

Serving Homeless Families in Early Care and Education Programs

*Child Care, Head Start, Early Childhood Special
Education, 4 Year Old Kindergarten, Early
Intervention-Birth to 3 and Home Visitation*



Wisconsin State Task Force on
Homelessness in Early Childhood
11/15/2017

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25 U

*Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, **housing**; medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.*

-General Assembly of the United Nations December 10, 1948

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The Wisconsin State Task Force on Homelessness in Early Childhood

Purpose/Mission Statement

Service providers and advocates at the state and local level will better coordinate existing policies, reaching across programs to ensure that young, homeless children are served in Wisconsin's early care and education programs.

Objectives

- Strengthen State Cross Sector Collaboration around serving young children who are homeless
- Strengthen Local Cross Sector Collaboration around serving young children who are homeless
- Improve Outreach
- Improve Identification
- Increase Enrollment in high quality early care and education services
- Maintain Stability











These materials were developed by the Wisconsin State Task Force on Homelessness in Early Childhood. The task force was convened in April 2016 in response to 1.) New federal policy guidelines on serving homeless children and families in federally funded early care and education programs and 2.) Recently released, startling indicators showing that infants represented the highest percentage of those found in homeless shelters with toddlers and preschool children representing the second highest rate.

This toolkit is accompanied by a series of training modules that address federal policy for serving homeless families with young children in federally funded early care and education programs. The modules can be found on the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners page at <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/>

The Wisconsin Promise

Wisconsin will strengthen collaboration and coordination with Wisconsin Homeless Education Coordinators, Birth to 3 Interagency Council, Child Find, Head Start, Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), Wisconsin Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and statewide Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies to help to ensure that young children experiencing homelessness are accessing quality early childhood programs.

At the local level, Wisconsin will encourage collaboration and individual partnerships to expand local capacity to meet the needs of families and children experiencing homelessness. This includes, but is not limited to:

-  Local early intervention or early learning councils
-  Local educational agencies/school districts/local homeless liaisons
-  Head Start and Early Head Start programs
-  Local child care providers
-  Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuums of Care
-  Domestic violence shelters
-  Homeless coalitions
-  CCR&R agencies
-  Salvation Army
-  Family Resource Centers

The *Homelessness in Early Childhood Task Force* will continue to work to address the needs of state and community partners as well as develop new aligned approaches to collecting data that will inform our activities and efforts toward abating the incidence of homelessness among young children in Wisconsin.

Introduction

Beginning in 2016, new federal rules for preschool, Head Start, and child care went into effect. These rules include many new policies designed to remove barriers and better support young children experiencing homelessness. This convergence and alignment of federal policies represent a critical opportunity for state and local action to better serve our youngest children experiencing homelessness.

This toolkit is made available in response to the new federal rules. We have chosen to also include the Birth to 3 and Home Visitation sectors as a means of keeping the messaging consistent across all service delivery areas.

Early care and education (ECE) programs provide tremendous benefit to all children, especially our nation's most vulnerable children. Children and their families who experience homelessness deal with a great many challenges. Quality ECE programs buffer the challenges and risks associated with homelessness by supporting children's learning and development in safe, stable and nurturing environments.

Infants, toddlers and preschoolers who experience homelessness are at grave risk of developmental delays and other problems due to a variety of factors, such as a lack of prenatal and early health care, crowded and unsanitary living conditions, poor nutrition, and the trauma caused by severe poverty and unstable living arrangements. Tragically, homelessness also creates unique barriers to enrolling and participating in early childhood programs, which are known to mitigate the

Barriers to Enrollment

Lack of Awareness:

Early childhood programs may not be aware of family homelessness in their communities. Most families experiencing homelessness stay in a variety of unstable situations, including staying temporarily with other people because they have nowhere else to go, or in motel rooms. These largely hidden living arrangements make outreach and identification a challenge. In addition, homeless service providers often lack awareness of the unique needs of young children, and may not know how to serve them.

High Mobility:

Families in homeless situations frequently are forced to move among temporary living situations. Shelters often limit a family's stay; parents move in search of employment; acquaintances may only be able to provide shelter for a short period of time. Due to the instability of homelessness, families often leave the service area of early childhood programs before their children rise to the top of enrollment waiting lists.

Transportation:

Families experiencing homelessness often do not have vehicles or funds to pay for transportation for their children to attend early childhood programs.

Lack of Documents:

Families experiencing homelessness often lack documents required for enrollment, such as health records, proof of income, and birth certificates, which may result in enrollment being delayed or denied.

harmful life-long effects of homelessness on education, health and well-being.

Strategies for improving services for young children experiencing homelessness will vary because each of the different funding streams for early childhood education programs is governed by different laws and regulations. Two of the major federal programs serving young children, Head Start and the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), are administered by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), while 4 year old kindergarten and IDEA Part B fall under the state and federal Departments of Public Instruction. IDEA Part C (Early Intervention-Birth to 3) falls under the auspices of the National Departments of Health and State Departments of Health. Federally funded Home Visitation Services are administered by the Department of Health at the national level and by the Department of Children and Families in Wisconsin.

This document describes policies and related suggestions for how states and programs can serve homeless children and families through these programs. Some of these ideas are relevant to the administration of all programs while others are requirements or recommendations specific to each program. We encourage you to take these into consideration as you evaluate your existing policies and procedures.

Early Childhood Homelessness in My State

410,394

children under age 6 live in Wisconsin

16,629

children under age 6 experienced homelessness in 2015 in Wisconsin²

1 out of every **24**

Wisconsin children

EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS

in 2015

The Early Childhood Homelessness Epidemic

Individuals are most likely to experience homelessness in infancy.

The first year of life is when people are most likely to enter shelter and transitional housing programs, followed by ages one to five.

Among low-income families, being pregnant or having a child under the age of two is associated with elevated risk for seeking or entering shelter. This may be driven by various factors. For example, raising an infant is expensive; in 2013, low-income single parents spent about \$8,000 to \$9,000 a year raising a child 0-2 years old, with housing, along with child care and early education, accounting for the largest share of the costs. Additionally, the birth of a child affects parents' ability to work, often disrupts family routines, and can trigger the need for additional space and resources. For low-income families who are sharing housing with family or friends because they are unable to afford their own place to live, the birth of a child may further strain limited social and financial resources or necessitate the need to leave inadequate housing arrangements and in some situations, lead to the loss of housing.

Almost half of children in shelters are under age 6.

Families represent approximately one-third of those experiencing homelessness.

Like many other low-income families, these families often are headed by a single woman, and they have an average of two children, at least one under age six.

Almost half of the children in families accessing shelter and transitional housing in a given year are under age 6—over 150,000 young children. Moreover, this figure does not include those who are sharing housing with others due to economic hardship.

Early Childhood Education for Children Experiencing Homelessness

13%

of children experiencing homelessness were served by Head Start/Early Head Start or McKinney-Vento-funded ECE programs

87%

of children experiencing homelessness were unserved by federally-funded ECE programs

Number of children under 6 served by federally-funded education programs for which data was available in 2015⁴

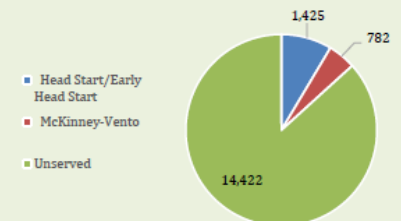


Image Credit: *2017 Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile*. The Administration for Children and Families

Homelessness during pregnancy and in the early years is harmful to children's development.

Pregnant women experiencing homelessness are less likely to receive adequate prenatal care than housed mothers, and their children are at increased risk for low birth weight, which can negatively influence a child's cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development.

Experiences of homelessness and housing instability in early childhood are associated with delays in children's language, literacy, and social-emotional development, potentially setting a course for cascading negative consequences. The science of early brain development indicates that children's earliest experiences and environments influence later success in school and life.

It is for these reasons that early developmental screening of children who are identified as homeless is critical. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends conducting developmental surveillance at every health supervision visit and conducting general developmental screening using evidence-based tools at 9, 18, and 30 months, *or whenever a concern is expressed*.

The incidence of homelessness in a young child's life can have traumatic effects on their development and a developmental and social emotional screen is therefore recommended immediately upon identification. Ongoing focused observation and awareness of the child's physical and emotional health are of the greatest importance throughout the child's experience with homelessness and in the months following such an incidence.

In cases where there is a concern, referral to your local Early Intervention program (for children Birth to 3 years of age) or to your local school district's special education program (for children ages 3 through 5) is recommended.

Families experiencing homelessness have unique needs.

While families with young children experiencing homelessness are a diverse group with varied needs, many share key characteristics and have particular needs, in addition to the fundamental need for housing, that, if addressed, can lead to more positive child and family outcomes.

Many families are affected by trauma.

Families with young children in emergency shelters experience an elevated number of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), with higher levels of ACEs among parents predicting more child adversity.

Many families experiencing homelessness have also experienced ongoing, interpersonal trauma, including community and domestic violence and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and homelessness itself can be a traumatic experience. Repeated traumatic events can serve as a barrier for families to participate in services and supports and form trusting relationships, and Children who face an overwhelmingly negative experience or multiple, repeated adverse experiences in the absence of sufficient support from a caring adult may experience “toxic stress”—a prolonged activation of the stress response system characterized by increased heart rate, blood pressure, and stress hormones. This kind of response can disrupt brain development and increase the chances of developmental delays, poor educational performance, and relationship and behavioral difficulties, as well as developing chronic health conditions including diabetes and heart disease.

About a quarter of families experiencing homelessness are headed by young parents.

The birth rate among young women in adolescence and early adulthood has declined to historic lows over the past 25 years. However, disparities in the teen birth rate continue, with a disproportionate number of births to Black and Latino teen girls, as well as young people reporting lower educational attainment and family income.

According to the recent HUD-funded Family Options Study, 27.1 percent of families experiencing homelessness were headed by someone under the age of 25.

Young parents experiencing homelessness are a particularly vulnerable population in highly stressful and unstable environments often with little support. As they face a new, stressful role as a parent (compounded by the stress of homelessness), most are also trying to establish their lives as adults by reaching important developmental milestones of their own including meeting educational goals and finding and maintaining gainful employment to become more self-sufficient. Youth and young adults who are parents are more likely than adult parents to report dropping out of high school, and may leave foster care without appropriate transition supports. Furthermore, young mothers in general are at increased risk for depression, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, trauma exposure, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Brain development that impacts planning and decision making continues through early adulthood, and this could have a profound impact on parenting.



Families experiencing homelessness are disproportionately from underserved racial groups.

Underserved groups constituted a large proportion of families experiencing homelessness; just under half were African American, about 40% were white, and the remaining individuals were multiracial (6.2%), Native American (2.4%), Pacific Islander (2.4%), and Asian (0.9%). In 2015, about a quarter of people in families experiencing homelessness identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Subtitle VII-B of The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act authorizes the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program and is the primary piece of federal legislation related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness enrolled in public schools. It was reauthorized in December 2015 by Title IX, Part A, of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The definition of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act has always been applied to any children who are in attendance at an Early Childhood Program administered by a school district such as IDEA Part B, Four Year Old Kindergarten, and in school district administered Head Start.

Recently, the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness has been adopted at the federal level by all Head Start programs, CCDBG (Child Care Subsidy Program) and IDEA Part C.

Legal Definition of Homelessness

According to section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)), the term “homeless children and youths”

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence ...; and

(B) includes—

(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals;

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings ...

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Children and youth are considered homeless if they fit both part A and any one of the subparts of part B of the definition above.

McKinney-Vento Definition of Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness has been adopted at the federal level by all Head Start programs, including those not administered by a school district, CCDBG (Child Care Subsidy Program) and IDEA Part C.

Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes:



children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;*



children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings



children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings



A Step by Step Process for Analyzing Situations

Tools related to this section:

#1 ACF Self Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Homeless Families - Section A: Identification and Support

#2 Outreach and Identification

#3 Questions to Ask When Determining Housing Status






#4 Sample Residency Questionnaire

Step 1: Get the Facts.

What is the family's situation?

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) recommends the following strategies when learning more about a family's living arrangement:

Use a standard enrollment form that includes the collection of information about the family's living situation to gather initial information like that found in **Tool #5 Sample Residency Questionnaire**

-  . If the form indicates that the student may be homeless, ask additional questions as needed to get a better sense of the family's circumstances.
-  Avoid using the word "homeless," as the stigma associated with the word may lead parents to insist they are not homeless even though their living situation would fit the McKinney-Vento definition.
-  Explain that the purpose for asking questions about their living arrangement is to determine if they are eligible for some additional supports and request that the parent/guardian provide you with the information needed to make a determination. Understand that families may be hesitant to answer questions for various reasons that include a desire for privacy, concerns related to domestic violence, or fear of losing their housing or custody of their children; however, in most cases you will be able to gather enough information to make a determination.
-  Respect the family's privacy by talking to them in a private space where other children and staff members cannot overhear the conversation.
-  Conduct a conversation with the family using applicable questions such as those provided in *NCHE's brief entitled "[Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Services: Do's and Don'ts for McKinney-Vento Local Liaisons.](#)"*)

Do not contact persons or agencies outside of your own program to obtain information about the child's living situation; this likely would violate the family's privacy and dignity). For example, do not contact landlords, public housing agencies, or law enforcement to verify living situations.

Step 2: Analyze the Facts.

Is the child eligible for provisions allowed for homeless families? To be eligible for special provisions, the child must meet the definition of homeless: *“Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”* Lacking any one of these three conditions would make a child eligible. In other words, if the residence is not fixed, regular, and adequate, it is considered a homeless situation. The law then lists several situations as specific examples of homelessness. The list of examples included in the definition is not exclusive; rather, it is meant to address some of the more common situations of homelessness. Determining whether a particular child fits the definition of homeless is done on a case-by-case basis.

To make a determination of homelessness:

(A) see if the child's situation fits into one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law; and if not,

(B) consider if the child is in another situation that would fit the definition of homelessness by not meeting the fixed, regular, and adequate standard.

Does the family's living situation fit into one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law?

A. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason. “Sharing the housing of other persons...” implies that the family is staying in another person’s home. Some pertinent questions to help determine if this is the case would include:

- Does the child have a legal right to be in that home?
- Can the family be asked to leave at any time with no legal recourse?
- Is the living situation intended to be temporary or long term?
- Did the family move into the home as an urgent measure to avoid being on the street or in another precarious situation? “...due to loss of housing...” implies that the student or family has no personal housing available.
- Did the student or family lose their previous housing due to:
 - An eviction or an inability to pay the rent or other bills?
 - Destruction of or damage to the previous home?
 - Abuse or neglect (such as in the case of a youth who leaves or is asked to leave the home)?
 - Unhealthy conditions, such as an inadequate physical environment, infestations, drug or alcohol abuse in the home, or domestic violence?

B. “...economic hardship ...” includes cases where limited financial resources have forced families to leave personal residences and share housing due to an inability to pay rent and other bills. The way that the shared housing came about and the intention of the residents are significant.

- If economic hardship such as an accident or illness, loss of employment, loss of public benefits, or condition of poverty forces a family to share the housing of others temporarily, the children meet the definition of homeless.

C. Living in a hotel, motel, or trailer park due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations. The phrase “...due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations” can help determine whether these living situations should be considered homeless situations.

- Motels, hotels, and camping grounds will almost always be homeless situations, as they are rarely fixed, regular, and adequate; however, considering whether alternative adequate accommodations are available can help identify possible exceptions, such as a wealthy family living in a luxury hotel on a long-term basis when adequate alternatives are available to the family.
- In contrast, trailer parks often are fixed, regular, and adequate residences. Asking questions about the condition and size of the trailer, the number of people living there, the intended length of stay, and whether the family has an adequate alternative will help determine if he or she is eligible for McKinney-Vento services.

D. Living in an emergency or transitional shelter.

- Emergency or transitional shelters of all kinds, including youth shelters, domestic violence shelters, family shelters, transitional living programs, and supportive housing programs are homeless situations.

F. Living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.




- An example of a place that meets these criteria is a public restroom.

G. Living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.

- These specific examples are largely self explanatory. In evaluating whether housing is “substandard,” consider standard dictionary definitions of the word substandard: “deviating from or falling short of a standard or norm” or “of a quality lower than that prescribed by law” (MerriamWebster’s Collegiate Dictionary).”
- Thus, determining if housing is substandard may include a consideration of such factors as:
 - Health and safety concerns, such as inoperable plumbing;
 - Number of occupants per square foot;
 - State and local building codes;

H. Migratory children who are living in circumstances described above.

Step 3: Get additional input. If you are still not sure if a student is homeless, consider the following resources:

-  The school district's local homeless education liaison
-  The State Coordinator for homeless education
-  The NCHHE Helpline at 800-308-2145 or homeless@serve.org

Determining eligibility is only the first step in implementing the McKinney-Vento Act. Once it is determined that a child fits the definition of homeless, the program should provide all rights and services required under the unique provisions established for each program.

Program by Program

Additional Information regarding protocols for each service delivery area can be found in the following table.

Child Care

Homelessness presents barriers to child care over and above what other poor families face. Homeless parents are less likely to receive child care subsidies; they are more likely to rely on informal child care arrangements and to report quitting jobs or school due to problems with child care. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have implemented final regulations requiring States to prioritize homeless children for child care services; to establish grace periods for enrollment that give homeless families a reasonable time to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements; and to use funds on enrollment, outreach, and training on the identification and enrollment of children experiencing homelessness.

These regulations went into effect on November 29, 2016. See this [summary](#) of CCDF regulations on homelessness.

<http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/dl/legis/CCDFRegsFINAL9262016.pdf>

Head Start/Early Head Start

Head Start programs offer comprehensive services to young children, including screenings, health, dental and mental health services. They actively engage parents to promote children's learning and development. Head Start programs thus are a perfect match for assisting families experiencing homelessness. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have implemented final regulations to update the Head Start Program Performance Standards. The regulations contain new policies on the prioritization and expedited enrollment and attendance of homeless children, as well as other procedures to facilitate the identification and stability of homeless children in Head Start and Early Head Start.

The regulations specific to homelessness went into effect on November 7, 2016. See this [summary](#) of Head Start regulations on homelessness.

<http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/dl/legis/Summary%20of%20Final%20Head%20Start%20Regulations%20Related%20to%20Homelessness%20FINAL.pdf>

IDEA Part C: Birth to 3/Early Intervention

Part C section 303.302 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires early intervention programs to identify, locate, and evaluate all eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities including children who are homeless as defined in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Each system must have a State policy in effect ensuring appropriate early intervention services are based on scientifically based research, to the extent practicable, and are available to all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, including infants and toddlers with disabilities who are homeless (*section 303.112*). Additionally *section 303.227* states there must be policies and practices adopted to ensure traditionally underserved groups including homeless children are meaningfully involved in the planning and implementation of all the requirements of this part.

School District Sponsored Early Childhood Programs: (IDEA Part B- Early Childhood Special Education and 4 year Old Kindergarten)

Among the most significant amendments to the McKinney-Vento Act is the extension of school stability and transportation rights to homeless children attending preschool programs administered by local educational agencies (Local School Districts). The amendments to the McKinney-Vento Act went into effect on October 1, 2016. While school stability is important for all children experiencing homelessness, it takes on special significance in the context of preschool programs. In Wisconsin, most school districts have 4 year old kindergarten programs. Therefore, children experiencing homelessness can enroll as any other public school student in these programs. There are however, no universal or compulsory programs for children under the age of five; therefore, preschool, including 4K programs, may not be available in all communities. For many young children experiencing homelessness, the ability to stay in the same preschool will be the only way to access any early childhood education at all. Research shows that early education is important to the academic development of all children..

Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation (MIECHV)

While there are no specific mandates for serving homeless families under the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program the potential benefits bear inclusion in this tool kit. Home visitation has been found to have one of the highest rates of return on investment. These programs can serve to strengthen parents' capacity to foster the education and development of their young children. Home visits can help parents provide the stimulation necessary to promote language acquisition, motor coordination, and achievement of other milestones, all of which are at risk when families experience homelessness. Home visiting programs meet with and follow families wherever they are currently living, providing ongoing support and consistency in the lives of children who may be highly mobile. Early intervention with at-risk children can

help mitigate some of the physical and emotional health issues associated with homelessness and result in improved long-term outcomes.

Home visiting programs reach pregnant women, expectant fathers, and parents and caregivers of children under the age of 5. MIECHV is administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in collaboration with Administration on Children and Families (ACF.)

In Wisconsin the these programs are administered through the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' [Family Foundations Home Visiting Program](#)

A Comparison of Program Policy: School District Early Childhood Programs, Head Start, Child Care, Early Intervention/Part C of IDEA; and Home Visitation Policies

Preschool, Head Start, Child Care Early Intervention and Home Visitation Policies for Children Experiencing Homelessness

Federal rules for preschool, Head Start, and child care include many policies designed to remove barriers and better support young children experiencing homelessness. This convergence and alignment of federal policies represent a critical opportunity for state and local action to better serve our youngest children experiencing homelessness. While the governance and structure of public preschool, Head Start, and Child Care and Development Fund services may differ, we are hopeful that the new emphasis on young children experiencing homelessness will bring communities together to make the most of these new provisions.

To that end, the chart below summarizes the most significant rules by topic area, across five federal programs.

This publication was written by Barbara Duffield, former Director of Policy and Programs, at NAEHCY, in collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood Development at the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Grace Whitney, Director of the Connecticut Head Start State Collaboration Office; and Carie Bires, Policy Manager, the Ounce of Prevention Fund and has been adapted to reflect a broader range of federally funded programs.

For more information, please contact NAEHCY at info@naehcy.org.

Preschool, Head Start, and Child Care Policies for Children Experiencing Homelessness

Updated: October 4, 2016

School District Operated Preschool, Head Start, Child Care, Early Intervention/Part C of IDEA and Home Visitation

Policies for Children Experiencing Homelessness

School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

- Reauthorized in 2015
- [Non-regulatory guidance](#) published July 2016

Administered by [the U.S. Department of Education](#)

The Head Start Act and the

Head Start Program Performance Standards

- The Head Start Act was Reauthorized in 2007
- [Regulations \(Head Start Program Performance Standards\)](#) published September 2016

Administered by [the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)

Child Care and Development Block Grant Act

- Authorizes the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
- Reauthorized in 2014
- [Regulations](#) published September 2016

Administered by [the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)

IDEA Part C Early Intervention

- Reauthorized in 2011
- [IDEA Part C Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities](#)
- Administered by [the U. S. Department of Education](#)

Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation (MIECHV)

[Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting](#)

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV
Applicability	<p>Applies to all local educational agencies Local School Districts. The McKinney-Vento Act’s preschool provisions apply to all Local School District-administered preschool programs, including Head Start programs that are administered by Local School Districts.</p>	<p>Applies to Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Programs.</p>	<p>Applies to all states that receive CCDF funds via the state’s Lead Agency and all child care providers/programs funded by CCDF.</p>	<p>Applies to all states that receive IDEA Part C funds via the state’s Lead Agency and all contracted service providers.</p>	<p>Applies to all states that receive MIECHV funds via the state’s Lead Agency and all contracted service providers.</p> <p>While there is no specific language in this legislation dedicated to special provisions for service to families who are homeless, we felt it was important for home visitation work to be included in this guide as a means of recognizing the importance of the work in bringing services to homeless families.</p>

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV
Definition of Homelessness	Children and youth who lack “a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence,” including shelters, transitional housing, unsheltered locations, public places, sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason,” and living in motels “due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.”	Identical definition.	Identical definition..	Identical definition.	Identical definition.

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV
Eligibility	Children and youth who meet the definition of homelessness are eligible for the protections and services of the McKinney-Vento Act.	Children who are age eligible and pregnant women who meet the definition of homelessness are categorically eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start programs <u>Note:</u> This means that families who meet homeless eligibility criteria do not also have to meet income guidelines. Categorically eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start does not mean that homeless children all will be enrolled, because of the limited number of seats/slots. There are more children who are eligible for Head Start than there are slots .	Children are eligible if 1) they are under age 13; and 2) their family income does not exceed 85 percent of state median. 3) they reside with a parent or parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program. Children are also eligible if they are receiving, or need to receive, protective services and reside with a parent or parents who are not working or attending a job training or educational program.. At State option, the income, work, and job	States must make appropriate early intervention services available to infants and toddlers with disabilities, including those who are homeless (IDEA, Part C; McKinney-Vento Act). "... ensures that appropriate early intervention services based on scientifically based research, to the extent practicable, are available to all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, including...infants and toddlers with disabilities who are homeless and their families.	Under the MIECHV Program, the following populations must be prioritized for home visiting services: low-income families; families with pregnant women under age 21; families that have a history of child abuse or neglect or have had interactions with child welfare services; families that have a history of substance abuse or need substance abuse treatment; families that use tobacco products in the home; families that are at risk for or have children with low student achievement; families with children with developmental delays or disabilities; families that include individuals who are serving or formerly served in the Armed Forces

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV
Eligibility (con't)		Therefore, not all eligible children can participate in Head Start and Early Head Start.	training/education requirements may be waived for families, if determined to be necessary on a case-by-case basis.. States may establish additional eligibility criteria.		

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV
Eligibility Determinations	<p>Every Local School District must designate a liaison for homeless children and youth who is able to carry out the duties in the law. Local School District homeless liaisons are required to ensure that homeless children are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other entities and agencies. Liaisons must participate in professional development offered by the State, as deemed appropriate by the State Coordinator.</p>	<p>Age eligible children for EHS (birth to 3) HS (3-5) and pregnant women who are also determined to be homelessness are eligible. <u>Note:</u> A program’s policies cannot require families to provide documents that confirm a child’s age if it is a barrier to the child’s enrollment. To verify whether a family is homeless, a program may accept a written</p>	<p>Lead Agencies must describe in their state Plan the procedures that are in place for documenting and verifying that children receiving assistance meet eligibility criteria at the time of eligibility determination and redetermination. §98.68(c). A child meeting eligibility requirements at the most recent eligibility determination or redetermination is considered eligible during the period between redeterminations.</p>	<p>Age eligible children for IDEA Part C (birth to 3) experiencing a developmental delay, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: a. Cognitive development; b. Physical development, including vision and hearing; c. Communication development; d. Social or emotional development; e. Adaptive development;</p>	N/A

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV
Eligibility Determinations (con't)	The State Coordinator must provide professional development for liaisons that includes information on federal definitions of homelessness. Determinations should be individualized and made on a case-by-case basis.	statement from a homeless services provider, school personnel, or other service agency attesting that the child is homeless, or any other documentation that indicates homelessness, including documentation from a public or private agency, a declaration, information gathered on enrollment or application forms, or notes from an interview with staff to establish the child is homeless, or any other document that establishes homelessness. However, if a family cannot provide these		or 2. Has a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay.	N/A

	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards				
Eligibility Determinations (con't)	documents, staff can document efforts made and provide a written statement as such. Programs must keep eligibility determination records for each participant and must provide eligibility training for staff.				
	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV
Identification and Outreach	Homeless liaisons are required to ensure that homeless children are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other entities and agencies. Liaisons also must disseminate public notice of McKinney-Vento rights in locations frequented by parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth, in a manner and form understandable to parents, guardians, and youth. States and Local School Districts must review and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification of homeless children and youth.	Programs are required to identify homeless children. Programs must develop and implement a recruitment process designed to actively inform all families with eligible children within the recruitment area of the availability of program services, and encourage and assist them in applying for admission to the program. Programs must include specific efforts to actively locate and recruit children with disabilities and other vulnerable children, including homeless children.	Lead Agencies must expend funds on activities that improve access to quality child care services for children experiencing homelessness, including training and technical assistance for providers and appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving children experiencing homelessness and their families; and specific outreach to families experiencing homelessness. §98.51(b)-(c).	Child Find provisions include a requirement that states ensure that homeless children with disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated. In the report accompanying Part C, Congress stated that states should conduct public awareness programs about the Part C program in homeless family shelters, health service offices, public schools and the child welfare system. IDEA 2004 <i>Nuts & Bolts of Homeless and Foster Care/Ward of the State Provisions</i>	Increased risk factors should be considered in transition plans for homeless children approaching their third birthday All families are screened for homelessness and housing needs are enrollment and at minimum, annually thereafter.

