



Institute for Children,
Poverty & Homelessness

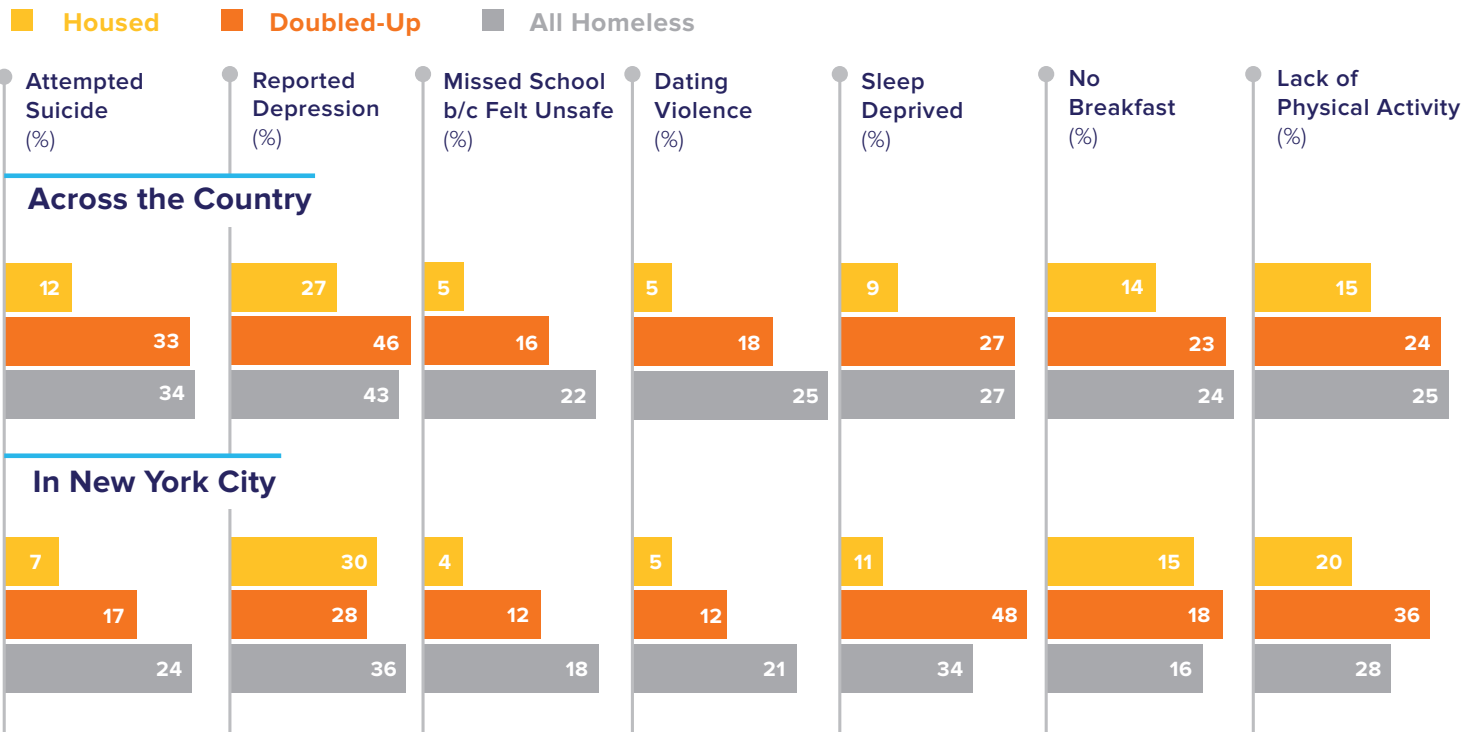
Homeless Doubled-up High Schoolers

Misguided Assumptions About the Housing Stability of Doubled-up Students

What Are the Biggest Misconceptions About Doubled-up Homeless Students?

Policymakers, some advocates and even the Department of Housing and Urban Development often mischaracterize what it means for a student to be “doubled up.” Lacking a permanent residence and frequently moving between unstable living situations is not the same as being housed or staying long-term with extended family or close friends –it’s homelessness. With the exception of the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services, most federal government agencies miss these students or choose to not identify them as homeless. This invisibility renders these children and teens ineligible for the supports available to their peers living in shelters or in places not meant for human habitation.

The negative effects of homelessness are similar regardless of where a homeless student sleeps. CDC research shows that doubled-up high schoolers experience many of the same health, well-being, and safety risks as other homeless teens when compared to their housed peers. Doubled-up students are more than twice as likely as housed students to have attempted suicide, and more than three times as likely to have experienced dating violence or to be sleep deprived. The trauma these students endure often spills over into their education, having a lasting impact even when they are successfully re-housed. The data demonstrates without question that any policy or practice that aims to rectify disparities between homeless and housed students must include those identified as doubled-up among the homeless.



The data above were collected as part of the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered every two years by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in partnership with state and local agencies. Not all states and cities include questions regarding housing status or make data publicly available. The data above include responses from AK, CT, DE, IL, MA, MD, NC, NM, and New York City. Data from the 2017 survey are currently in the process of being released. All differences between housed and doubled-up students were statistically significant with the exception of “Reported Depression” and “No Breakfast” in New York City. Reported percentages for doubled-up students who attempted suicide across the country and missed school or were sleep deprived in New York City have wider margins of error than other responses. Full notes on data and methodology are available on our website at www.icphusa.org.