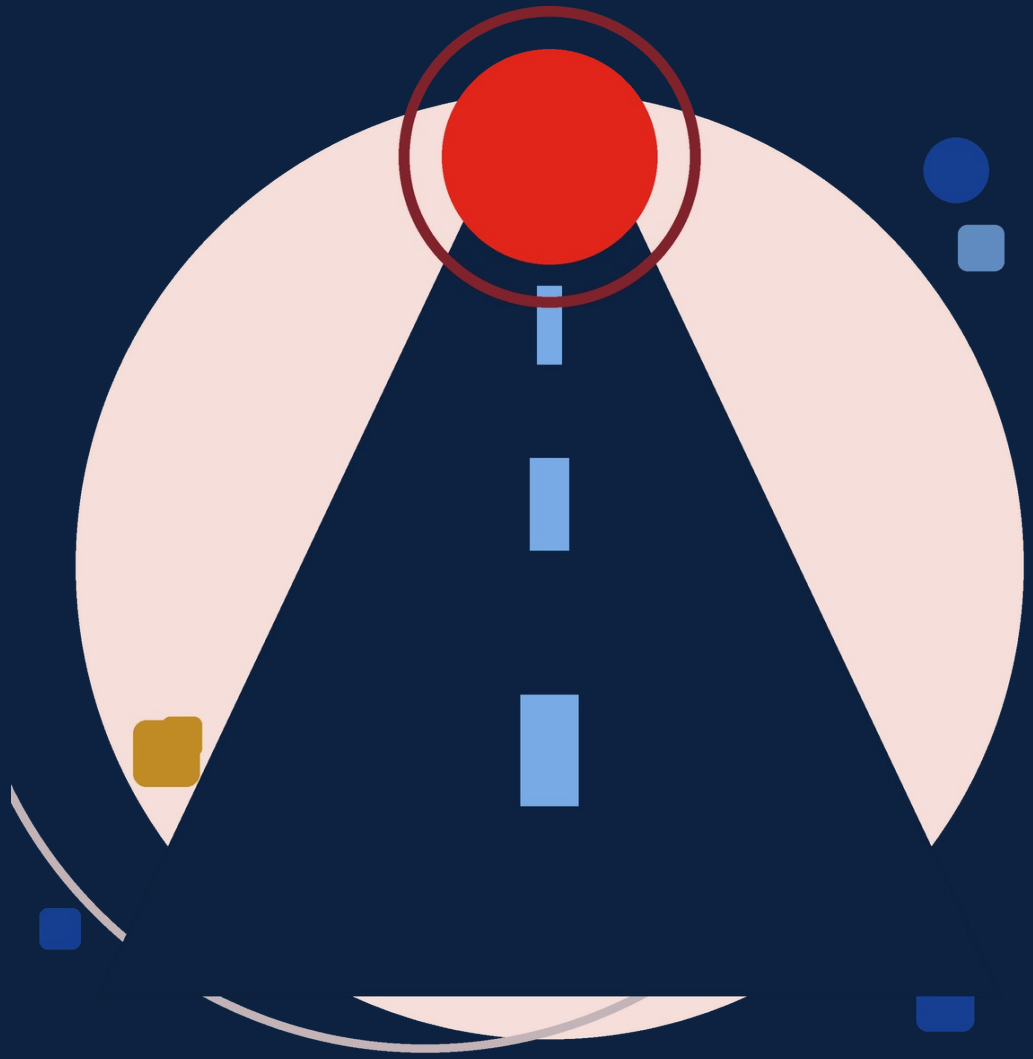
THE SEAT SERIES · FREE ATTENDANCE SCIENCE™ RESOURCE

SEAT 18

McKinney-Vento Liaisons · Grades 6-12

Unaccompanied and Working Youth

How do we support older students who are on their own, working, or carrying adult responsibilities?



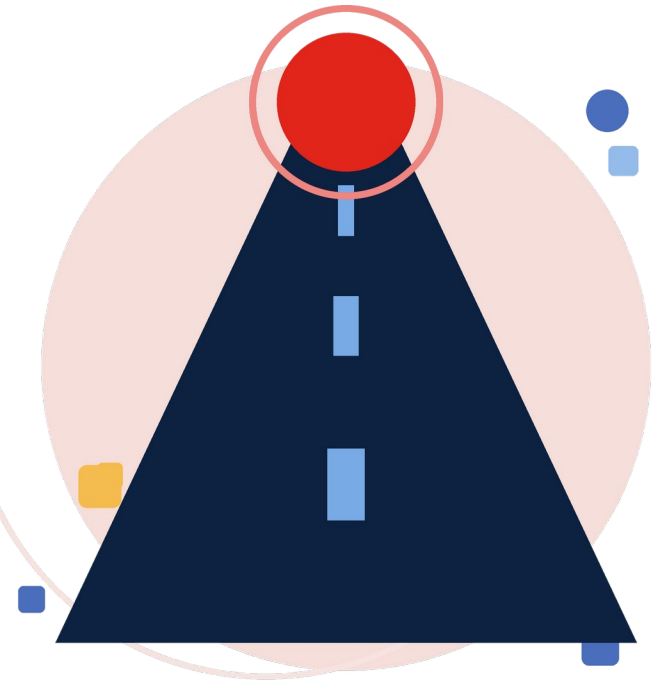
10 slides · 2 handouts · evidence from Schools Spared, Children Punished and the Attendance Science™ research base

