

# **The Educational Rights and Needs of Homeless Children**



**SICC MEETING  
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## *INTRODUCTIONS*

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# CHILDREN IN POVERTY



“Overall...receive lower grades, receive lower scores on standardized tests, are less likely to finish high school, and are less likely to attend or graduate from college...”

Source: Seccombe 2001, p. 323

# What does homelessness in Missouri look like?



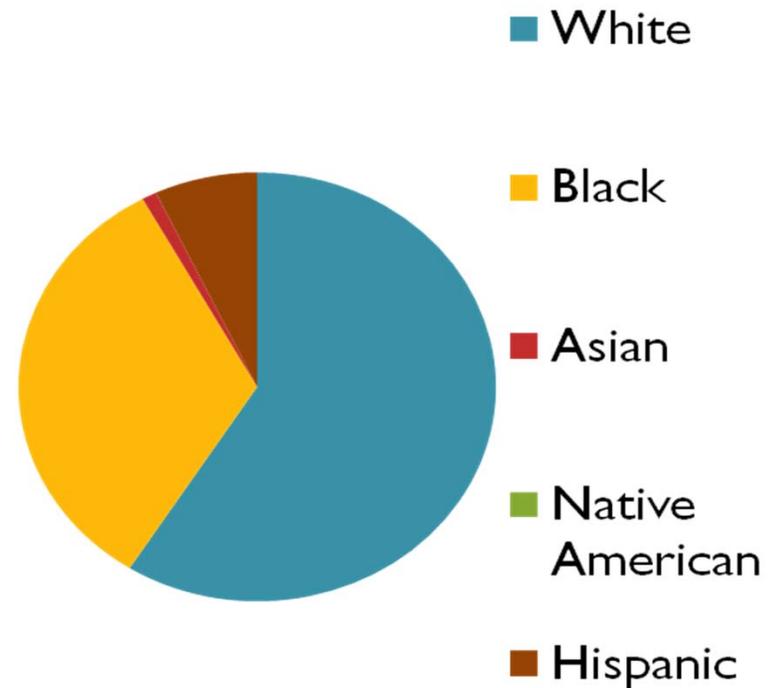
Missouri has 256,000 children living in poverty.\*

## Ages of Homeless Children

Under 6 years.....	12,801
Grades K-8.....	3,606
Grades 9-12.....	14,071

**Total Homeless Children...30,478**

## Race/Ethnicity



\*As reported by The National Center on Family Homelessness 2009

# THE EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS OF HOMELESS CHILDREN



# MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT



The McKinney-Vento Act ensures homeless children certain rights. It addresses the educational and related needs of some of the most vulnerable members of our society—homeless children and youth.

The Act is a conditional funding act. This means that the federal government gives grants to states and, in return, the grantee states are bound by the terms of the act.

## DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

For the purposes of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act, homelessness is described as...

***“Children and unaccompanied youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”***

If the living arrangement does not meet **all three criteria**, it is considered a homeless situation.



**WHAT  
DOES  
FIXED,  
REGULAR,  
AND  
ADEQUATE  
MEAN?**

**Fixed**

A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.

**Regular**

A regular residence is one which is used on a predictable or routine basis.

**Adequate**

An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

# MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT



- McKinney-Vento requires schools to immediately enroll students experiencing homelessness even when they lack:
  - Proof of residency
  - Guardianship
  - Birth certificates, school records, or other documents
  - Medical records, including immunization records
    - ✦ MOFAQ
      - If unable to obtain prior immunization records within 30 days, begin the immunization series and demonstrate satisfactory progress has been accomplished within 90 days.
  - Required dress code items, including uniforms

# MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT



- Determining eligibility is a case-by-case determination made by examining the living arrangement of each individual student.
- Some instances will be clear-cut; others will require further inquiry and then a judgment call.
- Determinations of eligibility cannot delay immediate enrollment and the prompt provision of services for MV students.

"You develop coping mechanisms – a fight or flight response - when you are homeless that are probably not appropriate in mainstream culture. You get increasingly defensive and desperate. ...We have to understand that a goal of simply creating more affordable housing units is not enough; we need ... plenty of compassion and understanding on the part of the community," ...

***Quote from Jessica Welch, former homeless student***

# MAIN POINTS OF MCKINNEY-VENTO



- What is in the child's best interest
- School stability
- School access
- Support for academic success

***First and foremost decisions  
must be child-centered***

# General Findings



- Mental Health: 2009 20% to 25% of homeless families in the US suffers form some form of mental illness.
- Physical Health: More than 1 in 7 homeless children have moderate to severe health conditions.
- Dental: 1 in 3 poor children have no dental care, low income children have 12 times as many restricted activity days due to dental disease.
- Education: Less than 25% of homeless children graduate from high school

Source: National Coalition for the Homeless

## Reflection:



The moral test of Government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children, those who are in the twilight of life, the aged, and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.

--Hubert Humphrey

**Questions?**