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Identification and Outreach (con't)				<p>those who are homeless (IDEA, Part C; McKinney-Vento Act). Furthermore, the Child Find provisions include a requirement that states ensure that homeless children with disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated.</p>	

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Expedited Enrollment	<p>Local School Districts are required to immediately enroll homeless children and youth, even if children have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness, or even if they do not have required documents, such as school records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, guardianship, or other documents.</p> <p>If a student does not have immunizations, or immunization or other health records or screenings, the liaison must immediately assist in obtaining them; the student must be enrolled in the interim. Enrollment means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.).</p>	<p>Programs must allow homeless children to attend for up to 90 days or as long as allowed under state licensing requirements, without immunization and other records, to give the family reasonable time to present these documents. Programs must work with families to get children immunized as soon as possible to meet state licensing.</p> <p>If a program determines from the community assessment that there are families experiencing homelessness in the area, the program may reserve one or more enrollment slots for pregnant</p>	<p>Lead Agencies must establish a grace period that allows children experiencing homelessness and children in foster care to receive services while providing their families (including foster families) a reasonable time to take any necessary action to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements.</p> <p>Lead Agencies must coordinate with licensing agencies and other relevant State and local agencies to provide referrals and support to help families of children receiving services during a grace period comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements.</p>	<p>All procedural safeguards and Birth to Three procedures apply to a child who meets the eligibility criteria and his parents whether or not the parent(s) defines their family as homeless. Coordinator will note this in the Child Info Screen in the data system. The purpose for doing this is to alert the receiving service coordinator to take extra measures to ensure completion of visits, managing no shows without a quick exit, and keep the transition plan up to date at all times.</p>	N/A

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Expedited Enrollment (con't)	States and Local School Districts must review and revise policies to remove barriers to the education of homeless children and youth, “including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.”	women and children experiencing homelessness when a vacancy occurs. No more than 3 percent of a program’s funded enrollment slots may be reserved. If the reserved enrollment slot is not filled within 30 days, the enrollment slot becomes vacant and the Program must fill it within 30 days.	<p>Lead Agencies must expend funds on activities that improve access to quality child care services for children experiencing homelessness, including the use of procedures to permit enrollment (after an initial eligibility determination) of children experiencing homelessness while required documentation is obtained.</p> <p>If, after full documentation is provided, a family experiencing</p>		

	Child Care and Development Block Grant
Expedited Enrollment (con't)	<p>homelessness is found ineligible, the Lead Agency must pay any amount owed to a child care provider for services provided as a result of the initial eligibility determination. Any CCDF payment made prior to the final eligibility determination will not be considered an error or improper payment.</p> <p>Lead Agencies must give priority for child care services to children experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>A penalty of five percent of the funds allotted under §98.61 (i.e., the Discretionary Funds) for a Fiscal Year shall be withheld for any For Fiscal Year the Secretary determines that the Lead Agency has failed to give priority for service.</p> <p>Wisconsin Shares waives the 7-day verification time limit for children in foster care. Homeless families are not required to provide documentation of homelessness, but must follow all other eligibility criteria. S. 252.04 Wis. Stats. and DHS 144 allow parents a grace period of 30 school days (six calendar weeks) to supply immunization records. Programs are required to comply with these provisions.</p> <p>Source: Homeless Families with Young Children FY2016-FY2018 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plans</p>

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Continuity/Stability	<p>Local School Districts are required, according to each child’s best interest, to continue the student’s education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, and until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes permanently housed; or enroll the child in any public school that housed students living where the student is living are eligible to attend.</p> <p>“School of origin” is defined as the school attended when permanently housed or school in which last enrolled, including a preschool..</p>	<p>If a program serves homeless children, it must make efforts to maintain the child’s enrollment regardless of whether the family or child moves to a different service area, or transition the child to a program in a different service area, according to the family’s needs. For families and children moving out of the community in which they are currently served, including homeless families Head Start programs must undertake efforts to support effective transitions to other Early Head Start or Head Start programs. If Early Head Start or Head Start is not available, the program should assist the family to identify another early childhood</p>	<p>Children maintain eligibility for a minimum of 12 months, regardless of increases in parents’ earnings (as long as income remains at or below the Federal eligibility limit) and temporary changes in participation in work, training, or education.</p>	<p>If the parent and child’s address is expected to change to a town that the provider program does not serve, the “Transfer of a Child from One Program to Another” procedure must be followed quickly in order to reduce or eliminate any gap in service provision. The service coordinator should facilitate the parent’s choice of a Birth to Three programs that serves their new town. Consent must be obtained to release information about the child and family to the receiving program using Form 3-3. Families who relocate precipitously due to unforeseen events, such as eviction or domestic violence, or who do not give prior notice of</p>	<p>Home visiting programs conduct visits wherever families are at and facilitate warm handoffs to other supports when families move out of a service area or age out of the program.</p>

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Continuity/Stability (con't)	<p>In determining best interest, Local School Districts must presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student’s best interest, unless contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.</p> <p>Local School Districts also must consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety. School districts also must give priority to the parent’s/guardian’s request.</p> <p>In determining the best interest of preschoolers, Local School Districts also</p>	<p>program that meets their needs.</p>		<p>relocation will appear to be “missing scheduled visits”. This may apply to a family that has a history of homelessness as well as to those who are experiencing homelessness for the first time since enrollment in Birth to Three. The service coordinator should make reasonable efforts to obtain the parent and child’s new contact information. may include calling secondary phone numbers (cellular or office) and extended family members whose information was recorded at intake, contacting community agency staff for whom a release of information has been granted. If these efforts do not</p>	

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Continuity/Stability (con't)	should consider attachment to teachers; availability and quality of services in the new area; and travel time, among other factors..			produce a successful contact with the parent and three or more scheduled visits are missed, the service coordinator will follow the Exit procedure for “children whose families consistently miss scheduled visits”	

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Transportation	<p>If remaining in the school of origin (including preschool) is in the child’s best interest, the Local School District must provide transportation to and from the child’s school of origin at the request of the parent or guardian.</p> <p>In addition, Local School Districts must provide comparable transportation services</p> <p>Local School Districts are required to remove barriers to enrollment and retention for homeless children. This includes transportation barriers.</p>	<p>If a child experiencing homelessness is unable to attend classes regularly because the family does not have transportation to and from the program facility, the program must utilize community resources, where possible, to provide transportation for the child.</p>	<p>No specific transportation provisions for children experiencing homelessness.</p>	N/A	N/A

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Collaborations to Ensure Access and Services	<p>Liaisons must ensure that homeless families and homeless children have access to and receive services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs), and, if eligible, early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and other preschool programs administered by the local educational agency.</p> <p>State McKinney-Vento plans must describe procedures to ensure that preschoolers experiencing homelessness have access to public</p>	<p>Each Head Start program must establish channels of communication between Head Start staff and McKinney-Vento liaisons to facilitate coordination of programs.</p> <p>Head Start programs must establish necessary collaborative relationships and partnerships with community organizations that may include housing assistance agencies and providers of support for children and families experiencing homelessness, including the local educational agency liaison designated</p>	<p>Lead Agencies must coordinate the provision of child care services with other Federal, State, and local child care and early childhood development programs (including programs for the benefit of children experiencing homelessness) to expand accessibility and continuity of care as well as full-day services. §98.14(a)(1).</p> <p>Lead Agencies must coordinate the provision of services with the state, and if applicable, tribal agencies responsible for services for children experiencing homelessness,</p>	<p>Any state receiving a Part C grant must establish a State Interagency Coordinating Council, which must include a representative of the State McKinney-Vento Coordinator and the state child welfare agency</p> <p><i>IDEA 2004 Nuts & Bolts of Homeless and Foster Care/Ward of the State Provisions</i></p>	

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Collaborations to Ensure Access and Services (con't)	<p>preschool programs administered by the State educational agency or local educational agency.</p> <p>State McKinney-Vento coordinators must coordinate with agencies that serve preschoolers, including child development and preschool personnel, to improve the provision of comprehensive services to children</p>	<p>under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.</p> <p>The State Director of Head Start Collaboration must develop a strategic plan that will enhance collaboration and coordination of Head Start services by Head Start agencies with other early childhood education and development for limited English proficient children and homeless children.</p>	<p>including State Coordinators of Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY State Coordinators) and, to the extent practicable, Homeless liaisons and Continuum of Care Grantees.</p> <p>§98.14(a)(1)(xi).</p>		

		School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Referrals and Services	<u>Note:</u>	Homeless liaisons must make referrals to health care, dental, mental health, substance abuse, housing and other services.	Programs must provide comprehensive services, including screenings, health, dental, and mental health, to every enrolled child.	States may use CCDF funds to support a system of child care resource and referral organizations that can provide consumer education to parents/caregivers, training and technical assistance to providers, and collect and analyze data. §98.52.	DHS 90.07 Identification and referral	Home visiting programs must assist families in accessing health insurance coverage, primary health care, and clinical preventive services and must coordinate with other service providers in their communities to support a comprehensive system of care for pregnant women and families with young children.
	Under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Education Act, Local School Districts that choose to use Title I funds to provide early childhood education services to low-income children below the age of		Programs are required to provide a broad range of opportunities and services to all parents to support family wellbeing, parent involvement in the program and family engagement around children’s learning and development.	States must collect and disseminate information about the availability of the full diversity of child care services that will promote informed child care choices, including other programs for which families that receive	Establishment of child find system. Each county administrative agency shall establish a comprehensive child find system to ensure that all children who may be eligible for the birth to 3 programs are ...referred for screening or for evaluation to determine eligibility for the birth to 3 program. The system shall include public awareness activities and an informed referral network. Referral of specific at-risk infants and toddlers. require the	

		School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Referrals and Services (con't)	compulsory school attendance must ensure that such services comply with the performance standards established under section 641A(a) of the Head Start Act 20 USC §6312(c)(7).			child care services may be eligible (including Head Start and Early Head Start, IDEA Part B and Part C programs, TANF, SNAP, and WIC). States must also provide information on how to access developmental screening.	referral of a child under the age of three who resides in Homeless family shelters; the Part C program in homeless family shelters, health service offices, public schools, and the child welfare system In the report accompanying Part C, Congress stated that states should conduct public awareness programs about	

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Parental Involvement/Family Engagement	Homeless liaisons must ensure that parents are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children, and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children. 42 USC §11432(g)(6)(A)(v).	Programs must integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to support family well-being and promote children’s learning and development.	Lead Agencies must describe how they support child care providers in the successful engagement of families in children’s learning and development. §98.16(gg). States must provide consumer and provider information that includes research and best practices related to meaningful parent and family engagement. §98.33(b)(1)(iv).	States must ensure the meaningful involvement of homeless families in the planning and implementation of the Part C program. DHS 90.10 Development of service plan team shall consist of the parent, other family members requested by the parent, the service coordinator, an advocate if requested by the parent, at least one of the qualified personnel who took part in the evaluation and assessment of the child, at least one professional who has expertise in assessment of both typical and atypical development and expertise in child development and program planning, and appropriate service providers. DHS 90.12 Procedural safeguards for parents	

	School District Operated Preschool: Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	The Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Birth to 3 IDEA Part C	MIECHV Family Foundations
Parental Involvement/Family Engagement (con't)				<p>A reasonable time before a county administrative agency or service provider proposes or refuses to initiate or change any of the following, the county administrative agency or service provider shall provide written notice to the parent and ensure that the parent understands the notice</p> <p>DHS 90.09 Family-directed assessment</p> <p>Any assessment of the child's family shall be with the family's permission. The assessment shall be directed by the family and shall focus on the family's strengths, resources, concerns and priorities related to enhancing development of the child.</p>	

Best Practice Strategies for Serving Children Experiencing Homelessness

Tools related to this section:





#1 ACF Self Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Homeless Families


#6 Partnering with Families


#7 Resources for Families

#8 Resources for Early Childhood Professionals


The following strategies are general guidelines for the best approach to serving homeless families. The pages following this section contain more specific rules for each program type.


-  ***Establish Sensitive and Supportive Relationships with Parents:*** When working with the parents of families experiencing homelessness it is important to be extra sensitive to the circumstances and needs of the family. Acknowledge and accept that the family's housing situation may change frequently and ask that they keep you up to date. Check in on a weekly basis to see if the family has any needs for which you might be able to refer or provide direct assistance. This check in can also serve as an ideal time to provide an update on their child's well being as a way to set the parent's mind at ease.
-  ***Insure that staff is Adequately Trained in Trauma Informed Practices:*** It is common for homeless children and their families to have had traumatic experiences that have contributed to their situation. Working with trauma affected individuals requires specialized skills that can be attained through training.
-  ***Prioritize Access to Services for Homeless Families:*** When deciding eligibility for enrollment in your ECE programs, give homeless families priority status so that homeless children are more likely to receive ECE services
-  ***Offer Flexibility to Homeless Families:*** Examine the documentation required to enroll in an ECE program and, where appropriate, provide “grace periods” that give families sufficient opportunity to gather required documents, such as proof of income or other financial statements, within a reasonable time frame.


 ***Provide Reasonable Flexibility in Meeting Immunization Requirements:*** Establish a grace period in which children can receive services while families are taking the necessary actions to comply with the immunization and other documentation requirements. Work closely with families to help them collect the appropriate documentation within a reasonable time frame by utilizing the [Wisconsin Immunization Registry](#).


 ***Coordinate with Local Homeless Liaisons:*** School district homeless liaisons identify children and youth experiencing homelessness and connect them and their families to programs and services. This could include, housing, health care, preschool programs if there non-school age children in the family, and other appropriate services. ECE programs are encouraged to connect with homeless liaisons to ensure a coordinated effort when children enter the public school system.

For more information, visit the [U.S. Department of Education’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth Grants](#) for State and Local Activities website, which provides links to regulations, policy guidance, FAQs, and a directory of State Coordinators for the Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness.³

 ***Work with Homeless Coalitions/Continuum of Care:*** The ECE community should participate on homeless coalitions which bring together homeless programs with other community organizations. The purpose of these coalitions is to ensure that services available to homeless families (particularly support services beyond housing) reflect the needs of the community. By participating on these coalitions, ECE representatives can ensure that the unique needs of young children are well represented.

 ***Partner with Neighboring Programs and Child Care Resource and Referral Programs to Serve Mobile Homeless Families:*** Establish informal or formal agreements in working with programs and Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to serve highly mobile families that are moving into a new neighborhood or region.

