

Are you a teen on your own?

Under law, you are called an “unaccompanied youth” and are entitled to certain educational rights.

This includes young people who have:

- run away from home.
- been thrown out of their homes.
- been left on their own by a parent or guardian.

You are considered homeless and entitled to rights even if your parent(s) or guardian(s) say that you can come home.

Who is Homeless?

You are homeless if you “lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”

- This includes teens who stay at a shelter, in a car, at camping grounds, in a park, in a motel, in a train station or similar situations due to lack of alternative accommodations.
- **This can also include children or teens that are staying with friends or relatives because they cannot pay for a place to stay.** This is often called “couch-surfing”: you may be able to stay with a friend or relative for only a night or two before needing to find another place to stay.



Who Can Help You?

Each school district has a **homeless education liaison** whose work includes helping you to enroll and stay in school. This liaison can help you with any problems that come up as you enroll and attend school.

To find the liaison in your area, look on the back of this brochure. If there is no name in the box, please call one of the numbers beneath the box to find out the name of the homeless education liaison in your district.



Choice of Schools

You decide:

- You have the right to continue attending your school and be with your friends, if that is your choice. Helping you return to the “**school of origin**” is one of the law’s main goals.
- If you decide that you want to attend school where you are now living, that is another choice you can make.
- It is a good idea to talk these possibilities over with the liaison before you decide. Teens that change schools often lose credits and have difficulty keeping up.

Whichever choice you make, you must be allowed to enroll or re-enroll immediately, even if you don’t have your school records with you. Proof of guardianship is not required in order for you to enroll.

Other Important Points

Eligibility

You are eligible for:

- Free lunch
- Fee waivers
- Food stamps/medical card

Transportation

You may be eligible to receive free transportation to school. You can get assistance from your liaison.

Equal Access to Programs & Services

You have the right to have access to programs and services that other students have access to.

- Gifted and talented education
- Special education
- Vocational education
- English Language Learner services

Sports Eligibility

You have the right to participate in sports and have fees related to this waived. Get help by:

- Talk with school social worker/staff
- Assistance from liaison

Re-enrollment

You may re-enroll in school as long as you can complete the necessary credits by age 21.

Right to Appeal

You have the right to disagree with the decision(s) of the school or district about enrollment or transportation and to have that dispute resolved by someone who is impartial. The school is required to enroll you and allow you to attend school while the dispute is being worked out.



Helpful Phone Numbers and Websites

Denver Public Schools: 900 Grant Street
720.423.3200, www.dpsk12.org

Denver Public Schools Medicaid
Program: 720.423.8269

Urban Peak: Denver 303.777.9198

Urban Peak Outreach Team:
303.974.2970,
Outreach Cell Phone 720-364-2644

Volunteers of America:
720.217.3884, Motel 303.825.2755

Rainbow Alley: 303.831.0442
1050 Broadway

Family Tree: Wheat Ridge
303.422.2133, info@familytree.org

Comitis Crisis Center: Aurora
303.343.9890

National Runaway Switchboard:
1.800.786.2929

Denver Public Schools Homeless Liaisons

Anna Stout: South Area, Alt/Charter
Schools Homeless Liaison
720.423.8230

Jackie Bell: North Area Homeless Liaison
720.423.8228

Katie Neal: Older Youth Educational
Outreach Specialist with CYC
720.299.8737

<http://eop.dpsk12.org>

None of my classmates knew that I didn't have a home to call my own. No one knew that while I was listening to my teacher explain adjectives, I was also wondering whether I would still have a place to sleep that night after school let out. No one ever knew because it is an embarrassing and abasing thing to be labeled homeless. I looked like everyone else, I talked like everyone else, I made decent grades, listened to the same music, and cheered our team on Friday nights. Why would they think I was anything different than how others saw themselves? I knew that I didn't want to be homeless for the rest of my life, and I saw education as the sure path to a more secure future. In spite of struggling with such an adverse situation, I wanted to maintain as high a standard as possible. I wanted colleges to look at me and see a student who really wanted to succeed and was willing to work as hard as necessary to reach her goals.

Ashleigh, 2005

LeTendre Scholar

Formerly homeless youth

Teen on Your Own You Can Still Attend School *Here is How*



Information on Rights for Unaccompanied High School Youth and their Education

Denver Public Schools Educational Outreach Program



