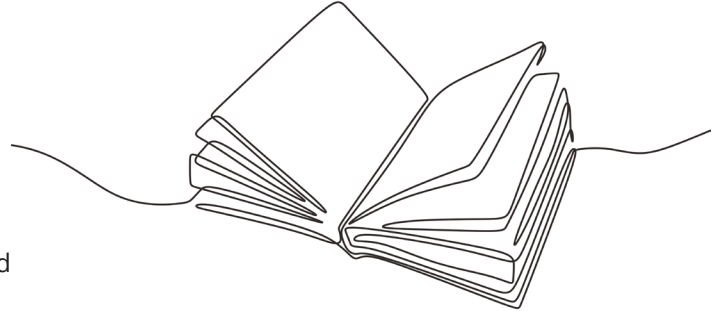


Enrolling Unaccompanied Immigrant Children Recently Released from ORR Custody in California Schools

Where can children enroll in school?

All children, including unaccompanied children released from ORR custody to sponsors living in California, can go to public schools that are in their school district.¹ A child's school district depends on their residency. Residency is where the child lives. School districts will ask for proof of residency, or proof of where the child lives, to make sure that the child is enrolled in the right school.² Some school districts automatically assign a "resident school" to each child based on their home address.³



Contact the school district to find out if the child has an assigned school. To find the child's school district, go to the [California School Directory](#) and search by zip code, then click the "District" tab. In California, children between 6 and 18 years of age are required to attend school full-time.⁴

What if the child was released to a sponsor that is not their parent or legal guardian?

Children can enroll in school even if their sponsor is a family member or unrelated family friend. A Caregiver Authorization Affidavit, whether filled out by a relative or non-relative caregiver of a child, is sufficient to permit the sponsor to enroll the child in school. For more information on the Caregiver Affidavit, see this [Factsheet](#) and [FAQ](#).

What information is needed when enrolling children in school?

Requirements vary across school districts.⁵ Generally, schools will ask for documents that confirm residency, identity of the child, and age of the child.⁶ Schools will also require a health exam and the child's immunization records.⁷ To make sure that the child has all the immunizations they need, check the [California Department of Public Health Immunization Requirements](#). Contact the school district's enrollment office or visit their website for a list of documents needed.

How can sponsors or schools get copies of immunization, medical, or educational records from ORR?

To request a copy of the child's case file, which should include the child's immunization, medical, and educational records from the child's time in ORR custody, sponsors must complete the ORR Authorization for Release of Records (Form A-5).⁸ For a copy of the Authorization for Release of Records, visit ORR's [Key Documents](#) page. If the child is younger than 14 years old, sponsors must sign the form, and if the child is 14 years old or older, the child must sign. Once the form has been filled out and signed, follow the instructions on page 8 of the form on how to submit the form to ORR. If you have questions about the Authorization for Release of Records form, contact the ORR National Call Center at (800) 203-7001 or information@ORRNCC.com.

Examples of Documents a School May Accept for Enrollment⁹

Residency*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property tax payments; lease or rent payment receipt• Employment pay stubs• Voter registration• Letter from a government agency• Signed affidavit from the sponsor confirming the child's information and home address• ORR Verification of Release form
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birth Certificate• Religious certifications, hospital or doctor records that show the child's date of birth• Prior school records that show the child's date of birth• Signed affidavit that confirms the child's date of birth• ORR Verification of Release form
Immunization Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A list of immunizations received (from country of origin and/or ORR)• Vaccination Card
Medical/Dental History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documents showing medical health or dental history (from country of origin and/or ORR)
Educational History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documents showing grade and test levels from country of origin and/or ORR)

**There is an exception to residency requirements if a child is "homeless" under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. For more information on McKinney Vento eligibility, visit [California Department of Education - Homeless Education](#).*

The U.S. Department of Education & U.S. Department of Justice encourage schools to accept the ORR Verification of Release form as an appropriate means for establishing proof of residency and/or age for purposes of enrollment, if sponsors voluntarily present this form to the school district.¹⁰

What information is not needed when enrolling children in school?

Schools cannot discriminate based on the race, national origin, or citizenship of the child or their family.¹¹ Schools cannot ask an unaccompanied child's sponsor for information beyond what would ordinarily be requested of any other child. Schools also cannot ask for information that may reveal a child's undocumented status and cannot require children to provide social security number.

Who can I contact for help?

- If you have difficulty enrolling a child in school, call the ORR National Call Center at (800) 203-7001 and ask for a case manager to help you work with the school to get the child enrolled.¹²
- If you have questions about school enrollment, call the California Department of Education at (916) 319-0800.

Endnotes

- 1 Cal. Educ. Code § 48200.
- 2 U.S. Dep't of Justice Civil Rights Division & US Dep't of Educ. & Office for Civil Rights, *Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School: Questions and Answers for States, School Districts and Parents*, <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2014/05/08/plylerqa.pdf>.
- 3 See Cal. Dep't of Educ., *District Transfers*, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/di/fq/districttransfers.asp> (indicating that parents and children are not guaranteed enrollment in their school of choice, or even the school closest to them).
- 4 Cal. Educ. Code § 48200.
- 5 U.S. Dep't of Justice Civil Rights Division & U.S. Dep't of Educ. & Office for Civil Rights, *Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School: Questions and Answers for States, School Districts and Parents*, <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2014/05/08/plylerqa.pdf>.
- 6 U.S. Dep't of Educ., *Fact Sheet II: Additional Questions & Answers Enrolling New Immigrant Students*, <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/unaccompanied-children-2.pdf>.
- 7 See Cal. Dep't of Health Servs., *CHDP School Handbook: School Entry Health Requirements*, <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/publications/Documents/CMS/CHDPPub108.pdf>; Cal. Dep't of Health Care Servs., *School Entry Health Exam Requirement*, <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/chdp/Pages/SchoolEntry.aspx>.
- 8 See Office of Refugee Resettlement, *Key Documents: Authorization for Release of Records*, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/policy-guidance/unaccompanied-children-program>.
- 9 See Office of Refugee Resettlement, *Sponsor Handbook*, p. 13 (2021), <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/FRP-8-Sponsor-Handbook-2021-05-19.pdf>.
- 10 U.S. Dep't of Justice, U.S. Dep't of Ed., & U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., *Information on the Rights of Unaccompanied Children to Enroll in School and Participate Meaningfully and Equally in Educational Programs*, 2, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/rights-unaccompanied-children-enroll-school.pdf>.
- 11 U.S. Dep't of Justice Civil Rights Division & US Dep't of Educ. & Office for Civil Rights, *Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School: Questions and Answers for States, School Districts and Parents*, <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/crt/legacy/2014/05/08/plylerqa.pdf>.
- 12 See Office of Refugee Resettlement, *Sponsor Handbook*, p. 14 (2021), <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/FRP-8-Sponsor-Handbook-2021-05-19.pdf>.