 ***Utilize Program Options that Best Fit Community Needs:*** Programs can consider program options that are the best fit for families in communities with high concentrations of families and young children experiencing homelessness. In such communities, full-day, full-year, center-based services in communities may be the best program option.

 ***Policy Development:*** Develop Policy around serving families experiencing homelessness that allows for flexibility that increases access to services.

The Importance of Data Collection

Tools related to this section:

#1 ACF Self Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness - Section E: Improving Collection, Reporting and Utilization of Data

#7 Resources for Early Childhood Professionals

Collecting, sharing, and integrating data on early childhood homelessness across programs, communities, and systems is important for a variety of reasons. Data is the key to understanding the size and scope of the problem, as well as the services and benefits accessed by families experiencing homelessness. Data can also improve a community's ability to appropriately identify and match families to housing, early care, early intervention and preschool special education, education, health, and developmental interventions; conduct a needs assessment; understand the effectiveness of interventions and track progress toward meeting shared goals to prevent and end early childhood homelessness.

Better understanding the size and scope of the problem, as well as the experiences of young children and their parents experiencing homelessness in the community can help improve housing and early childhood program design, targeting, and supports for these families. In addition, data sharing can reduce burden on staff and families by limiting data entry and supporting better targeting of resources.

Continuum of Care (CoC) Programs are designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and State and local governments to quickly re-house homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

CoC's are also the primary source for data on homelessness, conducting bi-annual point in time surveys to identify those who are homeless within the communities that they serve.

Collaboration: Working with Your Homeless Liaison and Continuum of Care (CoC)

Tools related to this section:

- #1 ACF Self Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Homeless Families-
Section D: Engaging in Strategic Collaboration**
- #5 Charting the Early Childhood Infrastructure**
- #7 Resources for Early Childhood Professionals**

Throughout this document you will find references to the importance of collaboration in your communities. There are two particular resources in every area of the state that are critical components to collaboration.

Homeless Liaisons

Each public school district is required to assign the duties of homeless liaison to a member of their staff. The homeless liaison is responsible for identifying and enrolling students experiencing homelessness in their school district. Homeless liaisons also ensure students and families receive services under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Homeless Liaisons work with students in their school district, but also often refer families and non-school age siblings to community partners such as Head Start and Birth to Three and are encouraged to collaborate with community partners, including early childhood providers.

To find out who your school district's homeless liaison is go to the following link and scroll to the bottom of the page: <https://dpi.wi.gov/homeless/liaisons>

Continuum of Care

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals. In 2007, 461 CoCs submitted application for federal homeless assistance funds in all 50 states, plus DC, Puerto Rico, and Guam. CoCs represent communities of all kinds, including major cities, suburbs and rural areas.

In 1995, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) began to require communities to submit a single application for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants in order to streamline the funding application process, encourage coordination of housing and service providers on a local level, and promote

the development of Continuums of Care (CoCs). By requiring communities to submit a single application, HUD hoped to encourage a more structural and strategic approach to both housing and providing services to homeless people. A CoC would provide this more strategic system by providing homeless people with housing and services appropriate to their range of needs.

The Four Parts of a Continuum

According to HUD, a CoC is “a community plan to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximize self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness.” HUD identifies four necessary parts of a continuum:

- 🏠 Outreach, intake, and assessment in order to identify service and housing needs and provide a link to the appropriate level of both;
- 🏠 Emergency shelter to provide an immediate and safe alternative to sleeping on the streets, especially for homeless families with children;
- 🏠 Transitional housing with supportive services to allow for the development of skills that will be needed once permanently housed; and
- 🏠 Permanent and permanent supportive housing to provide individuals and families with an affordable place to live with services if needed.

CoCs are tasked to track and manage the homeless community in their area. One of most important activities entrusted to CoCs is the biannual count of the homeless population and an annual enumeration of emergency systems, transitional housing units, and beds that make up the homeless assistance systems. These counts provide an overview of the state of homelessness in a CoC, and offer the information necessary to redirect services, funding, and resources as necessary. The CoC also manages these services, offering both prevention strategies and homeless assistance programs to assist those at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.

To find out who serves as your areas CoC :

If you work in one of the following areas, simply go to the link beside their name. If you do not work in any of these areas go to the following link to identify which group covers your area: <http://www.wiboscoc.org/find-services.html>

- 🏠 Dane County: <http://www.danecountyhomeless.org/>
- 🏠 Milwaukee: <https://www.facebook.com/milwaukeeecoc/>
- 🏠 Racine County: <http://racinecoc.org/>

Collaboration Strategies

- 🏠 Invite Homeless Liaisons to community partner meetings about early childhood education
- 🏠 Participate in Continuum of Care (CoC) meetings with homeless liaisons and other service providers
- 🏠 Reach out to liaisons every school year
- 🏠 Have a strategic plan for partnering
- 🏠 Recognize that often liaisons wear multiple hats, especially in rural districts
- 🏠 Connect with school staff that provides services (not just liaison) counselors, social workers, etc.
- 🏠 Know the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness
- 🏠 Create memorandum of understanding (MOU) for information sharing
- 🏠 Develop referral protocols for identification

Conclusion

Successfully meeting the comprehensive needs of families experiencing homelessness requires building relationships and partnerships between local housing and early childhood providers where both systems take an active role in the community to learn about each other's programs and make necessary referrals. This can be achieved through a two-generation approach to ensure local programs work together to meet the full needs of both parents and their young children experiencing homelessness. The coordinated entry process can facilitate such partnerships and collaboration to help ensure families are connected with appropriate housing and early childhood service supports. Early childhood programs can do their part to identify housing needs of the families they connect with every day.

Data can help us better understand the size and scope of the problem of early childhood homelessness in our communities, identify which interventions work best for young children and their parents, and track our progress on reaching our shared goal of preventing and ending family homelessness by 2020. The Wisconsin Task Force on Homelessness in Early Childhood believe implementing the recommendations and strategies included in this tool kit and their accompanying training modules can help move us closer to this shared goal so every young child and parent has the opportunity to thrive.

Tools

Tool # 1 ACF Self Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness

Tool # 2 Outreach and Identification

Tool # 3 Sample Questions to Ask When Determining Housing Status

Tool # 4 Sample Residency Questionnaire

Tool # 5 Charting the Early Childhood Infrastructure

Tool # 6 Partnering with Families

Tool # 7 Resources for Families

Tool # 8 Resources for Early Childhood Professionals

Resources

Online Training

Videos

Tool # 9 Case Studies

Tool # 10 Screening and Assessment

Tool #1

Self Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Homeless Families



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



**INSPIRE MINDS.
CHANGE LIVES.™**

SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS SERVING
FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Summer 2017



A guide to creating early childhood settings that support the safe and healthy development of young children experiencing homelessness.

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Introduction

As a provider of high-quality early care and education programs, you regularly support the healthy and safe development of infants, toddlers and preschoolers who are experiencing homelessness in your community. This is especially important considering the high number of young children who experience homelessness and the effects that the stress caused by homelessness can have on their development. Research has shown that homelessness puts children at increased risk of poor health, developmental delays, academic underachievement and mental health challenges. Welcoming children and families who experience homelessness to your safe, developmentally appropriate program will assure that these children have the best possible start to a bright future.

This Self-Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness has been specifically designed for child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, and public pre-k programs as a guide for welcoming and supporting families and children experiencing homelessness into these programs. We know that ending family homelessness will require us to implement whole-of-community strategies to ensure that every member of each family experiencing homelessness is offered the services and the supports they need to thrive. Early care and education providers play a critical role in identifying and supporting families with young children who are experiencing homelessness and connecting those families to other resources within their community.

This tool is just one of several resources that the Administration on Children and Families (ACF), Ounce of Prevention Fund, CSH and others have created to support the healthy and safe development of children experiencing homelessness. Others include:

- [Birth to Five: Watch me Thrive!](#)
- [Developmental Screening Guide for Shelter and Housing Providers](#)
- [Early Childhood and Family Homelessness Resource List](#)
- [Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters](#)

- [Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Supportive Housing](#)
- [Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness: CCDF State Guide](#)
- [Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness: CCDF State Self-Assessment](#)

Definition of Homeless Used by HS/EHS, Child Care, and Preschool

HS/EHS follows the definition of homeless children established in Sec. 725 of the McKinney-Vento Education Assistance Act.

Subtitle VII-B of the [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) (per Title IX, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act) defines homeless as follows:

The term "homeless children and youths"—

- (a) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and
- (b) includes—
 - (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;*
 - (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));
 - (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
 - (iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

*Per Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, "awaiting foster care placement" was removed from the definition of homeless on December 10, 2016; the only exception to his removal is that "covered states" have until December 10, 2017 to remove "awaiting foster care placement" from their definition of homeless.

Why This Tool Is Important

Approximately 1,211,348 children under the age of 6 will be homeless at some point during the year,¹ many of whom will spend substantial time in shelters. These children face a host of barriers that are linked to poor physical, socio-emotional and intellectual development outcomes.

² Supporting the healthy development of young children experiencing homelessness can reduce the prevalence of developmental and behavioral disorders that are associated with high costs and long-term consequences for the housing crisis, health, mental health, education, child welfare and justice systems.³ Early childhood programs can be a positive force in the lives of children and mitigate the negative impact that homelessness can have on their development by creating an environment that is safe and developmentally appropriate.

Additional Concerns: Child Abuse & Domestic Violence

We recognize that in the course of working with young children, providers may discover situations of concern within the family. If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, contact your local Child Protective Service or law enforcement agency so professionals can assess the situation. Many states have a toll-free number to call to report suspected child abuse or neglect. To find out where to call, consult the [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#).

If you find that a child is currently part of a family that is experiencing domestic violence, find a safe time and place to speak to the parent. Let her or him know that there is help available by calling 1.800.799.7233. The [National Domestic Violence Hotline](#) provides crisis intervention and can help the parent plan for safety and next steps.

For additional resources, check out Childhelp®, a national organization that provides crisis assistance and other counseling and referral services. Call 1.800.4.A.CHILD (1.800.422.4453). The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with professional crisis counselors who have access to a database of 55,000 emergency, social service, and support resources. All calls are anonymous.

¹ Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile, June 2017, www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/epfp_50_state_profiles_6_15_17_508.pdf.

² Bassuk, Ellen L., Cristina Murphy, Natalie Thompson Coupe, Rachael R. Kenney, and Corey Anne Beach. America's Youngest Outcasts: 2010.

Why This Tool Is Important

National Center on Family Homelessness, Needham, MA. 2011; Tumaini R. Coker, Marc N. Elliott, David E. Kanouse, Jo Anne Grunbaum, M. Janice Gilliland, Susan R. Tortolero, Paula Cuccaro, and Mark A. Schuster. "Prevalence, Characteristics, and Associated Health and Health Care of Family Homelessness among Fifth-Grade Students." *American Journal of Public Health* 99:8, 1446-1452. August 2009; Bassuk, E. L., Volk, K. T., & Olivet, J. "A framework for developing supports and services for families experiencing homelessness." *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal*, 3, 34-40. 2010.

³ Johnson, K. and J. Rosenthal. (2009). Improving Care Coordination, Case Management, and Linkages to Service for Young Children: Opportunities for States. (Portland, ME: The National Academy for State Health Policy, April 2009). www.nashp.org/making-the-case#sthash.e4r0aYIK.dpuf; Reynolds, A. and J. Temple. (2008). "Cost-effective early childhood development programs from preschool to third grade." *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 4, 109–139.

Organization of This Tool

This tool contains recommendations for making early childhood programs more responsive to the unique needs of infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families who experience homelessness in five areas: Identification and Support; Removal of Barriers; Responding to Family Needs; Engagement in Strategic Collaboration; and Improving Collection, Reporting and Utilization of Data. Links to resources referenced in the tool are highlighted and listed at the end of the tool starting on page 20. Also accompanying these recommendations is an action plan form that can be found on page 18.

We understand that your program is likely operating at capacity, with little extra time or financial resources. Therefore, this tool categorizes recommendations by the estimated amount of resources they will require.

- Recommendations that likely require few resources, i.e. those that can be done for little to no money or staff time, are marked with an asterisk and highlighted in white.
- Recommendations that likely require some resources, i.e. those that may need a small amount of money or staff time, are marked with two asterisks and highlighted in light blue.
- Recommendations that likely require substantial resources, i.e. those that may require shelters to apply for grant funding, are marked with three asterisks and highlighted in dark blue.

Low Resource Requirements*

Some Resource Requirements**

Substantial Resources***

How to Use This Tool

We recommend that early childhood program staff use this tool first to do an initial assessment of their program, noting whether each recommendation has been accomplished, is improving, or needs action. Based on the results of the initial assessment, staff and leadership then can use the resources referenced to identify strategies to best support young children and their families who experience homelessness. These strategies can then be translated into an action plan.

We suggest that staff members use this tool to re-evaluate the program's progress at least once during the implementation process and once after the process's completion. Periodically repeating the process will ensure ongoing progress and the ability to address newly identified needs. Also, because of the complex and changing nature of each family's experience with homelessness, it may be helpful to consistently engage

Organization of This Tool

volunteers and parents throughout the process of improving the program's policies and practices related to infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families who experience homelessness. It may be helpful to engage homeless service providers, McKinney-Vento liaisons, and other homelessness/housing experts in your community in the process as well.

This tool is not intended to serve as a comprehensive guide to programming in early childhood programs or as a guide for ensuring the full educational and developmental needs of young children. It is simply a mechanism to guide early childhood staff and leadership as they begin the process to improve how well their program welcomes and serves young children and their families who experience homelessness.

Thank You for Making a Difference

Research indicates that the first 5 years of a child's life are critical to brain development, academic achievement, and outcomes later in life. The work you are doing to provide the infants, toddlers and preschoolers who experience homelessness in your program with a safe and developmentally appropriate experience is vital to the trajectory of their lives.

In addition, you can continue to play an important, positive role in the lives of countless young children by passing this tool along to other early childhood programs and publicizing the need for specialized practices in serving young children experiencing homelessness throughout your community. Early care and education providers are encouraged to actively participate in their community's [Continuum of Care](#), which coordinates homeless service delivery in order to better connect to external resources available to families experiencing homelessness. If you aren't already, it would also be helpful to reach out to your [Local Emergency Food & Shelter Program Board](#), which provides funding for temporary shelter and food services. Both are great places to advocate for young children experiencing homelessness and to share the work you are doing to make a difference in your community. Finally, it would also be helpful to connect and collaborate with McKinney-Vento liaison(s) stationed at local schools, as they can be great partners in recruiting and enrolling young children experiencing homelessness into early childhood programs.

