



Bridging The Gap Between K-12 and Early Childhood Through Program Collaboration



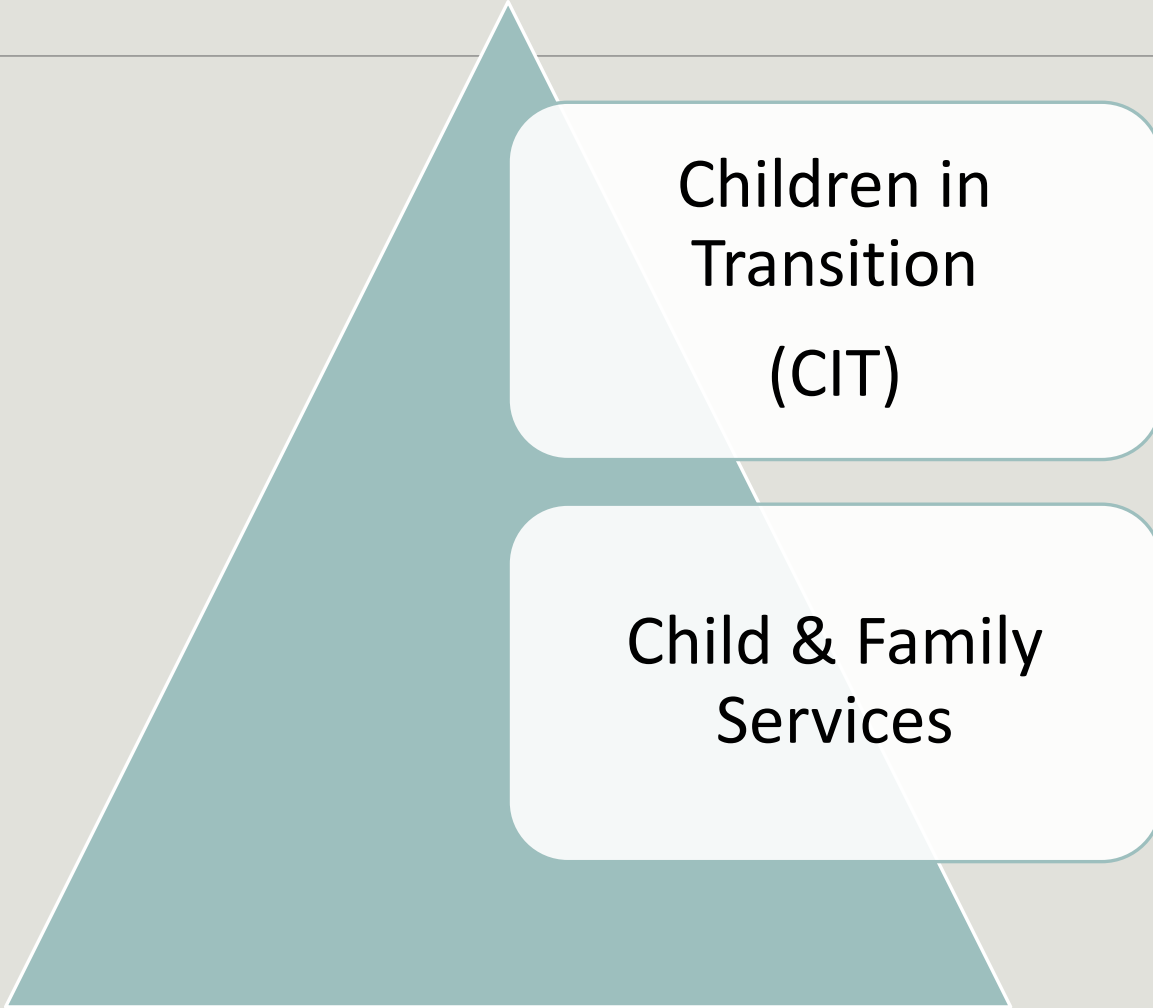
NIKKI DUTRA- EARLY CHILDHOOD HOMELESS LIAISON

WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT RENO, NV

BRENDA MARTINEZ – PK ENROLLMENT SPECIALIST

WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT RENO, NV

Washoe County School District programs



Children in
Transition
(CIT)

Child & Family
Services

Why identifying Early Childhood homelessness is so important

Early childhood homelessness creates distinct barriers to participating in early childhood care and PK education. Over 50% of children living in federally-funded homeless shelters are under the age of five.



