent has used or is currently using substances despite negative social, interpersonal, legal, medical or other consequences.
Child with Disabilities or Chronic Health Condition	Child being served has a physical, cognitive, emotional or health-related condition or impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities or qualifies the child for services under IDEA Part C.
Court-Appointed Legal Guardians and/or Foster Care	The child has court-appointed legal guardians or is in foster care.
Death in the Immediate Family	The death of the child, parent or sibling.
Parent with Mental Illness	Parent has been diagnosed with a thought, mood, or behavior disorder (or some combination) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.
Incarcerated Parent(s)	Parent(s) is incarcerated in federal or state prison or local jail or was released from incarceration within the past year.
Low Educational Attainment	Parent did not complete high school or GED and is not currently enrolled.
Low Income	Families eligible for Free and Reduced Lunches, Public Housing, Child Care Subsidy, WIC, Food Stamps, TANF, Head Start/Early Head Start, and/or Medicaid.
Military Family	Parent/guardian is currently deployed or is within 2 years of returning from a deployment as an active duty member of the armed forces. Deployment is defined as any current or past event or activity that relates to duty in the armed forces that involves an operation, location, command or duty that is different from his/her normal duty assignment.
Parent with Disabilities or Chronic Health Condition	Parent has a physical, cognitive, or other health-related condition or impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
Child Abuse or Neglect	Suspected or substantiated abuse/neglect of child or sibling(s).
Single Parent Household*	Only one parent/primary care provider resides in the home.
Speakers of Other Languages/English Language Learners*	A language other than English is the primary language spoken in the home.
Recent Immigrant or Refugee Family	One or both parents are foreign-born and entered the country within the past 5 years.
Teen Parent	Parent(s) under the age of 20 years during the program year.
Homeless or Unstable Housing	Lives in emergency/transitional housing or in a place not intended for regular housing and/or moved more than twice in the past year due to problems with housing.
Very Low Birth Weight	Birth weight was under 1500 grams or 3.3 lbs.
Domestic Violence	Parent is involved in intimate partner violence.

**High Needs characteristics have been revised to be more consistent with Parents as Teachers national office. DESE also approves Single Parent Household and Speakers of Other Languages/English Language Learners as approved high needs characteristics.*