

Local Educational Agencies' Guidance for Dissemination Educational Rights and Protections of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Purpose for Dissemination of Educational Rights and Protections

Local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to ensure that public notice of the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness is disseminated at locations frequented by parents and guardians of such children and youth, and unaccompanied youth, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth (42 United States Code Section 11432[g][6][A][vi]; California *Education Code* Section 48852.5). The purpose of this guidance to assist LEAs with this requirement.

It is critical that agencies and organizations that serve children and youth are aware of the educational rights and protections of children and youth experiencing homelessness. In addition, it is a great way to generate public awareness among community agencies. The California Department of Education (CDE) requests your assistance in disseminating this information among the agencies, organizations, and other entities with which you associate.

Where Can I Find Educational Rights?

The CDE has posters, translated into various languages, outlining educational rights and protections of children and youth experiencing homelessness available to download from the CDE's Resources for Homeless Children and Youth website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/index.asp>. In addition, the CDE's Integrated Student Support and Programs Office will send out free English and/or Spanish posters upon request. Simply contact the office of the Homeless Education Program within the Integrated Student Support and Programs Office by phone at 866-856-8214 or by email at HomelessEd@cde.ca.gov.

Definition of Homelessness:

Children and youth experiencing homelessness are individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;

- Children and youths living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described above.

Best Practices for Maximizing Outreach

Please consider the following best practices and recommendations, as it relates to where to display posters. Display educational rights:

- In LEAs and in schools where children and parents can easily locate and read them, such as: building entrances, common bulletin boards, counselor's/nurse's office, hallways, the lunch line, locker rooms, and restrooms;
- In locations that do not draw undue attention to students who may be reading them, and consider the student's age and height;
- In community locations such as churches, clothing and food banks, libraries, laundry mats, convenience and grocery stores, fast food restaurants, and thrift stores;
- In locations that provide services to others such as post offices, free clinics, eviction prevention providers, legal services providers, and housing court;
- In shelters, weekly- or monthly-rate hotels and motels, trailer parks, and camping grounds.

Strategies to Consider

When displaying educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness in schools, please consider the student's privacy and confidentiality. This information is for identification purposes as well as for enrollment and appropriate services.

When placing posters in bathrooms, hang the poster in the stall so students can read the information without being teased or judged. School and district staff should routinely check to see that posters have not been removed and replace them as needed. Besides displaying educational rights in physical locations, LEAs might consider including

educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness in parent/student handbooks, registration packets, and summer school meal programs.

Lastly, it is essential to include contact information for the LEA homeless liaison and the State Coordinator on the educational rights, whether it a poster, brochure, or flyer. If the LEA has site liaisons, their contact information should also be provided. Children and youth experiencing homelessness and their families need to be aware of and understand their educational rights, as well as an LEA contact to reach out to if they need resources, a referral, someone to talk to, or to address an issue with enrollment.

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact the CDE Homeless Education Program within the Integrated Student Support and Programs Office by phone at 866-856-8214 or by email at HomelessEd@cde.ca.gov.