

Tips

- ▶ When moving to a new school, it is helpful to bring a letter from the shelter on its letterhead, saying that your child is staying there. If you are staying with relatives or in a motel, bring along a letter from a relative or social worker.
- ▶ However, **no school can deny your child admission because you do not have these letters.**
- ▶ Contact your homeless liaison if you feel that you are not receiving the assistance you need.

Your Responsibilities as a Parent

- During the school year, your child should be going to school every day.
- Immediately ask the school for transportation help if you need it.
- Ask for special tutoring or counseling to help make up for lost time.
- Meet with your child's teacher regularly.
- Insist on what you think is the **best education** for your child.



Ohio State Legal Services

555 Buttlers Avenue
Columbus, OH 43215
614-221-7201
800-589-5888
www.oslsa.org



Equal Justice Foundation

88 E. Broad St., Suite 1590
Columbus, OH 43215
614-221-9800
800-898-0545



Youth Empowerment Program

Coalition on Housing &
Homelessness in Ohio
175 S. 3rd Street, Suite 250
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-280-1984

Sending Your Child to School



A Guide to the Educational Rights of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Ohio

Who is “Homeless”?

For the purposes of education, a “homeless student” is someone who **doesn’t have a “fixed, regular, or adequate place to live,”** including children and youth who are in any of the following living situations:

- ▶ sharing housing of relatives or friends due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- ▶ living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of other adequate options; and
- ▶ living in emergency or transitional shelters, on the street, in a car, or similar substandard arrangements.

Choosing a School

Every time a child changes schools, she can fall as much as 6 months behind!

As a parent, you have a choice:

- ▶ Keep your child in the school she was attending when you lost housing (“school of origin”); OR
- ▶ Enroll your child in the school nearest the shelter or temporary location.

Note: You have this right while you are homeless, or until the end of the school year after you get permanent housing.

School Enrollment

By law, Ohio schools must allow a homeless child or youth to enroll in school immediately.

What about School Records?

- ▶ If you are sending your child to a new school, the school must enroll them, even if you cannot produce previous school records, including immunizations, transcripts, or transfer forms.
- ▶ It is the duty of the school to assist you in getting the records from the last school your child attended.

What about Transportation?



- ▶ If you choose to keep your child in the “**school of origin**,” the school is required to inform you of the availability of transportation services and provide them to you.
- ▶ If you choose to enroll your child in a school in the district where you **currently live**, then “comparable services” must be provided to you.

Under the law, public schools are required to **remove barriers** to your child’s enrollment, retention, and **SUCCESS.**

In Ohio...



- ▶ Each school district has a “**homeless liaison**,” who is responsible for handling issues related to students living in transition.
- ▶ If you don’t know who your district’s liaison is, you can:
 - ▶ Visit the Ohio Department of Education’s website at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?page=2&TopicRelationID=1037>
 - ▶ Contact the State Coordinator at (614) 466-4161.

Disputes

If a dispute arises between you and a district, your child must be immediately enrolled in the school of choice while the dispute is being resolved.

In the event of a dispute, you should be referred to the local homeless liaison.

Also, feel free to contact the **Equal Justice Foundation** at **1-800-898-0545**.

Note: Remember that it is a violation of Ohio law to **fail to send** your child to school.