

# Moving, even to more affluent areas, puts kids at greater risk for not graduating high school

October 20 2015, by Neil Schoenherr

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Want to make sure your child graduates from high school? Don't move.

A new study from the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis finds that students experiencing at least one move over a twelve-month period have a roughly 50 percent decreased likelihood of obtaining a [high school diploma](#) by age 25.

These associations are identified regardless of whether students move to a poorer or more affluent area.

"Our findings support prior research that demonstrates the strain mobility places on academic attainment after accounting for other academic risk factors," said lead author Molly Metzger, PhD, assistant professor at the Brown School.

"Evidence suggests that mobility in adolescence hampers chances of [high school](#) graduation regardless of whether youth move to a relatively poorer or less-poor neighborhood," she said. "Our results suggest housing policies and programs that promote mobility must consider potentially meaningful unintended consequences for youth and families."

The study, "Residential Mobility During Adolescence: Do Even 'Upward' Moves Predict Dropout Risk?" was recently published in the journal *Social Science Research*.

As part of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a nationally representative survey that followed seventh- to 12th-graders in the mid-1990s into their young-adult years, researchers asked students whether they had moved to a new residence during the previous year.

Metzger and her team analyzed the data and came to their conclusion.

"This finding is especially relevant to youth transitioning to adulthood who tend to lean on informal supports more than institutional resources," Metzger said.

**More information:** Molly W. Metzger et al. Residential mobility during adolescence: Do even "upward" moves predict dropout risk?, *Social Science Research* (2015). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2015.05.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2015.05.004)

Provided by Washington University in St. Louis

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