Young Homeless Children: Key Strategies for Success in School
Presenters

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Welcome to Chicago!
Session overview

- Homelessness and young children
- McKinney-Vento and preschool
- 5 minute break
- Early care and education overview
- Scenarios and small group
- 5 minute break
- Partnerships
- Discussion and questions
Homelessness and young children
Prevalence of homelessness among children

Nationally

- 2.5 million children experience homelessness each year in the U.S.
- During the 2014-2015 school year, schools identified 1,263,323 children experiencing homelessness.
- The number of homeless children identified by schools has grown significantly over the past 5 years; the greatest increases were in preschool aged children and ninth grade students.
- Between 2007 and 2014, shelter use by families increased in suburban and rural areas by 48.1%.
- Children of color are disproportionately represented among all children experiencing homelessness.
Young children are disproportionately impacted by homelessness.

Annual Percentage Rates of Shelter Use By Age (National)
Homelessness harms children

- Lower birth weights
- More likely to have moderate to severe acute or chronic health problems
- Three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems
- Four times the rate of developmental delays
- Twice as likely to go hungry
- Twice as likely as others to repeat a school grade, be expelled or suspended, or drop out of high school
- More likely to experience a traumatic event
- Compromised brain development
The early years matter

• The first three years represent the most critical period of development

• Relationships, experiences, and environments shape development

• Early experiences lay the foundation for later success...or challenges
McKinney-Vento and Preschool
The McKinney-Vento Act Definition of homeless

Lacking a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence--

- Doubled-up (sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason)
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Living in a public or private place not designed for human living.

- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus/train stations, or similar settings
- Defined as “migratory children” who are living in the above circumstances;
- Unaccompanied youth: A youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and living in the above circumstances

**MVHAA – Sec 725(2)**
McKinney-Vento and preschool:

ESSA

- Immediate enrollment
- Removal of barriers
- Funding
- School of origin
- Feeder schools
McKinney-Vento liaisons and preschool

• Must ensure that homeless children receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs, and preschool programs administered by the district

• To ensure the identification of homeless preschoolers, local liaisons should:
  o Work with school personnel, who can ask families enrolling school-age children whether there are preschool-age siblings
  o Collaborate with district special education personnel to identify young homeless children who may be in need of special education services
Transportation

LEAs must provide transportation to and from the school/preschool of origin, including until the end of the year when the student obtains permanent housing, at a parent’s or guardian’s request (or at the liaison’s request for unaccompanied youth). 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii); Guidance J5

- If staying in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation to the school of origin.
- If crossing LEA lines, both LEAs must determine how to divide the responsibility and share the cost, or they must share the cost equally.

11432(g)(1)(J)(iii); Guidance J5
Early childhood landscape
Early care and education landscape

- Home visiting
- Head Start & Early Head Start
- State Pre-Kindergarten Programs
- Child Care
- Services for children with disabilities
- State Advisory Councils
- Early childhood collaborations
Activity
Early childhood home visiting

• Home visiting programs match at-risk parents with trained professionals who provide information, advice, and support during pregnancy and throughout the first few years of the child’s life

• Funded with federal, state, and private dollars

• Targets pregnant women, families with young children

• Multiple evidence-based models: Parents as Teachers (PAT), Healthy Families America (HFA), Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), Early Head Start
Proven benefits of home visiting

• Improved prenatal, maternal, and child health outcomes
• Enhanced social-emotional and language development
• Supports cognitive and physical development
• Reduces child maltreatment and injury
• Increased school readiness
• Improved coordination with community resources
How does home visiting support homeless families?

- Addresses and buffers negative impacts of homelessness
- Helps families build resilience and strengthen family functioning
- Mobile service: visits can take place in families’ homes, in shelter programs, or in other settings
- Connects families to other community resources
MIECHV – home visiting

• Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
• Formula block grants to states with some access to discretionary supplemental grant funds
• Administered by federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB)
• Must use evidence-based model
• Must report on federal performance indicators
• Includes goal to integrate home visiting efforts within states
Head Start | Early Head Start

general overview

Intended to achieve 2 primary goals:
- Break the cycle of poverty
- Improve children’s school readiness

Created 1965
- LBJ’s “War on Poverty” initiative
- Preschool-aged children (3-5 year-olds)
  - Less than 40% of those eligible are served*

Created 1995
- Under Clinton Administration
- Infants & Toddlers (birth to 3-years-old) & Expectant Mothers
  - Less than 5% of those eligible are served*