Please visit ACF's website for a full list of [ACF resources on early childhood homelessness](#). Please visit Ounce of Prevention Fund [publications webpage](#) for a full list of articles, newsletters and toolkits.

Self-Assessment Tool

Section A: Identification and Support

What have we done so far?	Accomplished	Improving	Needs Action	Notes	Next Steps
A1. We use respectful and sensitive language on all flyers, applications and in intake processes; we don't use the word "homeless" with families or staff, but more neutral language like "temporary living situation"*					
A2. Our forms are McKinney-Vento compliant/friendly, and ask sensitive questions about living situations (e.g. do not ask a family if they are homeless)*					
A3. We post outreach materials prominently in our programs targeted specifically to families experiencing homelessness*					
A4. We partner with local schools to identify and enroll younger siblings of school-aged children who are identified as experiencing homelessness*					
A5. We provide awareness activities and training on homelessness for all staff in a position to interact with families, such as attendance clerks, custodial staff, bus drivers, teachers, nurses, etc.**					

What have we done so far?	Accomplished	Improving	Needs Action	Notes	Next Steps
A6. We do outreach and enrollment in places families experiencing homelessness may be, such as shelters, motels, health clinics, public assistance offices, campgrounds, with other families in our program, etc.**					
A7. We have a designated liaison to serve as a single point of contact who identifies and enrolls families experiencing homelessness, refers families to coordinated entry and other housing resources, coordinates with community partners, and/or supports other staff***					

Resources Referenced in This Section

- A1 (respectful and sensitive language): [Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act](#)
- A2 (forms McKinney-Vento compliant/friendly): [McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Common Form](#)

Additional Resources for This Section

Staff training and awareness resources

- [Core Competencies in the HCH Setting: A Guide for Administrators](#)
- [Serving Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Facts on Trauma and Homeless Children](#)
- [Awareness Videos on Homelessness and Homeless Education](#)
- [Expanding Early Care and Education for Homeless Children](#) (multiple resources)
- [Resource Guide to Trauma-Informed Human Services](#)

Other

- [Continuum of Care](#)

Section B: Removal of Barriers

What have we done so far?	Accomplished	Improving	Needs Action	Notes	Next Steps
B1. We are flexible with documentation, screening and other enrollment requirements*					
B2. Our program marketing and recruitment materials are “ McKinney-Vento friendly ” and do not unintentionally discourage homeless families from applying ^{4*}					
B3. We coordinate closely with other community service agencies, including and particularly homeless service providers, for referrals*					
B4. We prioritize children experiencing homelessness for enrollment in our program*					
B5. We expedite and/or simplify enrollment for children experiencing homelessness*					

⁴ Families who experience homelessness may be discouraged from applying if outreach materials state that certain documentation is required at the time of application. Materials should omit required documentation or clearly state that families who experience homelessness do not need to produce these documents in order to apply.

What have we done so far?	Accomplished	Improving	Needs Action	Notes	Next Steps
B6. We focus recruitment and enrollment of homeless families as close as possible to the beginning of the program year, if applicable*					
B7. We reserve slots in our program for children experiencing homelessness**					
B8. We retain children experiencing homelessness in our program, when possible, even when they move outside of our service area in the best interest of the child ⁵ **					
B9. We assist families in obtaining needed documentation, know who to work with in our community to access documents already on file, and in particular we avoid unnecessary duplicate immunization, etc.**					
B10. We provide or arrange for transportation for children experiencing homelessness***					
B11. Our programs or services are located close to where families experiencing homelessness are, such as shelters and motels***					

⁵ Per the Every Student Succeeds Act, early childhood programs administered by a Local Education Agency, including Head Start programs, are required to allow children to remain in their school of origin, subject to best interest of the child, if they become homeless and move outside of the program’s typical service area,

Resources Referenced in This Section

- B2 (McKinney-Vento compliant/friendly materials): [McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Common Form](#)
- B4 (prioritize children): [CCDF Homelessness Guide](#)
- B7 (reserve slots): [Summary of Final Head Start Regulation Related to Homelessness](#)

Additional Resources for This Section

- [NAEHCY Chart](#) outlining Head Start, Child Care and pre-k policies
- [McKinney-Vento definition](#)



Section C: Responding to Family Needs

What have we done so far?	Accomplished	Improving	Needs Action	Notes	Next Steps
C1. We expect and plan for mobility, including developing a communication plan with families and preparing for unexpected transitions*					
C2. We develop positive relationships with families experiencing homelessness at a comfortable, respectful pace using strengths-based attitudes and relationship-based practices *					
C3. We respond to non-academic needs, such as clothing, diapers, etc. and partner with other community-based organizations to provide additional supports and services**					
C4. We are vigilant in screening for developmental delays or disabilities , or past involvement with Early Intervention or Early Childhood Special Education, for children experiencing homelessness**					
C5. We expedite IDEA services whenever possible and provide extra support to families experiencing homelessness**					

C6. We train our staff on the impacts of trauma and how to accommodate and work with children and families who have experienced trauma**					
C7. Our program policies are trauma-informed **					
C8. We have procedures in place to support children and families who have experienced trauma**					

Resources Referenced in This Section

- C2 (positive relationships with parents): [Strengths-Based Attitudes and Relationship-Based Practices](#)
- C4 (screening for developmental delays or disabilities): [Birth to 5: Watch me Thrive!](#)
- C5 (IDEA services): [Question and Answers on Special Education and Homelessness](#)
- C7 (trauma informed care): [ACF Resource Guide to Trauma-Informed Human Services](#)

Additional Resources for This Section

- [Supporting Homeless Children and Youth with Disabilities: Legislative Provisions in the McKinney-Vento Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)
- [McKinney-Vento, IDEA and You: Strategies for Helping Homeless Children with Disabilities](#)
- [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center \(ECTA\) resource page](#)

Section D: Engaging in Strategic Collaboration

Because families who experience homelessness often have complex needs that require support and services across a number of service systems, strong and active collaborative relationships with service partners is an essential component to serving families who experience homelessness. This section outlines some of the most critical partnerships and collaboration practices that early care and education programs should have in place in order to effectively serve these families.

What have we done so far?	Accomplished	Improving	Needs Action	Notes	Next Steps
D1. We have relationships with key homeless services partners, such as McKinney-Vento liaisons, shelters, supportive housing providers and public housing agencies*					
D2. We have relationships with community partners who can assist in identifying and providing supportive services to families experiencing homelessness, such as motel managers, law enforcement, legal aid, behavioral health agencies, domestic violence agencies, public health departments and soup kitchens*					
D3. We meet regularly with partners to develop collaborative plans for supporting children and families experiencing homelessness**					
D4. We go onsite to partner agencies to engage and enroll families**					

What have we done so far?	Accomplished	Improving	Needs Action	Notes	Next Steps
D5. We collaborate with key partners on service provision, such as case management services**					
D6. We have a designated staff liaison who is responsible for collaborating with homeless services partners***					
D7. We have joint procedures, forms, or agreements with partner agencies for simplifying and expediting referrals***					
D8. We cross-train with key partners and share best practices across organizations in working with families experiencing homelessness***					
D9. We share data with key partners, and in particular, offer data to local homeless service providers and Continua of Care to help them understand the scope of early childhood homelessness in the community***					

Resources Referenced in This Section

- D7 (joint agreements with partner agencies): [Memorandum of Agreement between the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Head Start Association](#)
- D9 (offer data): [homeless data in community assessments and program planning](#)

Additional Resources for This Section

- [Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness](#)
- [Engaging Your Community: A Toolkit for Partnership, Collaboration, And Action](#)
- [Building Partnerships to Address Family Homelessness](#)



Section E: Improving Collection, Reporting and Utilization of Data

What have we done so far?	Accomplished	Improving	Needs Action	Notes	Next Steps
E1. We identify children experiencing homelessness in our program and record, report, and track that data*					
E2. We provide regular training to all staff involved in data collection and reporting related to homelessness**					
E3. We review enrollment data on children experiencing homelessness regularly and develop improvement plans as needed**					
E4. We regularly collect and review data on retention and attendance of children experiencing homelessness and develop improvement plans as needed**					
E5. We consider homelessness data in community needs assessments and program planning ***					

Resources Referenced in This Section

- E5 (homelessness data): [homelessness data in community needs assessments](#)

Action Plan for Creating a Safe, Developmentally Appropriate Environment for Young Children

Goal: _____

Action Steps	Timeline	Person(s) Involved	Resources Needed

Signature of Leadership/Staff: _____

Appendix A: Forms

Use Forms to Sensitively Screen for Homelessness

- Check box if address listed is temporary
- Describe living situation
- Provide living situation options

Follow Up With a Conversation Whenever Possible

- Tell me about where you're staying now.
- Is your living situation temporary or permanent?
- Are you all sharing the home equally or are you more like guests?
- Do you move frequently? How many times have you moved in the past year?
- Do you expect to move again soon?
- How many people are staying in the home? How many bedrooms and bathrooms does it have?
- Do you have heat/electricity/running water where you are?
- Do you feel safe and secure where you are?

Allow For Multiple Modes of Contact

- Email, alternative phone numbers, alternative addresses

Appendix B: Resource Links

Section A: Identification and Support

Resources Referenced in This Section

- A1 (respectful and sensitive language): [Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act](#)
- A2 (forms McKinney-Vento compliant/friendly): [McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Common Form](#)

Additional Resources for This Section

Staff training and awareness resources

- [Core Competencies in the HCH Setting: A Guide for Administrators](#)
- [Serving Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Facts on Trauma and Homeless Children](#)
- [Awareness Videos on Homelessness and Homeless Education](#)
- [Expanding Early Care and Education for Homeless Children](#) (multiple resources)
- [Resource Guide to Trauma-Informed Human Services](#)

Other

- [Continuum of Care](#)

Section B: Removal of Barriers

Resources Referenced in This Section

- B2 (McKinney-Vento compliant/friendly materials): [McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Common Form](#)
- B4 (prioritize children): [CCDF Homelessness Guide](#)
- B7 (reserve slots): [Summary of Final Head Start Regulation Related to Homelessness](#)

Additional Resources for This Section

- [NAEHCY Chart](#) outlining Head Start, Child Care and pre-k policies
- [McKinney-Vento definition](#)

Section C: Responding to Family Needs Resources

Resources Referenced in This Section

- C2 (positive relationships with parents): [Strengths-Based Attitudes and Relationship-Based Practices](#)
- C4 (screening for developmental delays or disabilities): [Birth to 5: Watch me Thrive!](#)
- C5 (IDEA services): [Question and Answers on Special Education and Homelessness](#)
- C7 (trauma informed care): [ACF Resource Guide to Trauma-Informed Human Services](#)

Additional Resources for This Section

- [Supporting Homeless Children and Youth with Disabilities: Legislative Provisions in the McKinney-Vento Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)
- [McKinney-Vento, IDEA and You: Strategies for Helping Homeless Children with Disabilities”](#)
- [Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center \(ECTA\) resource page](#)

Section D: Engaging in Strategic Collaboration Resources

Resources Referenced in This Section

- D7 (joint agreements with partner agencies): [Memorandum of Agreement between the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Head Start Association](#)
- D9 (offer data): [homeless data in community assessments and program planning](#)

Additional Resources for This Section

- [Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness](#)
- [Engaging Your Community: A Toolkit for Partnership, Collaboration, And Action](#)
- [Building Partnerships to Address Family Homelessness](#)

Section E: Improve Collection, Reporting and Utilization of Data Resources

Resources Referenced in This Section

- E5 (homelessness data): [homelessness data in community needs assessments](#)

Other Resources

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network blends the best practices of the clinical research community with the wisdom of front-line community service providers. Its mission is to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families and communities throughout the United States. For more information go to www.NCTSNet.org.

- Administration for Children and Families: www.acf.hhs.gov and www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/interagency-projects/ece-services-for-homeless-children
- Children’s Defense Fund: www.childrensdefense.org
- Education for Homeless Children and Youth: www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless
- Health Care for the Homeless Information Resource Center: www.nhchc.org/resources/clinical/tools-and-support/hch-information-resource-center
- National Alliance to End Homelessness: endhomelessness.org
- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth: www.naehcy.org
- National Center on Homeless Education: nche.ed.gov/about.php
- National Coalition for the Homeless: www.nationalhomeless.org
- National Health Care for the Homeless Council: www.nhchc.org
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty: www.nlchp.org
- Ounce of Prevention Fund: theOunce.org and collaboratingpartners.com/documents/CCDFHomelessnessGuidefinalOct2015.pdf
- SchoolHouse Connection: www.schoolhouseconnection.org
- Urban Institute: www.urban.org
- United States Interagency Council on Homelessness: www.usich.gov
- Zero to Three: www.zerotothree.org

Tool #2

Outreach and Identification

The following information was developed by Office of Head Start and was originally featured in their *Interactive Homelessness Lessons*. Unfortunately that tool is not currently available on their site we are told it will be returning soon. The information is still a useful tool for thinking about how to reach homeless families in your community.