The importance of early childhood education for homeless children is immense as it can play a significant role in a child's development and can potentially impact their success later on into their education.



A person in the U.S. is most likely to experience homelessness in the **first year of life**.¹

A person is next most likely to experience homelessness at ages 1–5.¹

Almost half of children in shelter are under age 6.²

More than 150,000 very young children stay in shelters each year, and even more are sharing housing with others due to economic hardship.²



Homelessness during pregnancy and in the early years is **harmful to children's development**.³

Pregnant women experiencing homelessness are less likely to receive adequate prenatal care⁴ and their children are at increased risk for low birth weight.⁵

1 Gubits, D., Shinn M., Bell S., Wood M., Dstrup S., Solari, C...Abt Associates, Inc.. (2015, July). *Family options study: Short-term impacts of housing and services interventions for homeless families*. Washington, D.C.: Prepared for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research by Abt. Associates and Vanderbilt University. Retrieved from https://www.huduser.gov/portal/portal/system/files/pdf/FamilyOptionsStudy_final.pdf

2 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development. (2016, October). *The 2015 annual homeless assessment report (AHAR) to Congress: Part 2: Estimates of homelessness in the United States*. Washington, DC: Solari, C., Morris, S., Shivji, A., & de Souza, T. Retrieved from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5162/2015-ahar-part-2-estimates-of-homelessness/>

3 Center for Housing Policy and Children's Health Watch. (2015, June). *Compounding stress: The timing and duration effects of homelessness on children's health*. Sandel, M., Sheward, R., & Sturtevant, L. Retrieved from http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/Compounding-Stress_2015.pdf

4 Richards, R., Merrill, R. M., Baksh, L., & McGarry, J. (2011). Maternal health behaviors and infant health outcomes among homeless mothers: US Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) 2000–2007. *Preventive Medicine*, 52(1), 87-94.

5 Stein, J. A., Lu, M. C., & Gelberg, L. (2000). Severity of homelessness and adverse birth outcomes. *Health Psychology*, 19(6), 524. Richards, R., Merrill, R. M., Baksh, L., & McGarry, J. (2011). Maternal health behaviors and infant health outcomes among homeless mothers: US Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) 2000–2007. *Preventive Medicine*, 52(1), 87-94.

ESSA Amendments to The McKinney-Vento Act

- State plans must include procedures that ensure that homeless children have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children.
- Liaisons must ensure homeless families and children can access early intervention services if eligible.
 - The definition of school of origin now includes preschools.

The “hidden” population

Homeless children ages 0-5 are under identified because they oftentimes are not enrolled into preschool programs. They have unique barriers that can prevent them from enrolling...



Transportation:

Most PK programs require families to provide their own transportation.



Hours and age limits:

½ day programs might not be practical for families that work; grants don't always allow 3 year olds; birthdate cutoffs



Lack of programs available:

Some school districts may not have many PK classrooms and/or families may not be aware of programs that are available.

Fact Sheet: Young Children Experiencing Homelessness
September 2016

Over 1.2 million children under the age of six are estimated to experience homelessness in the United States; this represents one in eighteen children under the age of six.¹

Most Homeless Children Do Not Stay in Shelters Due to Limited Availability and/or Restrictive Rules.

Primary Residence of Homeless Children Enrolled in Public Schools in the United States in 2013-2014²

- Unsheltered – 4%
- Motels – 6%
- Shelters – 15%
- Doubled-Up (staying temporarily with other people because there is nowhere else go to) – 75%

More Than Half of Children in Federally-Funded Homeless Shelters Are Under the Age of Six.

Homeless Children in Shelters funded by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2012³

| | | |
|--|---------|---------|
| Total Number of Children Under Age 18: | 322,319 | |
| Under Age 1: | 33,044 | (10.3%) |
| Ages 1 – 5: | 134,631 | (41.8%) |
| Ages 6-12: | 111,230 | (34.5%) |
| Ages 13-17: | 43,414 | (13.5%) |

A Small Percentage of Homeless Children Are Enrolled in Public Preschool Programs.

