

SCHOOL STAFF TRAINING

Chicago Public Schools

Students in Temporary Living Situations



STUDENTS IN TEMPORARY LIVING SITUATIONS

*Chicago Public Schools (CPS) will provide an education environment that **treats all students with dignity and respect.** Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) will have **equal access to the same free and appropriate educational opportunities as students who are not homeless.***



FEDERAL AND LOCAL HOMELESS EDUCATION POLICIES

- The McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act was reauthorized as part of NCLB
 - Student homelessness is defined by the US Department of Education; every district has a McKinney Vento program that uses this definition
 - Goal is to identify and remove barriers to education for homeless students; including transportation, enrollment, and others
- A local consent decree, *Salazar v. Edwards* has applied to CPS STLS for nearly 15 years.
 - This decree states that each CPS school must have a trained STLS liaison.



DEFINING STUDENT HOMELESSNESS

- Living in shelter, motel, or hotel
- Doubled up at someone else's home
- Sleeping in cars, parks, buses, trains, or abandoned buildings
- Awaiting foster care placement
- Refugees and migrant workers in any of the above situations
- Unaccompanied youth, of any age, in any of the above situations; includes children staying with grandparents or others who are not the legal guardian



CHILD HOMELESSNESS IN CHICAGO AND THE UNITED STATES

- More than 80% of STLS students identify as “doubled up”
- STLS enrollment tripled in the last ten years; much of that growth came during and after the 2008 economic recession
- Nationally, 40% of children living in shelters are under the age of 5
- Children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population
- More than 85% of homeless families are headed by single mothers

CHALLENGES FACED BY STLS STUDENTS, WHEREVER THEY RESIDE

- Trauma related to loss of home, family illness, loss of employment, parental death, parental incarceration, parent's loss of job
- Loss of routines and personal possessions
- Increased rate of chronic and acute illness
- Increased frequency of developmental delay
- Isolation, fear, and stigma
- Elevated risk for physical & sexual assault
- Family rejection due to sexuality/gender identity



MCKINNEY VENTO SERVICES

- Transportation provided to eligible students
- Immediate Enrollment without regard to documentation
- Maintain enrollment in school of origin upon becoming homeless
- Automatic waiver of school-related fees (uniforms, school supplies, lab equipment, gym uniforms, customary field trips, etc.)
- Automatic eligibility for free school meals



SUPPORTING STLS FAMILIES EVERY DAY

- Encourage and facilitate enrollment in preschool
- Refer to free or low-cost medical care and food stamps through CFBU
- Refer to social service providers (social workers, counselors)
- Promote confidentiality and privacy
- Attend professional development on topics related to STLS students such as: domestic violence, LGBTQ youth, family homelessness



STLS STUDENTS & TRAUMA

- Many STLS students have witnessed violence at home or in the community
- Experience of **homelessness** is traumatic
- Students may experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, and/or depression
- STLS students may be at risk for dating violence or may have fled domestic abuse



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WITH STLS STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

- Keep in communication with the STLS liaison about attendance or behavior issues when appropriate
- If student is out of uniform due to living situation, refer to liaison instead of punishment
- Avoid taking possessions away from STLS students
- Homeless families have experienced trauma and this may be represented in their interactions with you; listen, be patient, and practice the Golden Rule
- Contact information changes frequently for highly mobile families; get many secondary contacts and update the list frequently



IMPORTANT REMINDERS ABOUT STLS STUDENTS & SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Immediate enrollment applies to students with special education needs
- Support expedited evaluations
 - High mobility can disrupt process, so it's best to get started as soon as possible
- If school cannot implement IEP, enroll student immediately and contact your SSA