Ideas and Procedures

Ideas	Procedures
Educate staff, community partners, and government-level partners	<p>Encourage training and awareness activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning opportunities for outreach staff that will enable them to identify and assist families experiencing homelessness. • Training and awareness activities on (1) the definition and (2) signs of homelessness for program staff, including administrators, bus drivers, family support staff, social workers, teachers, and others. • How to use sensitivity and discretion in following up on answers to questions. • Avoiding the use of the word “homeless.” Exercise sensitivity when talking with parents and youth, who often are afraid to identify themselves as homeless due to fears of stigma or negative repercussions. • Cross-training in the larger early childhood system to spread the same message to increase cross-referrals. Educate partners, such as the McKinney-Vento liaison and families in homeless situations, to understand the McKinney-Vento Act and how it relates to your program. Partner with local school systems and help them understand your program's enrollment requirements. • Making staff aware of regulations and operating procedures, such as closing times or lights-out and meal schedules, of shelters and other organizations serving families in homeless situations. • <p>Provide outreach materials and activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on priority enrollment for children experiencing homelessness. • Asking about housing status as part of the standard enrollment process. • Outreach materials and posters where there is a frequent influx of families and youth in high-risk situations, including: low-cost motels, campgrounds, laundromats, libraries, social service agencies, and youth centers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching out to unaccompanied homeless youth who are pregnant or parenting by collaborating with street outreach teams, drop-in centers, and youth shelters, and by working to build trust with young people. • Ask the community for help. Contact local agencies to seek their collaboration in identifying and serving homeless children and youth, including: faith-based organizations, food banks, homeless continuum of care, Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCGs), housing and public health departments and programs, homeless coalitions, shelters, and soup kitchens. • Ask families for help. Families can share information, for example, by word of mouth and by posting outreach materials where their peers will see them. • Ask school district liaisons for help. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, every school district is required to designate a homeless liaison. The McKinney-Vento Act requires liaisons to ensure that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies. Contact local school districts to obtain the name of the state homeless education coordinator or liaison.
<p>Outreach materials and posters</p>	<p>Leave materials and posters where there are low-income families (e.g., shelters, campgrounds, motels, public housing projects, laundromats, libraries, social service agencies).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe different living arrangements that qualify as homeless situations. Not all families who are experiencing homelessness think of themselves as “homeless” • Keep the materials well stocked. • Include information on rights, who is considered homeless, and a local number to call. • Participate in fairs and activities that are specific to homeless populations. • Place materials in work rooms at hotels, cafeterias, restaurant kitchens and other job locations where parents in homeless situations may work (remember families in homeless situations may have jobs but no home to go to after work).

Awareness activities	<p>Provide awareness activities for the community, infant, toddler, and preschool environments, and school staff through professional development training sessions. Include a list of local service providers such as food banks, clothing providers, and medical, dental, and counseling resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct family nights to offer health checks, services, and resources. <p>Invite service agency personnel and homeless families to help conduct sensitivity training for school staff including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Registrars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Secretaries o School counselors o School social workers o School nurses o Teachers o Bus drivers o Administrators o Attendance officers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include training on (1) the definition and (2) how to recognize common signs of homelessness. • Visit sites where homeless families live. • Conduct parent outreach sessions at facilities, such as shelters and motels, where there are families in homeless situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Bring awareness of the value of Head Start. o Provide informational materials about the programs and services available. o Include materials in various languages. • Set up recruitment hubs at places where families experiencing homelessness might be. For example, create a mini recruitment fair at shopping malls or stores, check-cashing facilities, Goodwill clothing depots, soup kitchens, libraries, fast-food restaurants, etc. Set-up and staff tables to reach children and families in untraditional places for recruitment, but common to where families in homeless situations may gather.
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Procedures and paperwork	<p>During enrollment and intake, use sensitive techniques to identify families experiencing homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate to design a universal referral form that can be used across programs (e.g., a streamlined referral form that has contact information for each agency). • Share applications to ensure that all collaborating agencies are represented (e.g., Head Start staff visiting a family shelter would not leave only Head Start applications but also information about local liaisons).
Continuity of education	<p>Make a referral for older children to the local homelessness liaison.</p>
Avoid using the term “homeless”	<p>Avoid using the word “homeless.” Exercise sensitivity when talking with parents and youth, who often are afraid to identify themselves as homeless due to fears of stigma or negative repercussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term “homeless” is not always associated with children. Ask people if they know families who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staying temporarily with relatives or another family, ○ Staying at campgrounds or in their car, ○ Living at motels, or ○ Moving several times a year.
Information fliers, brochures, newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop fliers and brochures about your program and disseminate them to agencies and facilities serving families who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. Include information about the educational, health, and development needs of children and strategies to meet those needs. • Consider having a focus group with families experiencing homelessness to discuss whether your materials would attract them.
Use databases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort by children’s addresses to identify doubled-up situations.
Home visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct home visits to determine doubled-up situations.

Contacts

Who To Contact	Examples	Do This...
Low-cost motels and campgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park rangers • Managers of motels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform them of school services that are available to children experiencing homelessness. • Leave written materials, including minimum age eligibility information, for the families that stay there. • Include contact information for your program. • Ask them to help identify and contact you regarding families experiencing homelessness.
Agencies that work with families in homeless situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Homeless Task Force • Homeless coalitions • Homeless Assistance Continuum of Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlist these community-based groups as partners in the identification of children who are in homeless situations.
Community and social service agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food banks • Faith-based organizations • Homeless Assistance Continuum of Care • Community resource coordination groups • Housing and public health departments and programs • Homeless coalitions • Shelters • Soup kitchens • Drop-in centers • Welfare and housing agencies • Nonprofit agencies • Police or sheriff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local agencies and ask their assistance in identifying and referring families in homeless situations, particularly families who may not fit the traditional definition of homelessness. • Make the State Department of Social Services aware of the eligibility requirements for Head Start.
Local Education Agencies (LEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local liaisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage them to carry Head Start applications.
Families in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families who may be sharing their home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When doing outreach, find out if families are sharing their home or have other families living in their garage or guesthouse.

Locations for Outreach

Note: You may want to conduct initial intake at these locations

Locations	Examples	Do This...
Community service agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelters • Soup kitchens • Food banks • Transitional living programs • Street outreach teams • Drop-in centers • Community action agencies • Welfare departments • Housing departments • Public health departments • Community health centers • Medical clinics • Hospitals • Faith-based organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up meetings to begin to collaborate on issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Identification of families in homeless situations o Head Start enrollment process o Transportation • Tell them about your Head Start program and what it has to offer. • Ask them to provide referrals. • Provide outreach materials and posters in several languages. • Place streamlined referral forms throughout the community. Include contacts for each program on the form and use the same form for various programs.
Places with low-income families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public laundry facilities • Migrant housing developments • Low-income neighborhoods • Public housing complexes • Libraries • Social service agencies • Community events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationships with people who operate services or programs in these areas or who use the services. • Provide outreach materials and posters in several languages.
Shelters and transitional housing facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motels and hotels • Shelters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to staff about your program's services, enrollment processes, and eligibility requirements. • Offer family nights to provide information and resources. • Be available for outreach following natural disasters when there might be many displaced families.
Local daycare centers and preschools		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships and collaborate to identify families in homeless situations

Worksheet: Outreach Plan

What will you do? (Ideas and Activities)	Who will do it? (Name and Contact Information)	When will you do it? (Begin/End Date)	Where will you do it? (Target Locations)

Tool #3

Sample Questions to Ask When Determining Housing Status

Questions to Ask When Determining Housing Status

The following questions are designed to assist in gathering information from families to determine the extent to which their living arrangement is fixed, regular, and adequate. These questions should be used to guide a conversation with the parent/guardian.

Fixed:

- Is this a permanent arrangement or just temporary?
- Are you looking for another place to live?
- Do you plan to move out soon?
- Why are you staying in your current place?
- Where were you living right before this place? Why did you leave?
- Where would you go if you couldn't stay where you are?
- Are you staying with friends/relatives just for a little while?
- Did you and your friends/relatives decide to move in together and share a home and expenses for the long term? Or is this a temporary situation for you?
- Could your friends/relatives ask you to leave if they wanted to?
- Are you all sharing the home equally, or are you more like guests in the home?

Regular:

- Do you stay in the same place every night?
- Do you have a key to the place where you are living?
- Do you move around a lot?
- How long have you been at that place? How long do you plan to stay?
- How long did you live in your last place?

Adequate:

- How many people are living in the home? How many bedrooms/bathrooms does it have?
- Are you and your children sharing a room? How many people are staying in one room?
- Are you and your children sleeping in a bedroom, or in a public area, like a dining room?
- Does the home have heat/electricity/running water?
- What condition is the home in? x Does it keep out rain and wind? x Is it safe? x Is it warm and dry?

Tool #4

Sample Residency Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Act. The answers provided will help the administrator determine residency documents necessary for enrollment of the child. In the event that it is determined that the family qualifies as homeless the form should be kept separately from the child's other records and should be re-visited with each SHARES re-authorization.

Student Residency Questionnaire

Customize for your purposes

1. Presently, where is the student living?

Check one box:

- a. in a shelter
- b. with more than one family in a house or apartment
- c. with friends or family members (other than parent/guardian)
- d. in a motel, car or campsite
- e. choices do not apply (If you checked this option, you do not need to complete the remainder of this form)

If you checked box a,b,c,or d above please complete the remainder of this form.

2. The student lives with:

- 1 parent
- 2 parents
- 1 parent & another adult
 - a relative, friend(s) or other adult(s)
 - an adult that is not the parent or the legal guardian

Today's Date:				
Program:				
Name of Student:				
Male †		Female †		
Birth Date: / /		Age:		
Social Security# [if appropriate] :				
Name of Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s)				
Address:				
ZIP:				
Phone:				
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian: _____				
Date: _____				

Please list children of all ages who are currently homeless.
Refer school age children to your local school district homeless liaison

Child's Full Name	M/F	Birth date	Grade	School Name

Tool #5

Charting the Early Care and Education Infrastructure in My Community



Building Futures
Through Education

Understanding the Early Childhood Landscape of Services and Supports for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness

Know the early care and education infrastructure in your community and access the highest quality services for young children experiencing homelessness.

The early childhood field encompasses a wide variety of service types and settings, as well as funding streams and regulatory systems. For those in the field, it can seem like a maze, or even a heavy fog. Local resources are often blurred because communities tend to rename programs at the local level¹ and may even create their own policies and procedures regarding eligibility and enrollment. Fortunately, with a few key questions and sources of information, one can map out the local early childhood landscape. Knowing how the system is structured will help to identify programs and services by the components they represent, and may help in advocating for access, prioritized enrollment, and service expansion, especially where originating legislation and regulations include mandates for children experiencing homelessness, or allow for flexibility in local implementation.

The **Early Care and Education Infrastructure in My Community** grid provides a list of the key programs supported by public funds and legislation and provides space to record what the program is called locally with the name and contact information for accessing the program and services. The **Early Education and Care Resource List** provides an annotated list of these same programs and a link to the programs' websites with state contacts who can help identify and access local programs. Most of the programs listed are major federal funding streams supporting state and local early childhood service systems, providing critical guidance for system design and often driving how programs and services are integrated and aligned to better support families. Any of those state contacts listed will be able to provide assistance in better understanding the early childhood landscape in local communities.

Early Care and Education Infrastructure in My Community

Program	What is this program called in my community?	Contact Name, Address, Email, Phone	Notes:
Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)			
Subsidized Child Care (Grants & Contracts)			
Child Care Subsidies (Vouchers)			
Head Start/Early Head Start			
State Pre-K			
Federal PDG Pre-K			
IDEA Part B/619 – Preschool Special Education			
IDEA Part C – Infant/Toddler Early Intervention			
MIECHV Home Visiting Programs			
Local/Regional Early Childhood Council			

Program	What is this program called in my community?	Contact Name, Address, Email, Phone	Notes:
State Advisory Council for Early Care and Education			
State MIECHV Home Visiting Advisory Council/			
McKinney-Vento Liaison			
Coordinated Access Network (Housing Case Management)			
My Key Early Childhood Go-To Resource:			

Special thanks to Grace Whitney, Connecticut's Director of the Head Start State Collaboration Office, for creating these tools. For more information on early childhood homelessness please see <http://naehcy.org/educational-resources/early-childhood> or contact Barbara Duffield, NAEHCY's Director of Policy and Programs, at bduffield@naehcy.org

Tool #6

Partnering with Families

The following resources are provided by the Office of Head Start's National Center on Parents, Family and Community Engagement.

When working with homeless families they are at their most vulnerable. Positive, supportive relationships matter most at times like these. These tools are meant to help you and your staff reflect upon the relationships that they have with all of the families they encounter, specifically those that face the greatest barriers.

Explore the role that Positive Goal-Oriented Relationships play in effective parent, family, and community engagement. This guide offers definitions, tools, and guides for reflective practice and supervision. This resource is intended for the entire Head Start and Early Head Start community **and** professionals in the early childhood field. Individuals, groups of staff, and supervisors can use this tool as part of training and reflective practice and supervision. This resource is aligned with the Office of Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework and Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).



**THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Parent, Family, and
Community Engagement**

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

POSITIVE GOAL-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIPS

Strength-Based Attitudes for Building Positive, Goal-Oriented Relationships

- ◆ Families are the first and most important teachers of their children.
- ◆ Families are our partners with a critical role in their family’s development.
- ◆ Families have expertise about their child and their family.
- ◆ Families’ contributions are important and valuable.



Relationship-Based Practices for Family Engagement

- ◆ Observe and Describe the Child’s Behavior to Open Communication with the Family
- ◆ Reflect on the Family’s Perspective
- ◆ Support Competence
- ◆ Focus on the Family-Child Relationship
- ◆ Value a Family’s Passion
- ◆ Reflect on Your Own Perspective

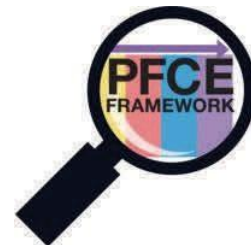


**THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Parent, Family, and
Community Engagement**

Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

POSITIVE GOAL-ORIENTED RELATIONSHIPS

NCPFCE@childrens.harvard.edu
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family>



Reflective Practice

A key to building positive, goal-oriented relationships is taking the time to reflect on our work with families. When we look at what's working and what's not, we can make changes that strengthen our relationships with families. Self-reflection is also an important part of our own professional growth.

Strategies for Effective Self-Reflection

- ◆ Observe and remember what happens with children, families, and staff.
- ◆ Think about how your own experiences affect you and your work.
- ◆ Think about the perspective of others.
- ◆ Identify stressors.

Reflective Supervision

It is also essential for staff to have healthy, trusting, and respectful relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Reflective supervision helps to nurture and guide staff so that they have the tools to engage children and families successfully.

Strategies for Effective Reflective Supervision

- ◆ Reflect on the staff's perspective.
- ◆ Support the staff's competence.
- ◆ Focus on the family-staff relationship.
- ◆ Value the staff's passion.
- ◆ Make time for your own reflection.

Strengths-based Attitudes for Supervision

- ◆ Staff deserve the support and respect we are asking them to give families.
- ◆ Staff are our partners with a critical role in achieving outcomes.
- ◆ Staff have expertise about their own field of practice.
- ◆ Staff contributions are valuable and important.