* State(s) of Head Start | 2016 | NIEER
Head Start | Early Head Start
general overview

• At least 90% of enrollees at or below federal poverty level

• Not less than 10% of children with special needs

• Program options:
  o Center-based*
  o Home-based (home visiting)
  o Family Child Care
  o Locally-designed variations

• Categorical eligibility includes:
  o homelessness (McKinney-Vento definition)
  o public assistance (e.g. TANF)
  o foster care
Head Start | Early Head Start

**Enrollment Requirements**

- Head Start programs are required to:
  - Use the McKinney-Vento definition of “homelessness”
  - Identify and prioritize homeless children for enrollment
  - Take steps to coordinate with local “feeder schools” to:
    1. Establish ongoing comm. w/ Liaisons &
    2. Develop a coordinated strategy for family support services

- Head Start programs are permitted to...
  Reserve slots for homeless children for a period of 30 days whenever a vacancy occurs

- Head Start children & families are permitted to...
  ...attend Head Start immediately while required enrollment docs are obtained in a reasonable timeframe

**Up to 90 days [§ 1302.16(c)(1)]**
Head Start | Early Head Start
A perfect match for homeless families

- Early/Head Start programs provide a source of stability for children and families.

- Early/Head Start programs provide comprehensive services that children and families experiencing homelessness may not otherwise receive:
  - Head Start’s focus on the entire family means parents also receive assistance in reaching their goals.

- Early/Head Start community partnerships can help connect children and families with continuums of care and coordinated services.
State pre-k programs

• State funding of preschool services for 4-year-olds or for 3- and 4-year-olds
  o Both school based and community providers
  o Both targeted and universal designs

• Most states now have some type of state pre-k system
Child care: The basics

- Various settings: center-based, home-based, relative/family friend & neighbor care
- Various hours: traditional work week, after school, weekends, overnight
- Rules for how child care is operated (ratios, group size, staff requirements, etc.) vary from state to state
- Can be for-profit or non-profit
- Can be regulated or not regulated (licensed vs. license-exempt)
- Ranges widely in regard to quality, cost, capacity, and availability
  - Fewest slots for infants and toddlers → most expensive to care for
  - After-school care can be a challenge as well → transportation
CCDF: The basics

- Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) is the primary Federal funding source for **subsidized child care**
- Governed by the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 (CCDBG)
- Goals of CCDF:
  - Promote self-sufficiency by making child care more affordable to low-income parents
  - Foster healthy child development and school success by improving the quality of child care
- States have a lot of flexibility in implementing CCDF
CCDF: Family eligibility

- CCDF serves children under the age of 13; up to age 19 for children with disabilities
- Family income must be below 85% SMI
- Parents must be working or participating in education or training activities
- Protective services category
- Priority required for children with special needs, very low income families, and children experiencing homelessness
- States may have additional eligibility requirements
- Individual child care programs/providers may have specific eligibility requirements
CCDF and homeless children

States are required to:

• use the definition of homelessness from the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act

• establish a grace period that allows children experiencing homelessness to receive child care while their families take action to comply with immunization and health/safety requirements

• Provide support to families in obtaining immunizations, etc.

• use funds for activities that improve access to child care services

• procedures to permit enrollment of homeless children while required documentation is obtained

• training and technical assistance on identifying and serving homeless children and their families

• specific outreach to homeless families

• coordinate with early childhood programs serving children experiencing homelessness, State Coordinators for Homeless Education, and, as practicable, local liaisons and CoCs

• collect & submit data on homeless children receiving child care assistance

• Prioritize homeless families for services; failure to do so may result in a reduction in funding
Finding child care

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)
• Resource to help families find child care
• Consumer education, provider training, data collection, administer subsidies

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
• System to assess, improve, and communicate the quality of early care and education programs
• Operating in most states
• www.qrisnetwork.org
Services for children with disabilities

• IDEA Part B, Section 619
  o Ages 3-5, Preschool Special Education
  o Primarily classroom and consultation models

• IDEA Part C
  o Infants and Toddlers – Early Intervention
  o Primary home visiting and consultation models
  o Eligibility varies by state
  o ESSA requires liaisons to ensure children can access EI, if eligible
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Uses McKinney-Vento definition of homeless
- Provides for identification, location, evaluation and education of children with disabilities
- States can choose to expand Part C to cover ‘at risk’
- State level Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) with local councils in many communities (LICC)
- Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- Goal of mainstreaming/inclusion/integrating into early care and education and home visiting state systems
Screening for Delays

• Because children experiencing homelessness are at higher risk for developmental delays, they should receive developmental screenings early and often using an evidence-based tool.