Homeless Children and Youth Enrolled in Public Schools in the United States in 2013-2014⁴

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Total: | 1,360,747 |
| Ages 3-5: | 50,084 |
| Grades K-3: | 483,568 |
| Grades 4-5: | 205,382 |
| Grades 6-8: | 276,511 |
| Grades 9-12: | 341,676 |

¹ [Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile](#). January 2016. Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

² U.S. Department of Education, Federal Data Collection 2013-2014: <http://www.serve.org/nche>

³ 2012 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR): Volume 2: <https://www.onecpd.info/resource/3297/2012-ahar-volume-2-estimates-of-homelessness-in-the-us/>

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, eddataexpress.ed.gov

- 1.2 million children under the age of 6 experience homelessness in the United States
- Only 50,084 children between ages 3-5 were enrolled in public preschool programs during the 2013-2014 SY
- Why do you think that number is so low?

Administration For Child & Families: 50 State Profile Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States

Revised June 2017:

Only 7% of children who were experiencing homelessness were served in Head Start/Early Head Start programs

16,068 children under the age of 6 experienced homelessness in 2015

93% of children experiencing homelessness were *not* served in federally funded ECE programs

Early Childhood Homelessness in Nevada

Early childhood experiences with homelessness have long-lasting impacts on a child's well-being, but access to educational services can help mitigate some of these negative effects.¹ However, federally-funded early childhood education (ECE) programs only serve a small portion of children who experience homelessness. Taking action to mitigate the impacts of early childhood homelessness is critical to ensuring all young children have the opportunity to thrive.

Early Childhood Homelessness in My State

214,028
children under age 6 live in Nevada

16,068
children under age 6 experienced homelessness in 2015 in Nevada²

1 out of every 13
Nevada children
EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS
in 2015

Early Childhood Education for Children Experiencing Homelessness

7%
of children experiencing homelessness were served by Head Start/Early Head Start or McKinney-Vento-funded ECE programs


93%
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 2015³


| Program Type | Number of Children | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Unserviced | 14,993 | 93% |
| Head Start/Early Head Start | 228 | 1.5% |
| McKinney-Vento | 651 | 4.4% |

Related Factors

Families experiencing homelessness, whether chronic or episodic, often face other barriers to affordable housing. By understanding these related challenges, states can create sustainable and proactive policy solutions that better address homelessness in their communities.



35% of families with children under 18 have a high housing cost burden⁴



31% of families with children under age 6 are working, but remain low income⁵

Administration for Children & Families

For detailed information on indicator definitions, data sources, and methodology, please see appendix.

Notes:
 1. McGeePatt, M., MastinFast, B.B., & Murphy, B. (2014). When the Dough Dries: The effects of homelessness on young children. Early Childhood Highlights, 8.
 2. Calculations by authors using methodology established by Nassut, et al. (2014) and 2015 data from U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
 3. Data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's 608 EBH/ET Data center.
 4. Data from U.S. Department of Education (2013). Generalized State Performance Reports, Part I and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014 Installation for Children and Families. (2013). Program Information Reports: Data on children under 6 experiencing homelessness served through federally-funded child care & home visiting programs will be collected for the first time in 2017.

A little background...

Washoe County School District's Children in Transition program consists of 4 Homeless Liaisons and 2 transportation liaisons

Washoe County School District has 116 schools - homeless liaisons divide schools amongst each other; each liaison has an average of 25-30 schools that they are working with

Each school has a designated CIT advocate that works directly with CIT Liaison – usually the school counselor or parent involvement facilitator (PIF)

Early Childhood Liaison covers their main schools in addition to all PK classrooms and EHS/HDST classrooms

WCSD has had a liaison dedicated to Early Childhood for 9 years

Currently WCSD has 41 PK classrooms and 52 SPED PK classrooms

WCSD has 3 Early Childhood programs for parenting teens. These programs are partnered up with EHS

Collaboration is key!

Why It's So Important...

We have to, thanks to ESSA!

