



# Children's Commission.

## Attorney Resource Letter:

### For Attorneys Handling Child Protective Services Cases

March 3, 2017

## Homeless Youth Handbook

In 2014, 113,063 students were identified as homeless by Texas public schools. Homelessness creates serious adverse conditions for children and youth, including medical and mental health, lack of school stability, physical safety, food insecurity, risk of exploitation and trafficking, and substance abuse. Older youth in foster care are particularly vulnerable to homelessness because they may run away. Additionally, youth are often homeless within a very short time after aging out of foster care. Research has shown that about a third of foster care alumni experience at least one night of homelessness by age 26.

Texas Appleseed, in partnership with Weatherford International and Baker & McKenzie LLP, recently released the [Homeless Youth Handbook](#). This handbook provides homeless youth with Texas-specific information about their rights, responsibilities, and available resources related to every major aspect of their lives, including education, employment, health, housing, parenting, and other major topics. The handbook is available online and in print. If youth on your caseload are at risk of running away or aging out of foster care without reliable housing, this handbook may contain valuable resources and information.

Under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, “homeless children and youths” is defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes youth who “couch surf” or live in a car or an emergency shelter. With the recent passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), children “awaiting foster care placement” are no longer considered homeless under McKinney-Vento.

For additional information about the impact of homelessness on education, please visit the [Texas Homeless Education Office](#).



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