YOUTH RIGHTS IN SCHOOL

GRADE **ALL**

Time Required: 30 minutes

**GOAL:** Students will learn about youth rights under the McKinney-Vento Act and the

resources that are available to youth who are unstably housed.

Activity Statements:

Students will watch a 3-minute video and discuss the scenario depicted in the video. They will discuss the rights and resources that are available to students, and how to promote awareness of these rights.

Materials:

1. Video - Eligibility for McKinney-Vento School Benefits (available via internet)
2. Computer & projector with audio speakers
3. Handout – *Youth Rights in School*
4. Exit Slip (one per group) – last 5 minutes of period – instructor led

Procedures:

1. Play 3-minute video - view at: <https://youtu.be/u2jUCXwRNFc>
2. Discuss questions 1-2.
3. Distribute or display handout (Youth Rights in School) and facilitate a discussion focused on questions 3-5.
4. Encourage students to stop by the guidance office to get more information.
5. Last 5 minutes of period, complete the attached Exit Slip with 3 questions to provide feedback to your school. Only one submission per Advisory group is required with multiple responses from the group. It is suggested that you open a Google Doc, enter responses, and then Share with administration. If this option is not available, you may submit on paper.

Discussion:

1. When Jasmine is thinking about where she can sleep that night, she tells the viewer that she has stayed several nights at a friend’s house.
   1. How common do you think it is for students to stay at a friend’s house temporarily because something is going on at home and they can’t stay at home?
   2. Who else do you think you might turn to for help or a place to stay? Would they turn to an adult at school or in the community? Why/why not?
2. Jasmine is afraid to tell her teacher about her housing situation. In the film, she says, “But if I’m living in another town, then they might make me change schools and I don’t want that. I want to stay here.”
   1. Is Jasmine right about that?
   2. Do you feel that this is one of the fears that students might have? Why/why not?
   3. What other fears do you think students might have that could prevent them from telling others and getting help?
3. What rights and resources does Jasmine have access to under the McKinney-Vento Act? (Encourage students to use the Handout as a resource to answer this question.)
4. Do you think if more students knew about these rights and resources that they would be more likely to ask for help? Why/why not?
5. What kinds of things do you think students and schools can do to promote awareness of youth rights under this law?

YOUTH RIGHTS IN SCHOOL – **Handout**

GRADE **ALL**

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

**Do you know someone who:**

* Was kicked out of their house?
* Ran away from home?
* Is staying with friends or another family because they couldn’t go home or they lost their housing?
* Is staying in a shelter?
* Is staying in a temporary place in DCF care?
* Is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or campground because they lost their housing?
* Has no place to stay?

If someone you know is experiencing one of these situations, there are laws and resources to help them. Even if they have a temporary place to stay, they may still be able to get help. The law helps youth who are alone and moving around, and those who are living with family and moving around.

**WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS?**

**If I’ve been moving around a lot, do I have to change schools every time I move?**

No. You have the right to choose between the school you went to before you lost your housing, the school where you are staying now, or the school where you were last registered.

**How will I get to school?**

You have a right to get transportation back to your old school - if that is what you or your parent/guardian believes is best for you. The transportation might be a bus, a bus pass, or even a taxi.

**Who can help me figure this out?**

Every school district has a person called a “McKinney-Vento liaison.” That person’s job is to help you. Visit **youth-help.org** and click on “McKinney-Vento liaisons in Connecticut” and find the contact information of your representative in your school district. Or ask your guidance counselor.

**The school won’t let me register until they get records. How long do I have to wait?**

If you are a student that is experiencing any of the situations described above, you have the right to be registered immediately - even if you don’t have proof of residency, immunizations, school records, or other documents. If the school disagrees with you, you still have the right to be registered immediately while the disagreement is worked out.

**Can I do after-school activities?**  Yes.You have the right to be involved in all school activities.

**How can I register in school if I am not living with my parent or guardian?**

The liaison will help you register if you are by yourself. You are considered an “unaccompanied youth.”

**Do I have to leave my school when I find a place to live?**

If you find a permanent place to live during the school year, the law allows you to stay in your school for the rest of the school year, if that is best for you.

\*\*For specific information about the law, please call the Center for Children’s Advocacy at 860-570-5327 or 203-223-8975.

YOUTH RIGHTS IN SCHOOL – **EXIT SLIP**

GRADE **ALL**

**EXIT SLIP**

Instructions:

* 1 per Advisory group
* Submit via Google Doc or paper copy

1. Was today’s lesson helpful? If so, in what way?
2. What can you, your school, or your community do to get this information to kids who need it?
3. How can this presentation/lesson be improved?