Lack of awareness of homelessness among preschool aged students can prevent staff and teachers from identifying them

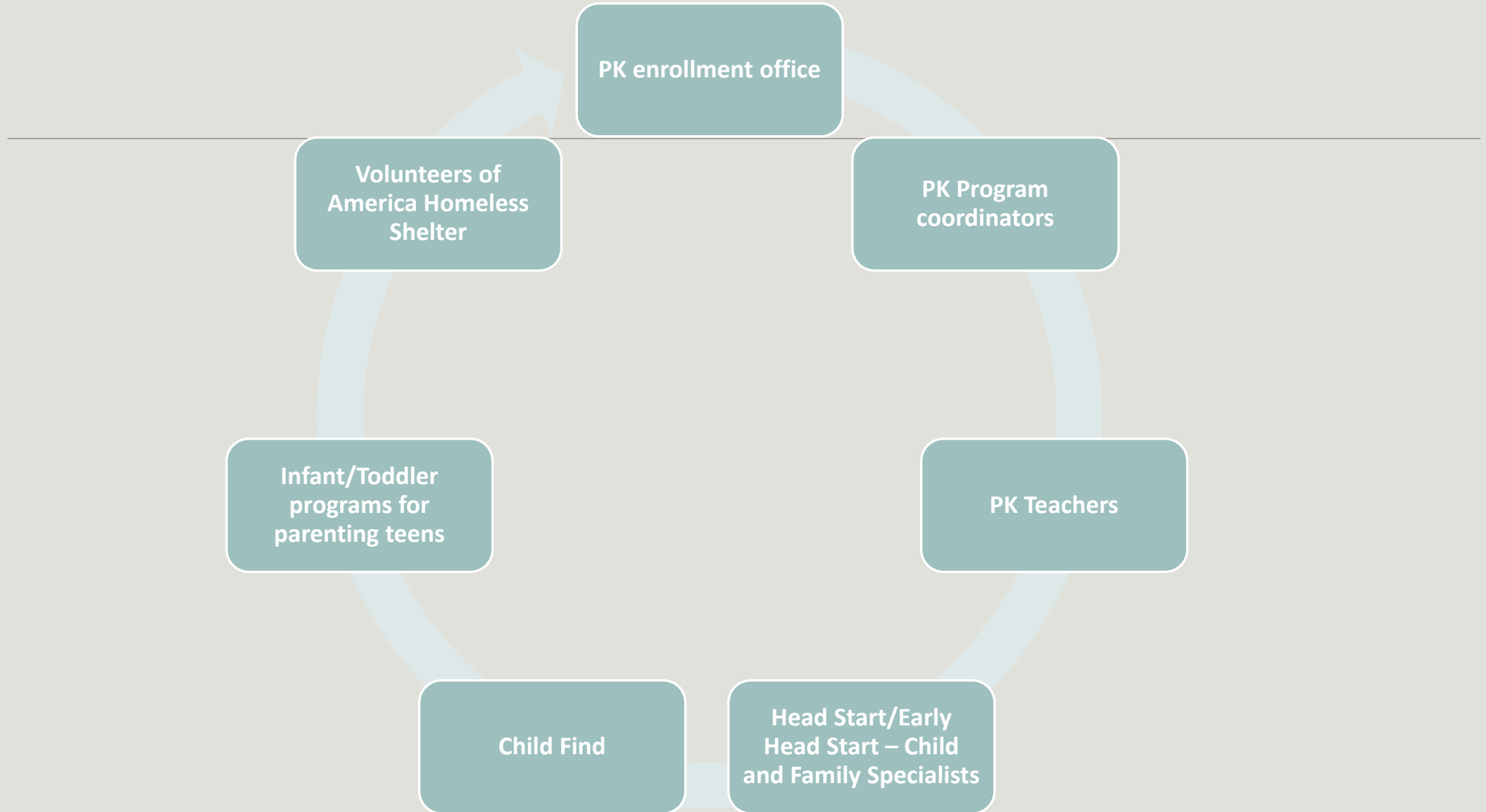
Finding that “hidden population” and getting them into ECE programs can create some predictability

