



Maryland’s Early Childhood Education Programs

Program Summaries and Key Contacts

This chart provides basic information about Maryland’s early childhood education programs, including provisions to support families experiencing homelessness and links to key contact information.

| Public School Homeless Education Program (Find Your Local Contact) | |
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| Brief Program Description | Provisions to Support Families Experiencing Homelessness |
| <p>Every local educational agency (LEA) has a homeless liaison, and every school building has a building homeless contact, to ensure children and youth experiencing homelessness can enroll, attend, and succeed in school.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate enrollment without proof of residency, age, immunization, or other documents typically required. • Stability in the same school, with transportation provided, as long as it is in the child’s best interest. • Fee waivers, school supplies and clothing, free school meals, academic support, and additional services depending on the school. |
| Pre-K (Find Your School District Pre-K Office or Local Program) | |
| Brief Program Description | Provisions to Support Families Experiencing Homelessness |
| <p>Prekindergarten is a program for 3- and 4-year-old children that helps children develop and maintain the basic skills necessary to be successful in school.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic eligibility and priority. • Immediate enrollment without proof of residency, age, immunization, or other documents typically required. • Stability in the same Pre-K program, with transportation provided, as long as it is in the child’s best interest. |

| Judy Centers (Find Your Local Contact) | |
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| Brief Program Description | Provisions to Support Families Experiencing Homelessness |
| <p>Judy Centers promote school readiness for children ages birth through five. Judy Center Early Learning Hubs are not child care centers. They connect to high-quality, comprehensive, full-day, full-year early education services and family support, through a multigenerational approach.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judy Centers will serve families experiencing homelessness regardless of where they reside. • Judy Centers offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development screenings ○ Family earning activities/family engagement ○ Parenting classes ○ Connections to adult education and workforce development ○ Evidence-based parent/child playgroups ○ Referrals for services and supports ○ Early Intervention identification ○ Home Visiting ○ Case management with families ○ Service coordination with community partners ○ Connections to local services providers to meet a family's needs |
| Early Head Start and Head Start (Find Your Local Contact) | |
| Brief Program Description | Provisions to Support Families Experiencing Homelessness |
| <p>Early Head Start (pregnant women and children up to age 3) and Head Start (children ages 3-5) programs provide intensive comprehensive child development and family support services. These programs may be administered by school districts or community agencies.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility without proof of income. Head Start Program Performance Standards describe how programs can document homelessness. • A program's policies and procedures cannot require families to provide documents that confirm a child's age, if doing so creates a barrier for the family to enroll the child. • Programs must allow children experiencing homelessness to attend for up to 90 days or as long as allowed under state licensing requirements without immunization and other records, to give the family reasonable time to present these documents. A program must work with families to get children immunized as soon as possible in order to comply with state licensing requirements. |
| Child Find (Find Your Local Contact) | |
| Brief Program Description | Provisions to Support Families Experiencing Homelessness |
| <p>The Child Find program exists across all LEAs in Maryland to support identifying children from ages 3 through 21 who are suspected of having an educational disability and who may be eligible for special education and related services.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each LEA oversees its own Child Find process; a referral can be made by anyone working with a child, including a parent, family member, child care provider, advocate, or medical professional. • Once a referral has been made, the LEA must hold an initial referral meeting. The LEA will provide a legal IEP team; to help them through the process, the child's parent or guardian may invite additional team members, including family members, outreach coordinators, and case managers. |

| Infants & Toddlers (Find Your Local Contact) | |
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| Brief Program Description | Provisions to Support Families Experiencing Homelessness |
| <p>Infants & Toddlers provides support to parents of children from birth through age 2 who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a significant developmental delay; • Manifest atypical development or behavior and is likely to have a development delay; or • Have a physical or mental condition likely to result in a development delay. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States must ensure that children with disabilities experiencing homelessness are identified, located, and evaluated. • Consult "A Family Guide To Early Intervention Services in Maryland" for more information. |
| Preschool Special Education (Find Your Local Contact) | |
| Brief Program Description | Provisions to Support Families Experiencing Homelessness |
| <p>Preschool special education provides specialized instruction and related services, such as speech-language, physical, and occupational therapy, to children with a disability ages 3 through 5.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate enrollment without proof of residency, age, immunization, or other documents typically required. • Stability in the same Pre-K program, with transportation provided, as long as it is in the child's best interest. • Requirements designed to promote timely evaluations and uninterrupted education and related services for children who change schools during the school year. • Consult "A Parent's Guide to Understanding Your IEP Rights and Responsibilities in Maryland" for more information. |
| Child Care Scholarship (Find Help Applying or Locate: Child Care) | |
| Brief Program Description | Provisions to Support Families Experiencing Homelessness |
| <p>The Child Care Scholarship program helps eligible families in Maryland pay for high-quality child care and early education programs. The program is managed by Child Care Scholarship Central 2 (CCS Central 2).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child care scholarship for 60 days will be approved within 3 business days through a "Fast Track" application, supported by a document from a provider or school homeless liaison verifying homelessness. • Families have 60 days to provide additional documents for an additional 52 weeks of child care. |