Did you know that children who change schools often are less likely to do well in school?

- Over a period of six years, students who have moved more than three times can fall a full academic year behind students that do not move around.
- Nationally, while 86% of high school students graduate, the graduation rate is only 60% for students who changed high schools at least twice.

The federal McKinney-Vento Act protects children who don't have a permanent place to live, such as:

- Children living with friends or relatives due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason
- Children living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or campgrounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Children living in shelters
- Children living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Children abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement

The McKinney-Vento Act allows your children to:

- Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there;
- Choose the school that best fits your child's needs. Your choices are:
  - the school closest to your child's temporary home,
  - the school in which your child was last enrolled, or
  - the school your child last attended when you had a permanent place to live;
- Enroll in school without proof of residency, immunizations, school records, or other documents;
- Get free transportation to your school of choice; but if you decide that the school closest to your child's temporary home is best, transportation must be provided ONLY if it is available to other children attending that school.
- Participate in and receive free transportation to special education services and after-school programs;
- Get all the school services they need; and
- Be free from harassment and isolation.

There are people you can call to help keep your child in her school and/or to enforce your other rights under the McKinney-Vento Act:

State Homeless
Education Coordinator
Kim Chouinard
(401) 222-4600 ext. 8477

For the name of your Local Homeless Education Coordinator contact the State Coordinator or your children's school or school district.

Or, contact the Education Law Attorney(s) at Rhode Island Legal Services!

(401) 274-2652

What you can do to protect your child's rights:

- If you've lost your place to live, and have no permanent residence, immediately contact your child's school.
- Meet with the principal to discuss whether it would be best for your child to stay at her school or to transfer to the school serving your child's temporary address. Also, request free transportation to your school of choice.
- If the principal decides to send your child to another school against your wishes, ask that you be provided with a written explanation.
- File a letter with the principal stating your complaints if your child is denied any of these rights.
- Call the Homeless Education Coordinator for your school district or the State Homeless Education Coordinator at the phone numbers indicated if you are still experiencing a problem.
- Seek legal assistance from the Education Law Group at Rhode Island Legal Services.

Your child has the right to be immediately admitted to the school in which you want your child enrolled until a final decision on your appeal is made.

Remember that your child cannot be forced to change schools!

LSC
America's Partner For Equal Justice

RILS OFFICES:

Providence:
56 Pine Street, Suite 400
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 274-2652
1-800-662-5034

Newport:
50 Washington Square
Newport, RI 02840
(401) 846 - 2264
1-800-637-4529

WWW.RILS.ORG
WWW.RIFAP.ORG
WWW.HELPRILAW.ORG
WWW.RIFAIRHOUSING.ORG
WWW.LOWINCOMETAXCLINIC.ORG

Robert M. Barge, Executive Director

The material contained in this brochure is general information about your rights and the services Rhode Island Legal Services provides to the community.
If you have specific questions, please contact one of our offices to consult with a legal advocate.

Your landlord can force your family to move...

But can't force your children to switch schools!!!

If you have to move out of your home and have no permanent place to live, federal law allows you to keep your child in the same school at no added cost to you.