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
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Community Engagement**

NCPFCE@childrens.harvard.edu
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family>

Tool #7

Resource Links for Families Facing Homelessness

2-1-1 Help Line



2-1-1 Wisconsin is a service that connects everyone in Wisconsin with quick and easy access to community-based health and human services information and resources.

Services Hotline for Women, Children and Families

(877) 855-7296

<http://www.mch-hotlines.org/mch-hotlines/services-hotline-for-women-children-families/>

The goal of the Services Hotline is to give Wisconsin families access to resources that may be able to assist them in the event of an unexpected pregnancy. The Services Hotline can provide information regarding public benefits and private agencies that may be beneficial, including Badgercare, FoodShare, the Wisconsin Works (W2) program, Child Support agencies, Child Care Subsidies, Parenting Programs and Employment Services

Primary Legal Services Programs in Wisconsin

Legal Action of Wisconsin – serving low income people in 39 southern counties in the lower half of Wisconsin and migrant farmworkers statewide. <http://www.legalaction.org/>

Wisconsin Judicare

- serving 33 southern counties and 11 federally recognized Indian tribes. <http://www.judicare.org/>

Tenant Information and Resources

Tenant Resource Center – statewide housing counseling on tenants rights and responsibilities and mediation, and homeless assistance services in Dane County <http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org/>

WI Courts Small Claims and Eviction Process Information

Forms available, including Answer and Counterclaim (SC-5200), Petition for Stay of Eviction Based on Application for Emergency Assistance (SC-5510VB) , Stipulation for Dismissal (Eviction) (SC-5300VA), Basic Guide to Small Claims Actions (SC-6000).

https://www.wicourts.gov/forms1/circuit/ccform.jsp?page=1&FormName=&FormNumber=&beg_date=&end_date=&StatuteCite=&Category=38

Homeless Assistance Information

Emergency Assistance Grant <http://www.fsc-corp.org/programs/emergency-assistance/>

A grant program for low-income families facing eviction/foreclosure or who are homeless and moving into a new place, or for those affected by fire, flood, or other natural disasters.

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/w2/parents/w2>

W-2 Emergency Assistance Payment (See Policy Memo at 19.1)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/manuals/w-2-manual/Production/default.htm>

W-2 agencies must determine eligibility for an emergency payment for a participant who has an emergency need and is awaiting a first W-2 payment. Participants in a CSJ placement, CMC placement, and W-2 T placement, are eligible in the period prior to their first W-2 payment.

Emergency payments are one-time payments designed to meet an emergency need at the beginning of a W-2 episode. They are not an additional W-2 benefit. Emergency payments do not tick the clock because they qualify as non-recurrent, short-term benefits under the TANF definition of assistance.

Emergency payments may be used for needs such as shelter, food and work-related expenses, etc. They should be used in conjunction with other supports available to participants including EA.

There is no limit on the emergency payment amount; each W-2 agency may choose to establish a range of payments (e.g., between \$25 and \$750). The W-2 agency may also choose to limit the payment to no more than once every 12 months. Participants are not required to repay emergency payments.

Health Care

Wisconsin Public Health Information and Referral Services

The State of Wisconsin is committed to connecting women, children, and children with special needs to services. Several public health hotlines have been developed to meet these needs. The hotlines are answered 24 hours/day by professional Information and Referrals Specialists. The Specialists will refer callers statewide to the most appropriate agencies to apply for public benefits, such as, WIC, Birth to Three, Badgercare Plus, FoodShare, Prenatal Care Coordination, Childcare Subsidies, Early Intervention Programs, and the Wisconsin Well Woman Program.

[Maternal and Child Health Hotline](#)

(800) 722-2295

<http://www.mch-hotlines.org/mch-hotlines/maternal-child-health-hotline/>

The Maternal and Child Health Hotline is available to answer questions regarding a variety of programs for women and young children. In addition to serving as an initial point of contact for WIC offices across the state, we share information with all of our callers about other resources that may be helpful to them, including Badgercare, FoodShare, W2, Childcare Subsidies and Prenatal Care Coordination.

Wisconsin First Step

(800) 642-7837

<http://www.mch-hotlines.org/mch-hotlines/wisconsin-first-step/>

At Wisconsin First Step our mission is to assist parents in finding resources for their children, aged birth to 21, with special needs. Not only will we help you get connected to the Birth to Three Early Intervention Program, but we can also share information about other programs that may benefit your child and family, including care coordination, therapies, respite care, autism services, behavioral health resources, transition assistance and employment services.

Mental Health Resources

The Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health

<https://children.wi.gov/Pages/Integrate/AccessWorkgroup.aspx>

Wisconsin First Step

Assists parents in finding resources for their children with special needs. Serving children and youth from birth to age 21 who have physical, cognitive, or mental health challenges. 24 hours/day, 7 days/week at 1-800-642-7837

<http://www.mch-hotlines.org/mch-hotlines/wisconsin-first-step/>

Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health

WI-AIMH strives to promote infant mental health through building awareness, promoting professional capacity, fostering partnerships and supporting policies which are in the best interest of infants, young children and their families.

<http://wiamh.org/>

Wisconsin Continua of Care

Balance of State Continuum of Care <http://www.wiboscoc.org/>

Dane County Homeless Services Consortium <http://www.danecountyhomeless.org/>

Milwaukee CoC <http://milwaukeecoc.org/>

Racine County <http://racinecoc.org/>

McKinney / Vento Act Info in Wisconsin – Education for Homeless Children and Youth

<https://dpi.wi.gov/homeless>

Wisconsin Housing Search

Search for apartments online and browse links to other housing and homeless resources in Wisconsin

<http://wihousingsearch.org/>

HUD in Wisconsin


Search for services online and browse links to other housing and homeless resources

<https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/wisconsin/homeless>

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESOURCES

FOR FAMILIES, YOUTH AND PROFESSIONALS

STEP 1: Visit www.mch-hotlines.org

STEP 2: Click on the  RESOURCE DIRECTORY

STEP 3: Search database for resources

FOR OPTIMAL SEARCH RESULTS, ENTERING A ZIP CODE IS KEY



EXPANDED CATEGORIES

Behavioral Health/Mental Health for Children and Youth



Alternative Therapies



Crisis Mental Health



Counseling/Therapy



Mental Health
Screening &
Assessment



Physician Based
Psychiatric Services



Support & Education
for Families

1-800-642-7837

ALSO SEARCH BY COUNTY | LIVE CHAT | FREE 24/7 CALL-IN

Tool #8

Resources for Early Childhood Professionals

Local Resources

Local resource for each community can be found at the following links. As these are the community resources they are likely to most useful having intimate knowledge of other local support services.

Wisconsin Homeless Liaisons

<https://dpi.wi.gov/homeless/liaisons>

Every school district and charter school must designate an appropriate staff person as the homeless liaison. Homeless liaisons must be able to carry out the duties as required under the McKinney-Vento Act. The homeless liaison is the key to ensuring homeless children and youth receive the services they need and is the primary contact between homeless families, school and local school district staff staff, shelter workers, early care and education and other service providers.

Wisconsin Continuum of Care – CoC

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and State and local governments to quickly re-house homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

- [Dane County](#)
<http://www.danecountyhomeless.org/>
- [Milwaukee](#)
<https://www.facebook.com/milwaukeeecoc/>
- [Racine County](#)
<https://www.facebook.com/The-Continuum-of-Care-for-the-City-and-County-of-Racine-UA-127968343885958/>
- [Balance of the State](#)
<http://www.wiboscoc.org/find-services.html>

Shelters

<https://www.homelesshelterdirectory.org/wisconsin.html>

This list is maintained by an independent source and is not comprehensive. Refer to your Continuum of Care for more complete information.

Child Find/ EC Special Education

Child Find is a continuous process of public awareness activities, screening and evaluation designed to locate, identify, and refer as early as possible all young children with disabilities and their families who are in need of an Early Intervention Program (Part C) or Early Childhood Special Education (Part B) services of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Each school district has personnel dedicated to screening and assessment of 3 to 5 year olds. in the event of developmental concerns. To locate your local school district use the [directory](#) located on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website and asks to speak to the special education director.

Birth to 3

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/index.htm>

The Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program is committed to serving children under the age of 3 with developmental delays and disabilities and their families. We value the family's primary relationship with their child and work in partnership with the family. We work to enhance the child's development and support the family's knowledge, skills and abilities as they interact with and raise their child.

Collaboration Coaches

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/4k-community-approaches-collaboration-coaches.php>

Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners Community Collaboration Coaches assist communities as they partner to provide early childhood services.

Head Start and Early Head Start

<http://whsaonline.org/wisconsin-head-start-map/>

Federally funded comprehensive child development program for pregnant women, infants and toddlers and their families (Early Head Start) and preschoolers (Head Start) that provides early learning experiences, usually in a center-based setting, along with health and family support services. Some, but not all, Head Start programs include full-day early care and education. Federal rules require that at least 90% of children served have family income at or below the federal poverty line and that at least 10% of children have an identified disability. States may supplemental federal funds with state funds to reach additional low-income families.

Home Visitation

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mch/homevisits.htm>

Wisconsin Family Foundations Home Visiting Program (FFHV) provides support to pregnant women and families, and helps parents of children from birth to age five to engage with resources and develop the skills to raise children who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and ready to learn.

YoungStar

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/homelessness> The Department of Children and Families uses a multigenerational and cross sector approach to support families experiencing homelessness. This page provides various resources that child care providers can direct families toward.

Know the early care and education infrastructure in your community and access the highest quality services for young children experiencing homelessness!

Homelessness in Early Childhood

Ensuring the early learning and development of our country's youngest children is essential to ACF's work. Supporting the well-being of these young children and their families is an urgent task and one that is critical to improving the long-term educational outcomes of children nationwide.

Several federal policies and programs are in place to strengthen the ability of early care and education (ECE) providers to serve young children experiencing homelessness. Whether you are in a Head Start program, early childhood program, or work at the state level on early childhood systems and services, the resources listed below will assist you in ensuring that these young children are prioritized for services that support their learning and development.

Federal Resources Promoting Development and Learning for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/interagency-projects/ece-services-for-homeless-children>

Wisconsin Contact:

Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/diversity-homelessness.php>

Regional Collaboration Coaches

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/4k-community-approaches-collaboration-coaches.php>

Subsidized Child Care Providers and Child Care Subsidies

Through the states, the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) supports a range of child care services. Publicly subsidized child care centers and family child care homes receive grants or contracts to provide early education and child care, often on a sliding fee scale, for infants, toddlers, preschoolers. Additionally, child care subsidies are vouchers for child care that parents can use with the provider of their choice, including public and private child care centers, family child care homes, and relatives or friends. Following federal rules, eligibility criteria are determined by individual states and there may be a waiting list for subsidized child care slots and child care vouchers. States supplement federal funds with state funds and TANF.

CCDF Grantee State and Territory Contacts | Office of Child Care | Administration for Children and Families <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-grantee-state-and-territory-contacts>

Wisconsin Contact:

Division of Early Care and Education, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

P.O. Box 8916, 201 East Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53708

General Phone: (608) 422-6002

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/>

Early Head Start and Head Start

Federally funded comprehensive child development program for pregnant women, infants and toddlers and their families (Early Head Start) and preschoolers (Head Start) that provides early learning experiences, usually in a center-based setting, along with health and family support services. Some, but not all, Head Start programs include full-day early care and education. Federal rules require that at least 90% of children served have family income at or below the federal poverty line and that at least 10% of children have an identified disability. States may supplement federal funds with state funds to reach additional low-income families.

Head Start Locator <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/HeadStartOffices>

State-Collaboration-Offices <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/states/collaboration/map/index.html>

Wisconsin Contact:

Wisconsin Head Start Map

<http://whsaonline.org/wisconsin-head-start-map/>

Wisconsin Collaboration Office

Wisconsin Head Start State Collaboration Office, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Office of Early Learning, 125 South Webster Street, Madison, WI 53707

608-261-2137

<http://www.whsaonline.org>

Child Care Resource and Referral

Carve out of federal child care block grants (CCDF) to states to provide for the coordination of early care and education resources, to link families with early care and education in their communities, to help build the supply of resources in communities, and to improve the overall quality of care. CCR&Rs help to connect child care and education resources, document various needs and help to build early care and education systems in states and communities. They may be statewide or more regionally or locally based and often sponsor training services to providers as well as consumer education for parents on identifying and accessing quality care.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies Listed By State

<http://www.all-things-child-care.com/resource-and-referral.html>

Wisconsin Contact:

Supporting Families Together Association

Listed by County <https://supportingfamielstogether.org/member-directory/>

U.S. Department of Education: Early Learning

The goal for early learning is to improve the health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes for all children from birth through 3rd grade, so that all children, particularly those with high needs, are on track for graduating from high school college- and career-ready.

To enhance the quality of programs and services and improve outcomes for young children, including children with disabilities and those who are English Learners, the department administers programs and promotes initiatives that increase access to high-quality programs, improve the early learning workforce, and build state capacity to support high-quality programs and ensure program effectiveness.

The [Office of Early Learning](#) (OEL) and the [Office of Special Education Programs](#) (OSEP) have primary responsibility for the department's key early learning investments and the Deputy Assistant Secretary on Policy and Early Learning in the OEL is responsible for leading and coordinating ED's early learning agenda by collaborating across various program offices.

Wisconsin Contact:

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Office of Early Learning, 125 South Webster Street, Madison, WI 53707

<https://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood>

[State Pre-Kindergarten/Universal Pre-K](#)

State supported early childhood education for preschoolers through local school districts or community councils. Operate education-focused half-day and full-day programs in schools or through community partnerships. Some programs provide referrals for health and developmental screening, supportive services to families, and offer opportunities for parent involvement. Under names like School Readiness, Smart Start, Bright Beginnings, etc., nearly all states now operate pre-kindergarten programs for four-year-olds or for three- and four-year-olds.

Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO)

<http://ceelo.org/state-information/>

Wisconsin Contact:

Wisconsin 4K

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Office of Early Learning, 125 South Webster Street, Madison, WI 53707

<https://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/4k>

Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)

Under the Affordable Care Act states are funded both by formula and through competitive grants to coordinate and enhance home visiting services in their state and to expand home visiting services utilizing federally designated evidence-based home visiting service models. Primarily focused on meeting the needs of pregnant women, infants and toddlers, some models serve preschoolers, as well.