Providing wrap-around services for families that go beyond the classroom

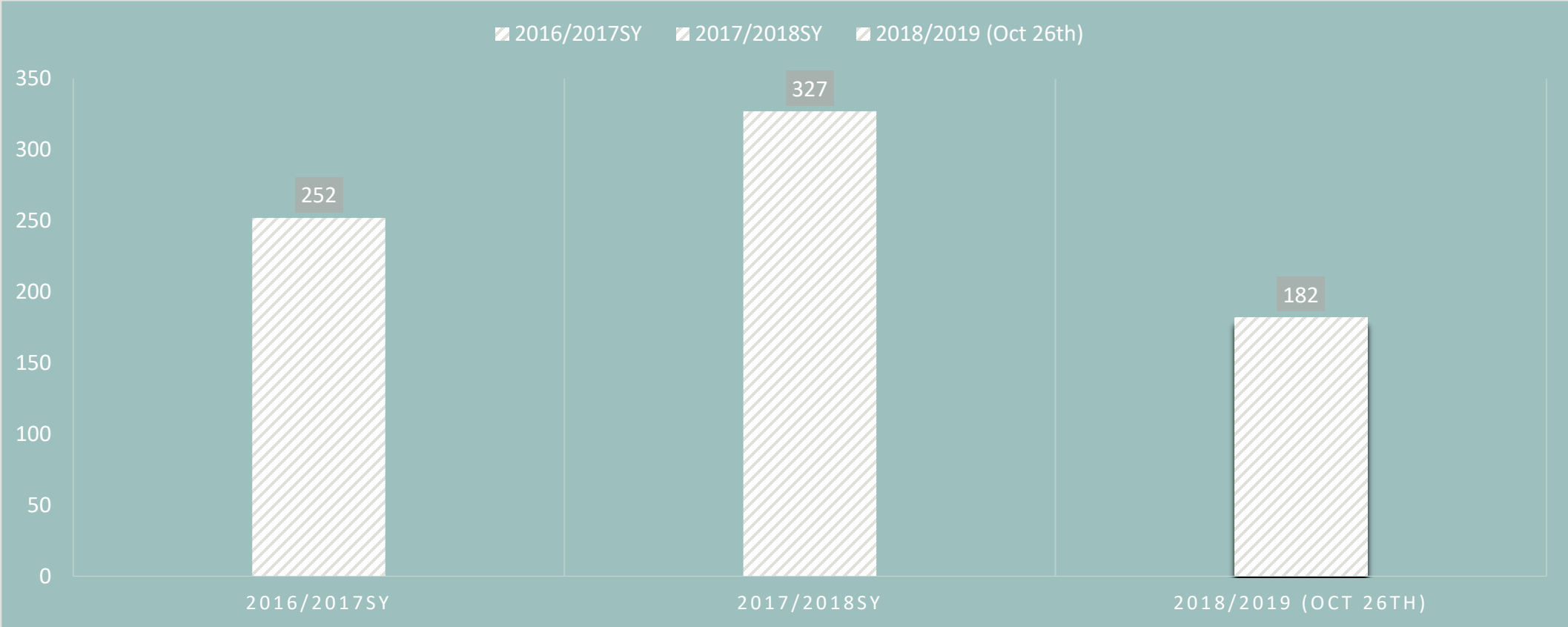
Identifying developmental delays and referring them to appropriate agencies (i.e. Child Find, NEIS)

Consistency in education helps overcome academic barriers

Who we collaborate with...



Students 0-5 Enrolled in WCSD PK & Head Start Classrooms



Brenda Martinez

PK Enrollment Specialist

WCSD Child & Family Services



Child and Family Services Department

The Child and Family Services Department is comprised of programs that serve children and families throughout the Washoe County School District and the Early Childhood statewide community. This department consists of the following programs; ***Early Childhood Education, The Nevada Registry and the Nevada Pre-K Standards/Early Learning Guidelines programs.***



Early Childhood Education (ECE) Pre-k Program: General Qualifications

Children must be Pre-K aged 3-5 years old

Must live in Washoe County

Live in the Zone where Pre-K programs are offered (Priority given to zoned families)

Grant funded programs may require additional qualification depending on site

Enrollment requirements for Pre-K

An official copy of the child's birth certificate

A current immunization record

Address verification (utility bill) and a family member's photo ID may be requested

Family income verification may be requested to meet grant requirements

A required meeting to complete the enrollment paperwork



Identifying CIT students during enrollment

During our meeting with the parents, the enrollment team asks a series of general demographic questions provided from our grant department. The most important question asked in identifying CIT students is question five.



5. Does the family meet the criteria for homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act? (A child is considered homeless if they lack a “fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime place of abode.”)
Or Fostering Connections (Foster Child)?
Yes 1
No 2

If the answer is “Yes” then we go ahead and fill out a CIT form. All forms are sent to Nikki for approval.