Jaylen's green checkmark

“

During remote learning, Jaylen's login was green every day. In reality he logged in from a phone propped on a pillow while working to help cover rent after his father lost his job. The technology counted presence. It never counted belonging, and that is what Jaylen lost.

Source: Schools Spared, Children Punished, Ch. 8 (Jaylen, composite case)



Every story in this series is a composite or a published case. Names are invented.

What liaisons are asking

How do we support older students who are on their own, working, or carrying adult responsibilities?

1

Older students carry rent, siblings and jobs.

2

Unaccompanied youth face enrollment and consent barriers.

3

Upper-grade absence climbs while supports thin out.

Shared words before shared work

U

Unaccompanied homeless youth

A homeless youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

P

Partial credit

State procedures for full or partial credit for work completed before a move.

L

Login presence

A connection counted as attendance; easily mistaken for engagement.

The numbers behind the moment

50%

of teen mothers earn a high school diploma by age 22, versus 90% of peers

Annie E. Casey Foundation, Teen Birth Rates and Educational Outcomes

16.5%

of long-term absences linked to caregiving for family members

OECD report on long-term student absence (causes reported)

36.5%

employment-population ratio for 16-19 year olds, July 2026

BLS, The Economics Daily (Aug 26, 2026)

Classify before you consequence

Withdrawal

Work and caregiving. Flexible schedules and credit recovery.

Avoidance

Feeling out of place among peers. Connect to an adult advocate.

Refusal

Exhaustion and stress. Health and counseling.

Truancy

Choosing work to survive is withdrawal. Ask first.

Three moves you can make this week

01

Cost: $0

Liaison as advocate

The liaison helps unaccompanied youth enroll and access services.

02

Cost: $0

Flexible schedule

Offer schedule options for students who work or care for others.

03

Cost: $0

Credit plan

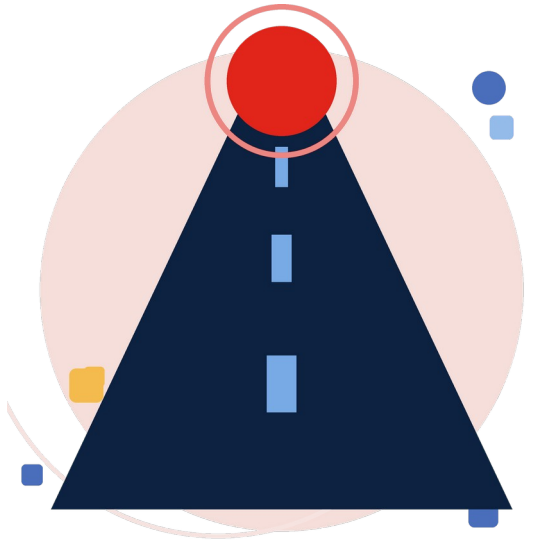
Map partial credits and a path to graduation.

A PRESENCE™ prompt for your building

P	R	E	S	E	N	C	E
Problem definition	Research evidence	Environmental context	**Statistical analysis**	**Equity assessment**	Network and partnership	Compliance and legal	**Evidence-based recommendations**

YOUR PROMPT

List students age 16+ with rising absence. How many work, care for others or live apart from parents? That share defines your support need.



Common missteps, and how you will know it works

- ✕ Requiring a parent signature to enroll unaccompanied youth
- ✕ Treating work-driven absence as defiance
- ✕ Ending supports at age 18 without a transition plan

LEADING INDICATOR · Moves first

Unaccompanied youth with a graduation plan

LAGGING INDICATOR · Confirms it worked

Credit accrual each term

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HANDOUTS Seat Card (A) and Find Your Data worksheet (B)

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Seat 15: McKinney-Vento Basics
Seat 16: Getting There: Transportation and School Stability
Seat 17: Hidden Homelessness and Mid-Year Moves

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