



Institute for Children,  
Poverty & Homelessness

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## **HOMELESS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DISPROPORTIONATELY FACE EXTREME HEALTH RISKS Higher Rates of Attempted Suicide, Abuse, and Substance Use Reported**

**New York, NY**—Homeless high school students across the country reported significantly higher rates of negative health and social outcomes than their housed peers across a variety of indicators, according to a new report from the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness (ICPH). From relationship violence and sexual risk behaviors to substance use and school climate, [\*No Longer Hidden: The Health and Well Being of Homeless High School Students\*](#) underscores that the overall health and safety of students experiencing homelessness is at risk. Findings include:

- Homeless students reported attempting suicide at four times the rate of their housed peers (30% vs. 7%).
- Homeless students were up to five times more likely to be emotionally, physically, or sexually abused by a partner.
- High school students experiencing homelessness were forced into sexual intercourse at over three times the rate of their housed peers (23% vs. 7%).
- Homeless teens were more than seven times as likely to have been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant as housed students (15% vs. 2%).
- Homeless students were anywhere from five to 16 times more likely than housed students to report using hard drugs.
- Almost one quarter of high school students experiencing homelessness were threatened at school, nearly five times the rate of housed students (23% vs. 5%).
- Homeless students were six times more likely to carry a weapon at school than their housed classmates (18% vs. 3%).

“One in 12 high school students experienced homelessness during the 2016–17 school year,” explains Chloe Stein, Principal Policy Analyst at ICPH. “In addition to the trauma and instability they already face, many are confronted with a range of serious mental, emotional, and physical health risks, the consequences of which can last well beyond high school.”

Examining data from the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), administered every other year to high school students by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ICPH sought to highlight the multiplicity of issues experienced by homeless high school students and



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the need for targeted interventions to address their needs both in and out of school. Data in this report are from nearly 30 states and large school districts across the country.

“Identifying and connecting these students to the appropriate supports is crucial. This report can serve as an evidence base from which to create interventions and policies that support homeless students,” says Andrea Pizano, ICPH’s Chief of Policy Research. “When their health needs are met, they have an opportunity to thrive and access a future that is not defined by their housing status.”

**The Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness (ICPH)** is a New York City-based policy research organization focused on family homelessness in New York City and throughout the United States. For more information, visit [www.ICPHusa.org](http://www.ICPHusa.org).

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