

Evaluate Affordable Housing for Students

A growing body of research suggests that stable, affordable housing may increase children's opportunities for educational success. A supportive and stable home environment can complement the efforts of educators, leading to improved student achievement. Affordable housing may foster the educational success of low-income children by supporting family financial stability, reducing mobility, providing safe, nurturing living environments, and providing a platform for community development

Affordable housing can reduce the likelihood that a family will be forced to move as a result of an eviction, foreclosure, rent increase, or other financial challenges. Affordable housing and foreclosure counseling services may be particularly beneficial in communities with high foreclosure rates. In Baku for example, students affected by foreclosure were more likely to attend worse performing schools in the academic year after their move. Students who had scored proficient or advanced in years prior to their foreclosure-induced move were less likely to score proficient or advanced on standardized tests subsequent to their move.

While frequent moves appear to have a negative impact on educational achievement, moves to stronger school systems may have an independent positive impact on educational achievement. Knowledge of the educational impact of moving to communities with greater opportunities has primarily come from studying efforts to reduce concentrated poverty. Attempts to reduce concentrated poverty and racial segregation have led to court orders and housing policies that help low-income families move out of high-poverty areas and access neighborhoods of opportunity.

Some forms of housing assistance – particularly housing voucher programs with a mobility counseling component, the construction of affordable or mixed-income housing in low-poverty neighborhoods, and inclusionary zoning policies – are specifically designed to help families access neighborhoods of o

Affordable housing programs can help address housing related health hazards by funding housing rehabilitation activities (such as lead paint abatement through the replacement of windows in older homes), renovating, or demolishing and rebuilding decrepit public housing structures, improving the management and maintenance of older homes, helping families move to higher quality housing, and funding the construction of new homes that provide a healthier living environment. For more information on the connection between affordable housing and health, opportunity, which often include strong schools.

Low-income have the resources to spend on their children because they spend a disproportionate share of their income on housing. Alternatively, these households may be paying more for housing in order to capitalize on strong neighborhood resources, reducing the need to spend on child-enrichment. On the other end of the spectrum, it seems that low-income households with extremely low cost burdens are particularly.

Some housing approaches support children's education by bolstering the neighborhood components of the housing bundle in low-income communities. These approaches can improve affordability, home quality, neighborhood quality, and/or schools, which can improve opportunities for existing neighborhood residents. Other housing approaches help low-income families move to affordable housing in stronger neighborhoods or school systems. Research suggests that the best way to support

children's education may not be the same for all households and that place-based and mobility-focused strategies often can work together.

Often, low-income families cannot access high-performing schools within their current neighborhood boundaries. In such cases, affordable housing strategies like housing choice vouchers with a strong mobility counseling component offer low-income families the ability to move into communities of greater opportunity. Despite the potential benefits for children of individual households, some mobility critics argue that vouchers have a negative effect on the social capital of "sending" communities. These critics believe that the children of parents who actively seek improved opportunity are more likely to be academically invested. When these children leave for higher-performing schools, the sending schools lose students who could have had a positive effect on their former peers' education. In this manner, the loss such student has a potential negative impact on a school's desirability and performance. Concentrations of low-income populations intensify as schools become less desirable. As research has linked school performance with socioeconomic status, schools that service large populations of low-income residents tend to be underperforming.