

## FEE WAIVERS AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Your child has a right to:

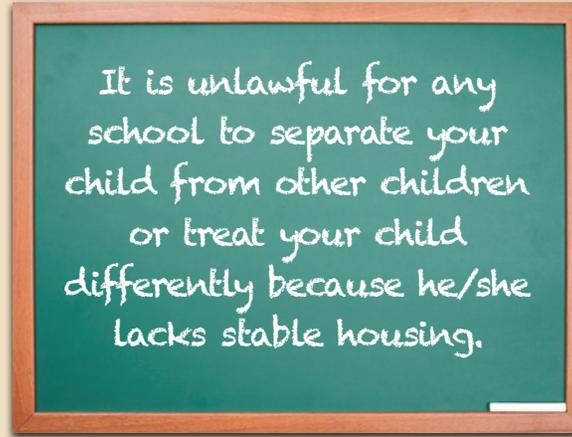
- Receive fee waivers for all school fees such as uniforms, books, field trip charges, graduation costs, and locker deposits
- Participate in hot meals and lunch programs
- Participate in special education, bilingual, vocational and gifted programs
- Participate in before and after school programs
- Receive counseling
- Participate in at least one hour of tutoring a week in Chicago Public Schools, or participate in any tutoring or academic support programs that a school provides

## SETTLING DISPUTES

If a dispute arises with the school, the school must provide the family or youth with a written explanation and a fair dispute resolution process, including referring the family or youth to free legal services. The student may attend the school and receive transportation until the dispute is settled.

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Send your child to school every day on time
- If you are transferring your child, enroll her in the new school right away
- Immediately ask the school for transportation assistance if you need it
- Ask for special tutoring or counseling to help make up for lost time
- Meet with your child's teacher regularly to make sure your child is getting every appropriate program
- Insist on what you think is the best education for your child



For help in English or Spanish contact:

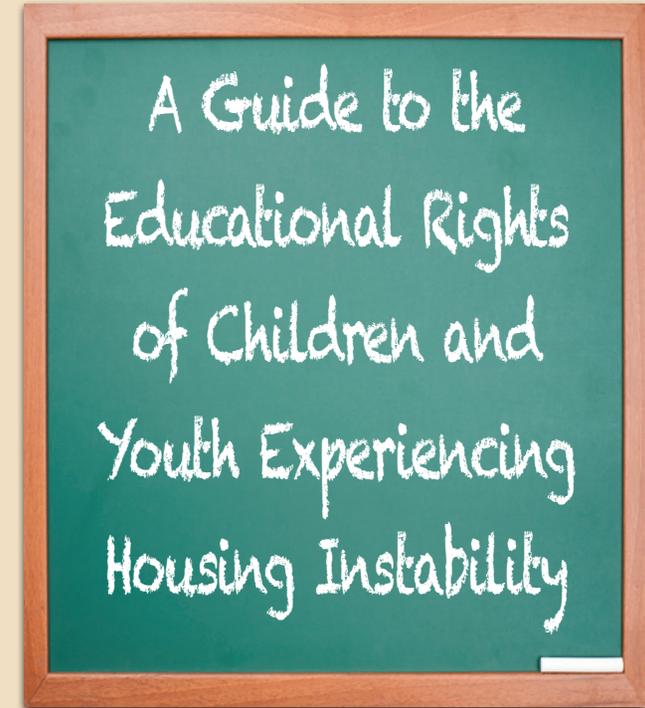
## The Law Project

of the Chicago Coalition  
for the Homeless

*Providing free legal services to families  
and youth experiencing housing instability  
in Chicago and the collar counties*

Call 1-800-940-1119

[www.chicagohomeless.org](http://www.chicagohomeless.org)



# INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS!

**Public schools have a special responsibility to provide immediate access, services and support to students experiencing housing instability.**

## ELIGIBLE STUDENTS INCLUDE THOSE:

- Sharing the housing of other persons 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 alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters, on the street, in a car, or similar substandard arrangements.

If you are an older youth, living away from your parents, and you lack permanent housing (maybe you are staying in a shelter or temporarily with friends or relatives) these same rights apply to you.

You do not need an adult in order to enroll in school. Preschool age children are also eligible.

## IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT

By law, Illinois schools must allow a child or youth experiencing housing instability to enroll in school immediately without requiring any records, transfer forms, proof of immunizations or physicals or proof of the living arrangement.

- Enrollment is defined by law as attending classes and participating fully in school activities. Therefore, students without permanent housing must be allowed – without any delay – to attend classes and to participate in school activities, including sports.
- After enrollment, the school must provide the student with low-cost or free medical referrals, to provide any necessary immunizations or physicals.

- Whether or not you lack stable housing, if your child lawfully begins the academic year in a school, your child has the right to finish the academic year in that school.
- It is the duty of the new school to assist in getting the records from the last school your child attended. The last school must provide these records within 10 days of the new school's request.
- Each school district must have a homeless liaison to assist students and families.
- Access to preschool for children with housing instability must be allowed by all school districts.

## CHOOSING A SCHOOL

With every change of school, a child or youth can fall as much as 6 months behind academically and socially. For many students, staying in the same school where one feels comfortable can be very important when other changes are happening. If you don't know where you are going to live next, keeping your child in the same school for the rest of the school year may be the best thing you can do. You have a choice:

- Keep your child in the school your child was attending before you lost housing.
- Keep your child in the school last attended even though your temporary living arrangements have changed (maybe you moved to another shelter or are staying with relatives for a few weeks). The above two school selection choices are referred to as the "school of origin."
- Enroll in the school nearest to where your child is staying that other children in the neighborhood attend.

## TRANSPORTATION

- If you choose to keep your child in the school of origin during a period of housing instability, the school is required to inform you and your child of the availability of transportation services and provide them to you.
- Your child can remain at the same school for as long as your housing instability lasts and even after you obtain permanent housing until the end of that

school year. If you live in one school district but your school is in another, both districts must work together to arrange transportation.

Transportation should be available for extra-curricular events and parent teacher meetings, too.

## IN CHICAGO...

Transportation by the Chicago Public Schools is provided in one of two ways:

1. CTA fare cards for students and fare cards for parents transporting students 6th grade and lower (including preschool); **OR**
2. A school bus is arranged if your child is in 6th grade or lower and you:
  - work or are in job training,
  - are in school.
  - are in court-ordered or DCFS-imposed services.
  - must take your children to different locations.
  - are not allowed to leave the shelter at those times.
  - have a disability which prevents CTA travel.
  - have any other good cause that prevents you from transporting your child to/from school, such as the late stages of a pregnancy or an infant and toddlers to care for.