All enrollment staff is trained twice a year.

Funding Sources for ECE Pre-K



Nevada Ready! Pre-K Grant

- Children must be 4 years old by September 30th and families gross income must fall below the 200% poverty level
- All programs must provide 5 days a week or 25 hours a week of class time
- 20 children per classroom with a certified/licensed teacher and a certified teaching assistant
- Equal access for all children e.g. homeless, foster, military, tribal
- Programs must demonstrate coordination with existing community services through collaboration and cooperative efforts

Annual 2018 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Continental United States

| Size of Family Unit | Annual Income | Monthly Income | Weekly Income |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | \$24,280 | \$2,023 | \$506 |
| 2 | \$32,920 | \$2,743 | \$686 |
| 3 | \$41,560 | \$3,463 | \$866 |
| 4 | \$50,200 | \$4,183 | \$1,046 |
| 5 | \$58,840 | \$4,903 | \$1,226 |
| 6 | \$67,480 | \$5,623 | \$1,406 |
| 7 | \$76,120 | \$6,343 | \$1,586 |
| 8 | \$84,760 | \$7,063 | \$1,766 |
| Each Additional Person Add: | \$8,640 | \$720 | \$180 |

Funding Sources for ECE Pre-K continued.....

State funded Pre-K

- Serves Pre-K children ages 3-5
- Must have 10 hours a week of class time
- Must live in school zone
- Not eligible to attend Kindergarten
- No income requirement



Early Childhood Education (ECE) CIT Exceptions

CIT exceptions for grant funded programs:

- Child can turn 4 after September 30th, but must be 4 before December 31st
- No income verification is necessary
- No documentation needed to register
- CIT spots are saved in every classroom to accommodate population

Exceptions for state funded Pre-K:

- Can enroll an older 3 year old

How our process works...

During enrollment with Brenda and her team, CIT form is filled out with family to determine eligibility.

Forms are sent to CIT office for approval and entered into WCSD database with CIT identification.

E-mail is sent to designated PK teacher, making teacher aware of incoming CIT student and to set up orientation.

Special accommodations are made for homeless students who may not be able to attend orientation in person due to transiency or lack of transportation.

PK teacher assesses the need of family and sends in request for items and/or transportation through CIT office.

Transportation support

Preschool is now included and students have the right to receive transportation (even if preschool transportation is not typically provided) and continues for the duration of homelessness.

Source: <https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/flow-chart-to-determine-preschools/>

PK teachers work with CIT Transportation Liaison and Early Childhood Liaison to assist family in getting transportation to preschool. Based on classroom hours and distance of travel, transportation liaison determines which option is best suited for family.

- SPED School Bus (car seats installed)
- Public transportation (bus passes)
- Mileage reimbursement (if family has vehicle)

Training & Community Outreach

Written into our grant that CIT advocates are trained twice a year on McKinney-Vento

Office hours - every Wednesday at PK enrollment office for PK teachers who may need additional support and/or questions


Attending events hosted by Child and Family Services to spread awareness, identify younger siblings in the household and inform identified families of what services CIT can provide

PK Flyers and informational posters in classrooms

Flyer gives a brief overview of services and protections under the McKinney-Vento Act and who to contact if they believe they qualify.

Significant increase in program awareness within the community and phone calls to CIT office with questions about eligibility.

Each PK classroom also has CIT posters displayed; more detailed information



**WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
CHILDREN IN TRANSITION PROGRAM**


If your family lives in any of the following situations, you may qualify for services and protections under the McKinney-Vento Act:

- Doubled up with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- Living in a shelter
- Living in a hotel/motel due to lack of alternative or adequate accommodations
- Unaccompanied; living with someone who does not have legal custody/guardianship of student.

Eligible Students have the right to:


- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment
- Remain at school of origin (last school attended when permanently housed).
- Have access to transportation to remain at school of origin.
- Assistance with school supplies, clothing, hygiene products, school fees, etc.

Intervention Department
Prevention and intervention services for students and families



IF YOU THINK YOU QUALIFY, PLEASE LET YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER KNOW SO THEY CAN SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY OR YOU CAN CONTACT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD LIAISON.