State Home Visiting Websites

<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-initiatives/home-visiting-overview>

Wisconsin Contact:

Wisconsin Family Foundations Comprehensive Home Visiting Program

Wisconsin Department of Children and Family 201 E Washington Ave Madison, WI 53703

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/mch/homevisits.htm>

IDEA – Part B – Preschool Special Education

Federally funded early care and education services, often only part-day, for children with disabilities, which will impact on their ability to learn. School districts are formula funded through State

Departments of Education to provide special education services typically in a classroom setting in the schools but services can be integrated into community programs, too. Children must meet strict eligibility criteria to receive a wide range of educational and family supports that met their individual educational needs.

U.S. Department of Education – State Contacts

http://wdcrocolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_ID=SSE

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities – State Contacts

<http://www.nichcy.org/Pages/StateSpecificInfo.aspx?State=>

Wisconsin Contact:

Contact your local school district

IDEA – Part C – Early Intervention Services

Federally funded, and state supplemented, educational and family supports for children birth to age three with identified developmental delays and disabilities. States set eligibility criteria, which can restrict interventions to a narrow target population or address more broad preventative service needs. Generally, services are through home visits to families and early childhood providers but may include group or center-based interventions.

NECTAC – The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center – State Contacts

<http://www.nectac.org/contact/Ptccoord.asp>

Wisconsin Contact:

***Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 1 W Wilson St, Madison, WI 53703
(608) 266-1865***

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/index.htm>

State Early Childhood Advisory Councils/Cabinets

Under the Head Start Act of 2007 states established or designated State Advisory Councils (SAC) to coordinate and further develop early childhood systems and services across varying funding streams and service sectors.

State Advisory Councils | Early Childhood Development | Administration for Children and Families <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/early-learning/state-advisory-councils>

Wisconsin Contact:

Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ecac>

National Programs and Resources

[National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth \(NAEHYC\)](http://www.naehcy.org/)

<http://www.naehcy.org/>

[National Center for Homeless Education](https://nche.ed.gov/)

<https://nche.ed.gov/>

[School House Connection](http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/)

<http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/>

[Administration for Children and Families](https://wayback.archive-it.org/8654/20170329001017/https://www.acf.hhs.gov/program-topics/homelessness)

<https://wayback.archive-it.org/8654/20170329001017/https://www.acf.hhs.gov/program-topics/homelessness>

[First Focus: Campaign for Children](https://campaignforchildren.org/)

<https://campaignforchildren.org/>

[Institute for Child Poverty and Homelessness](http://www.icphusa.org/)

<http://www.icphusa.org/>

[National Alliance to End Homelessness](https://endhomelessness.org/)

<https://endhomelessness.org/>

[Center for the Study of Social Policy](https://www.cssp.org/)

<https://www.cssp.org/>

Training Resources

[Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#)

[Education for Homeless Children and Youth \(EHCY\) Training Resources](#)

<https://dpi.wi.gov/homeless/resources>

[Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners Webinars](#)

<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/diversity-homelessness.php>

[Serving Young Homeless Children under the Child Care and Development Fund Program](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a--34fkyJ-4&feature=youtu.be>

In this webinar, presenters from the National Center for Homeless Education and Child Care Aware of America explore legislative requirements and implementation strategies for serving young homeless children under the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program. Presenters from the Alabama Departments of Education and Human Resources also discuss the development of a state-level collaboration to serve homeless families under CCDF in Alabama. Topics covered include

- Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) provisions related to serving young homeless children and their families
- Requirements for reporting data on young homeless children served by CCDF providers, including understanding the definition of homeless to be used for data collection purposes
- Provisions related to young homeless children included in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (draft regulations)
- State- and local-level strategies for collaborating to improve services to young homeless children and their families

[Homeless Global Learning Project](#)

<http://homelessglp.weebly.com/lesson-activities.html>

In today's uncertain economy, anyone can be homeless.

There are no discriminating factors such as age, race, or gender.

It's a devastating problem that can be solved!

[Spent](#)

<http://playspent.org/>

Understanding Poverty - a poverty simulation game.

Video Resources

[America's Invisible Children - The Homeless Education Crisis in America](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/americas-invisible-children-homeless-education-crisis-america)

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/americas-invisible-children-homeless-education-crisis-america>

[Poverty in America Documentary 2017](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAKyi3SYC_I)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAKyi3SYC_I

[Hard times Generation: Homeless Kids](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dK_RnxYdrqU)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dK_RnxYdrqU

[America's Poor Kids \(Child Poverty Documentary\) - Real Stories](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOOkfVxkusc)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOOkfVxkusc>

[Homeless Babies and Toddlers Endure Tough, Long Days On San Diego Streets](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGgdRoIKenQ)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGgdRoIKenQ>

[Trauma Informed Practices](https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/trauma/e-resources)

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/trauma/e-resources>

Tool #9

Case Study Work Sheets

The following case studies were developed by Office of Head Start and were originally featured in their *Interactive Homelessness Lessons*. Unfortunately at the time of this printing, the lessons are being updated and unavailable for viewing. They will be available again soon at

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/ods/resource/interactive-homelessness-lessons/detail/#>

The case studies however are still a useful tool for thinking about the definition of homelessness and how unique situations can be interpreted.

Rosa

Oscar and Juanita Hernandez have a four-year-old daughter, Rosa. They rent a two-bedroom apartment. Oscar is a construction worker. Juanita was a cashier in a community supermarket until it recently closed.

As a construction worker, Oscar was making a decent wage allowing Juanita ample time to look for another job. The construction company began to fall behind on its work production, however, and within one month after Juanita lost her job, Oscar lost his job.

Oscar and Juanita are now both unemployed. Unable to find employment, they quickly used their meager savings to meet their basic needs.

As everyday needs became increasingly more difficult to meet, Oscar called his brother, Luis, explained their situation and asked if he and his family could come and live with him.

Luis lives in a two-bedroom house with his wife and four children. Although Rosa loves living with her cousins and having someone to play with each day, Oscar and Juanita are keenly aware of how difficult it is becoming to live with Luis and his family.

Question: Is Rosa's family living in a homeless situation?

Your Task: If you believe she is, share your thoughts in the box.

If you believe she is not, share your thoughts in the box.

Marco

Enrique and Yvonne Martinez are migrant farm workers with three children ages 3, 7, and 12. Recently the family left Florida, where they were temporarily living with friends, to work in Michigan during the fall season. They found housing in a migrant camp and enrolled their youngest child, Marco, in the local Migrant and Seasonal Head Start and their other two children in a local elementary school.

One month into their stay, the migrant camp in which the family was living was closed by the Health Department due to unsafe conditions. Many of the families, including the Martinez family, scattered to other locations. The housing in the migrant camp was unavailable indefinitely and so the Martinez family found shelter with another migrant family of three in a small two bedroom home. Enrique and Yvonne are not sure, however, if this family will allow them to stay through the season. There is a Head Start program in the new service area in which the family is staying, and there is a waiting list.

Question: Is Marco's family living in a homeless situation?

Your Task:

If you believe they are, share your thoughts in the box.

If you believe they are not, share your thoughts in the box.

Nicole and Bert

Bert has been raising his daughter, Nicole, on his own since she was three years old. Her mother is in jail because she abused Nicole. The engineering plant where Bert worked closed down. After he lost his job, the unpaid bills began to mount one on top of the other. Bert lost his electricity, water, and then the gas. Shortly after, he also lost the house.

To survive after losing his job, Bert sold everything he owned except his working tools and his SUV. They were both paid off. He knew he needed the tools for work and the SUV to help with job hunting and in a worst case, he and Nicole could sleep in it.

Bert is a trained carpenter and building maintenance engineer with twenty years of experience, but he still has been unsuccessful in finding a job. After one month of sleeping in his car trying to conserve the few dollars he did have, he decided that he and Nicole should relocate to another state with the hope that he would be able to find a job.

When Bert got to his new location, he had three goals: find a job, find a preschool program for Nicole, and find a place to live. With the little money he was able to set aside after selling everything, he rented a one-room apartment on the bad side of town. Bert visited the Finch Head Start program and is very close to selecting a preschool program for Nicole.

Unfortunately, he still has not found a job and his money is dwindling quickly.

Question: Are Nicole and Bert living in a homeless situation?

Your Task:

If you believe they are, share your thoughts in the box.

If you believe they are not, share your thoughts in the box.

Case Study Answer Key

Rosa

Rosa's family would be recognized as homeless because....

(i) her family is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason

Marco

Marco's family would be recognized as homeless because....

(iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

(i) his family is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason

Nicole and Bert

Nicole's family would not be recognized as homeless because...

Before relocating, Nicole and her father would have been identified as homeless. However, since their move Bert has secured a rented a one-room apartment that provides a *"fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."*

Tool #10

Screening and Assessment

CDC's *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* for Early Care and Education Providers

FREE research-based, parent-friendly resources on child development Boost family engagement and your own professional development

CDC's *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* materials...

- ✓ **Help you track and celebrate each child's developmental milestones**
- ✓ **Help you communicate with parents about development**
- ✓ **Provide guidance on discussing developmental concerns**
- ✓ **Help parents know what milestones to expect next**
- ✓ **Complement and support developmental screening**
- ✓ **Provide professional development with CDC's FREE CEU training, *Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns* (www.cdc.gov/WatchMeTraining)**
- ✓ **Aid in early identification of the 1 in 6 children with a developmental delay or disability**

Note: In centers that conduct developmental screenings, these materials support and complement, but do not replace, developmental screening.



Watch Me! Training

CDC's *Learn the Signs. Act Early.*



Milestone Checklists

CDC's *Learn the Signs. Act Early.*



Milestone Moments Booklet

Comprehensive, parent-friendly; includes all milestone checklists as well as tips for

You can ensure children with developmental delays and disabilities receive the help they need by...

1. Learning how to monitor each child's development with CDC's FREE 1-hour online training, *Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns* (www.cdc.gov/WatchMeTraining)
2. Regularly using CDC's milestone checklists in your classroom to
 - Track each child's development progress;
 - Guide your conversation and support your observations when raising concerns with parents; and
 - Complement developmental screening by engaging families in monitoring milestones.
3. Encouraging families to use CDC's [milestone checklists](#) or [Milestone Moments booklet](#) at home to monitor their children's development; and
4. Helping parents to act on developmental concerns by encouraging them to talk with their child's healthcare provider and call their state's early intervention program. Support them by sharing CDC's [How to Help My Child](#) and [How to Talk to the Doctor](#) tip sheets.



www.cdc.gov/ActEarly | 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Getting materials is easy with 3 simple options:

Print materials from a FREE disk.

Order disk from
www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Orders



Order FREE printed materials

(in limited quantities) in English or Spanish
from www.cdc.gov/ActEarly/Orders

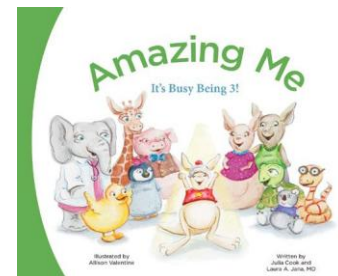


All materials are available in English and Spanish, many in simplified Chinese and Korean, and some in other languages.

Find the resources pictured here and others at www.cdc.gov/ActEarly.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) *Learn the Signs. Act Early.* program aims to improve early identification of children with developmental disabilities so children and families can get the services they need as early as possible.

Want to customize CDC materials with your logo and contact information? Local contact information is most helpful to families. Request customizable files from ActEarly@cdc.gov and have them printed locally.



www.cdc.gov/ActEarly

| 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)



Ages and Stages Questionnaire

ASQ, and ASQ-SE are trusted screeners that unlock critical knowledge about young children's development and help give all kids the best start in life.










Screening children who have or are experiencing homelessness early is of the utmost importance and the ASQ tools are some of the most trusted tools to get the job done and involve parents in the process.

Visit the following site for a one-stop shop for learning all about the screener; some free resources and how it can strengthen your work with children and families.




<http://agesandstages.com/landing-page/welcome/>

How ASQ-3 Works

6 easy steps to screening success!

- STEP 1** Choose the right questionnaire for the child's age.
Photocopy or print it...

...or use ASQ Online.

- STEP 2** Give it to the parent to complete and return.

- STEP 3** Parent fills out the questionnaire at home.

They're clear, quick, and easy to do!

- STEP 4** Score the questionnaire when the parent returns it.
Score by hand in minutes...

...or in seconds with ASQ Online.

- STEP 5** Share results with the parent.
Discuss referral options if there are developmental concerns.

- STEP 6** Give parents fun ASQ-3™ Learning Activities.
Help them boost development at home between screenings!


ASQ-3™ and the ASQ logo are trademarks of Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. ©2016 Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. All rights reserved.

www.agesandstages.com | 1-800-638-3775 |   

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8. *Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development U.S. Department of Education October 31, 2016
9. *What is a Continuum of Care?* National Alliance to End Homelessness, , Publication, January 14, 2010, <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/what-is-a-continuum-of-care/>. Accessed 8.16.17

This publication was developed by the Wisconsin State Task Force on Homelessness in Early Childhood as a response to the dramatic incidence of homelessness in the early years and as method for informing those working with young children who are homeless of the procedures and best practices for serving this most vulnerable population.

Individuals are most likely to experience homelessness in infancy.

The first year of life is when people are most likely to enter shelter and transitional housing programs, followed by ages one to five.

Among low-income families, being pregnant or having a child under the age of two is associated with elevated risk for seeking or entering shelter. This may be driven by various factors. For example, raising an infant is expensive; in 2013, low-income single parents spent about \$8,000 to \$9,000 a year raising a child 0-2 years old, with housing, along with child care and early education, accounting for the largest share of the costs. Additionally, the birth of a child affects parents' ability to work, often disrupts family routines, and can trigger the need for additional space and resources. For low-income families who are sharing housing with family or friends because they are unable to afford their own place to live, the birth of a child may further strain limited social and financial resources or necessitate the need to leave inadequate housing arrangements and in some situations, lead to the loss of housing.

Almost half of children in shelters are under age 6.

Families represent approximately one-third of those experiencing homelessness.

Like many other low-income families, these families often are headed by a single woman, and they have an average of two children, at least one under age six.

Almost half of the children in families accessing shelter and transitional housing in a given year are under age 6—over 150,000 young children. Moreover, this figure does not include those who are sharing housing with others due to economic hardship.

Serving Homeless Families in Early Care and Education Programs



Wisconsin State Task Force on
Homelessness in Early Childhood

11/15/2017