

Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 – Summary of Provisions on Homelessness

Background: In November 2014, President Obama signed into law the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014, S. 1086. The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act provides funds to states to help low-income families pay for child care while a parent works or is in an educational or job training program.

Homeless families face barriers to child care access above and beyond other families in poverty, including higher rates of mobility; difficulty meeting work requirements; little, if any, income to apply towards child care subsidy co-pays; and challenges accessing the documents required to enroll in child care. As a result, parents who have experienced homelessness are less likely than their housed peers to receive child care subsidies, and more likely to have employment problems due to lack of child care. Young children who are homeless are more likely to have developmental delays, and more health and mental health problems, than low-income housed children. Access to quality child care is critical for their readiness for and success in school.

The Child Care Development and Block Grant Act of 2014 (S. 1086) contains several provisions to increase access and continuity for homeless children and families. The legislation requires States to

- establish a grace period that allows children experiencing homelessness to receive child care while their families take action to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirement.
- use funds for activities that improve access to child care services, including
 - procedures to permit enrollment of homeless children (after an initial eligibility determination) while required documentation is obtained,
 - training and technical assistance on identifying and serving homeless children and their families, and
 - specific outreach to homeless families.
- coordinate services with early childhood programs serving children experiencing homelessness.
- establish a sliding fee scale that is not a barrier to families receiving federal childcare assistance.
- collect and submit data on homeless children receiving federal child care assistance

The legislation also requires that families who initially qualify for childcare receive childcare services for at least a year, regardless of changes in income or work, training, or education status. It increases authorized funding levels for each of the next six years.

NAEH CY is pleased that many of the recommendations of the NAEHCY Early Childhood Committee were included in the final legislation. By acknowledging and addressing the unique barriers caused by homelessness, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 will help parents experiencing homelessness get back on their feet, and increase opportunities for safe, high quality early childhood care for children experiencing homelessness.

Next Steps: Advocacy to improve homeless families' access to child care now moves to the state level, as states begin to incorporate new requirements into their state Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) plans. There are many important advocacy opportunities in state plans, including prioritization of services to homeless children and families and use of funds to identify and serve homeless families. A list of state child care agencies may be found at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-grantee-state-and-territory-contacts>.

Please share this legislative update with homeless service providers, local and state homeless coalitions and task forces, and early care and education providers. Please also stay tuned to NAEHCY's website, or sign up for legislative updates via email, to learn about the timing and content of upcoming opportunities.

For More Information: For more information, please contact Barbara Duffield, NAEHCY Director of Policy and Programs, at bduffield@naehcy.org or 202.364.7392.