

Housing Stability for Children

A lack of affordable housing options means children may be exposed to unsafe housing or even may experience homelessness.

As shown in Table 1 below, **531** children in Ulster County public schools experienced homelessness in the 2020-2021 school year.

Homeless Students in Ulster County School Districts-Table 1

School District	Total (Unduplicated)
KINGSTON CITY SD	184
HIGHLAND CSD	47
RONDOUT VALLEY CSD	58
MARLBORO CSD	96
NEW PALTZ CSD	13
ONTEORA CSD	20
SAUGERTIES CSD	39
WALLKILL CSD	7
ELLENVILLE CSD	67
TOTAL	531

Source: NYS-TEACHS.ORG 2020-2021

Most children who experience homelessness in Ulster County are “doubled up” in a relative or friend’s home, and a smaller portion live in a hotel or motel or live in a shelter.ⁱ While less common, some homeless children in New York may also live in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, train stations, or similar places.ⁱⁱ

Children who experience housing instability and homelessness are much more likely to suffer from health and behavioral problems,ⁱⁱⁱ ^{iv} move from one school to another, have poor school attendance,^v be challenged to keep up with schoolwork and learning,^{viii} and have a higher risk of dropping out.



UNSAFE HOUSING CONDITIONS

When affordable housing options are limited, households are often forced to live in substandard housing because it is all they can afford. For children this often means home is an unsafe place where they may be exposed to toxins like lead-based paint and asbestos, a leaky roof, broken windows, pests and rodents, non-functioning heating or cooling systems, hazardous electrical wiring, and unsanitary conditions.

The toxins that children are exposed to in poor quality housing such as lead-based paint are known to cause developmental delays and permanent brain damage.^{viii} Nationally, at least 4.2% of children who test have elevated lead levels.^{ix} Children of lower socioeconomic status and children of color experience higher rates of lead poisoning.^x Households with lower incomes often do not have a choice but to remain in a home even after children have tested positive for elevated lead levels.

MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING BENEFITS CHILDREN

Households that have access to stable, safe, and affordable housing are better positioned to live healthy and happy lives. A safe place to call home is a key part of giving children a strong foundation on which to build their lives.



ⁱ U.S. Department of Education, 2019-2020 school year

ⁱⁱ [National Center for Homeless Education \(NCHE\) \(seiservices.com\)](https://www.nche.org/)

ⁱⁱⁱ "A Round Up of Recent Research on Child and Youth Homelessness" School House Connection. August 9, 2021. [A Round Up of Recent Research on Child and Youth Homelessness \(January-July 2021\) | SchoolHouse Connection](#)

^{iv} "Poor Quality Housing Is Tied to Children's Emotional and Behavioral Problems" MacArthur Foundation, How Housing Matters. September 2013. [poor quality housing is tied to childrens emotional and behavioral problems.pdf \(macfound.org\)](#)

^v [Still Disconnected: Persistently Low Attendance Rates for Students in Shelter \(advocatesforchildren.org\)](#)

^{vi} "Young Children Experiencing Homelessness", School House Connection. February 17, 2020 [Young Children Experiencing Homelessness: An Overview | SchoolHouse Connection](#)

^{vii} "Stable, affordable housing drives stronger student outcomes, factsheet" Opportunity Home [Stable, Affordable Housing Drives Stronger Student Outcomes - Opportunity Starts at Home \(opportunityhome.org\)](#)

^{viii} "Health Effects of Lead Exposure" Center for Disease Control. March 9, 2022 [Health Effects of Lead Exposure | Lead | CDC](#)

^{ix} Frostenson, Sarah. "1.2 Million children in the US have lead poisoning. We're only treating half of them." Vox. April 27, 2017 [1.2 million children in the US have lead poisoning. We're only treating half of them. - Vox](#)

^x "Populations at Higher Risk" Center for Disease Control. Content source: National Center for Environmental Health, Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice. October 29, 2021. [Populations at Higher Risk | Lead | CDC](#)