**NIKKI DUTRA
EARLY CHILDHOOD LIAISON
775-353-6935
NDUTRA@WASHOESCHOOLS.NET**




Information about School-Aged Youth in Homeless Situations

Annually over one million children and youth experience homelessness. Schools can give these students stability, security, and a safe place to grow. In 1987 Congress passed a law called the McKinney-Vento Act. This law is designed to provide support to students experiencing homelessness and remove any barriers to their education.

Homelessness is defined through the McKinney-Vento Act as:
Anyone who lacks a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence. This includes:

- Sharing housing of others due to economic hardship
- Living in a motel or hotel
- Living in an emergency, transitional, or domestic violence shelter
- Living in a car, park, or abandoned building
- Living in a camper, RV, fifth wheel, or tent
- Unaccompanied, run away or abandoned youth
- Living on the street
- Residing in foster care



Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness have the right to:

- Go to school and be given access to the same public education provided to other students, including preschool education.
- Continue in their school of origin (school the child attended when permanently housed, or the last school in which the child was enrolled) for the remainder of the school year if they move.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency if it delays or prevents school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or other documents required for enrollment.
- Participate in school activities and programs with students who are not homeless. Students cannot be separated from regular school programs because they are homeless.
- Attend special classes and receive needed services that would be offered to all other students
- Receive transportation, if feasible, back to their school of origin.

When you move, you should:

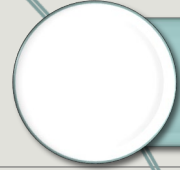
- Contact the Children in Transition Advocate at your school or the school district's **Children in Transition Liaisons** for help to continue in your school of origin or enrolling in your new zoned school.
- Tell your teachers anything they need to know to help you adjust in the new school.
- Ask any of the following people for assistance with backpacks, school supplies, personal care items, or health and dental services:
 - The school's Children in Transition Advocate
 - The district Liaisons for homeless education
 - A social agency provider, such as the **Family Resource Center** in your area.

Your school's Advocate is:

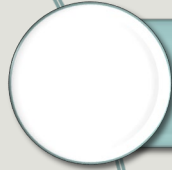
**Washoe County School District
Children in Transition
Program Liaisons**

██████████
EARLY CHILDHOOD LIAISON
775-353-6935

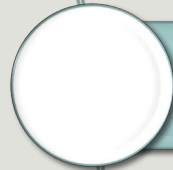
Successes



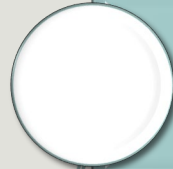
23% increase in PK students identified from 16/17 SY



Identifying older siblings that have not been identified at their school yet; ensuring all students in home have been identified

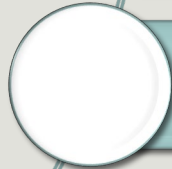


Working with VOA Homeless shelter to streamline the process of enrolling students into PK programs

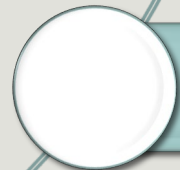


Training teachers:

- McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness
- Better understanding of barriers homeless PK students face



Grant changes due to growing homelessness population; registration exceptions




Increased awareness of CIT program; utilizing services

Challenges

Teachers feeling uncomfortable asking about living situation



Transportation – car seat required; classroom hours & lack of classrooms in zoned schools.



Informational posters not posted in classrooms



Students become homeless all year, not just during enrollment



Stigma that comes along with being homeless – families embarrassed to discuss their living situation

Challenges (continued)

Undocumented immigrants – apprehensive to be identified as homeless

3 year olds education gap – where can these students be placed?

Nevada Statutes 392.040, et seq.: Attendance is required for students ages 7-17

Special accommodations cannot always be made for homeless families; case-by-case

Once barriers are removed, families are expected to follow all the same classroom protocols

What's next---what we hope for moving forward

Continue our search in finding the hidden population and enrolling them into PK programs



Reaching out to motel/hotels; DV shelters, group homes - providing flyers, business cards, etc.



Community outreach – being more visible within our community, even outside of district run events



Continue strong collaboration within our 2 departments to better serve PK students experiencing homelessness



Building stronger relationships with outside agencies; referrals that go both ways



Continue to spread awareness about Early Childhood homelessness; through collaborations, we are able to serve the most vulnerable population

“Children lose many things when they become homeless; education does not have to be one of them.”

-Author Unknown



THANK YOU FOR COMING!



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