• Many resources available for screenings, including:
  o Head Start and other early childhood programs
  o Pediatricians
  o School districts
  o Child Find
State Advisory Councils  
(Head Start Act of 2007)

• Charged with developing a high-quality, comprehensive system of early childhood development and care

• Ensure statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide range of early childhood programs and services in the State, including child care, Head Start, IDEA preschool and infants and families programs, and pre-kindergarten programs and services

• Can be a great opportunity to influence early childhood policies, practices, and investments in your state
State Points of Contact:  
Laterals to McKinney-Vento State Coordinators

- CCDF – State Child Care Administrator
- Head Start – State Head Start Collaboration Director
- Pre-K – Early Childhood Specialist(s) in State Departments of Education
- IDEA – State Lead for Part C & State Lead for Preschool Special Education
- Home Visiting – State Lead for MIECHV
Early Learning Coalitions

• Early Learning Coalitions at state, county and/or community levels
• Wide variety of participation and funding support
• Homeless service providers and liaisons should consider attending to create connections and learn local resources
Scenarios and discussion
A disabled grandmother took her two grandsons (1.5 and 3 years old) and began caring for him in the children’s home once the mother was incarcerated. Having very little income to support herself and her grandchildren put the family further into hardship. Food became scarce at the middle of each month and the children’s families’ nutrition was at risk. Department of Children and Families did not want to pay her because she was the maternal grandmother. With no extra income, the grandmother was unable to keep the apartment. They became homeless and began to live with any relative, friend or foe they could possibly get to help. The family was referred to 211, who then referred them to other resources.

The children’s language appears to be delayed and their recent physical and shot records could not be located. There are neither birth certificates nor Social security numbers to be found.

All of their earthly belonging has been auctioned off when the eviction took place.

Mom should be released from jail soon. She will need employment, food and shelter as well.
A Head Start on Housing Stability
Bridgeport, Connecticut

Partnerships

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ABCD Head Start
Bridgeport, Connecticut
*Agency Needs Assessment identified Housing for Head Start Families as an agency priority*

The Connection, Inc.
*Supportive Housing Services program office is located in the ABCD Head Start building in Bridgeport*

Chapin Hall at The University of Chicago

Video Presentation
*The Home Works Program!*
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR FAMILIES MODEL FOR CHILD WELFARE FAMILIES, SINCE 1998

Intensive Case Management

Housing
- Housing Application
- Housing Search/Housing Specialist
- Housing Inspection
- Security Deposits
- Lease
- Housed on Subsidy
- Voucher

Housing Secured

Home visit within 2 days
- Develop Service Plan Goals
- Collaboration with DCF Community Provider/Bs
- Budget Management $
- 1st FTM (2 wks)
- Interdisciplinary Team Meetings
- Re-Administer Assessments
- Rounds Case Presentations
- Supervision
- Discharge Planning

Discharge

Vocational Specialist
- Vocational Assessments

Goal Setting

Service Array: Employment skills, Disability Benefits, Education

Employment
The Partnership’s Progress to date

2017 April/May
DATA Collection: Bridgeport ABCD Head Start staff screening 1100 enrolled families to evaluate housing risk using the QRAFT screening tool.

2017 June /July
RESEARCH FINDINGS Report/Brief: University of Chicago - Chapin Hall evaluation of data from QRAFT screening.

2017 June/July
MEDIA/MARKETING: The Connection/ABCD Head Start Video produced to demonstrate need; Conference Workshop Presentations; Meetings with community, potential funders and housing providers; Grant applications.
Discussion

• What are your barriers to establishing or maintaining partnerships with early care and education programs?

• What partnerships with early care and education do you already have in your community?

• What tips do you have for successful collaboration?

• What questions do you have about collaboration?
Collaboration tips

• Plan for staff turnover in multiple systems
• Work with community collaborations
• Get it in writing → collaboration agreements, MOUs, release of information
• Develop joint case management plans with family support workers, home visitors, etc. Don’t duplicate efforts when you don’t have to!
• Invest in relationships with systems-level leaders who can support your client advocacy efforts
• Meet regularly with partners—including program leaders, supervisors, and front line staff
Contact information

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Thank you!