

Supporting Our Youngest Learners:

Programs and Services for Infants,
Toddlers, Preschoolers and their
Families



Session overview

- Homelessness and young children
- Early care and learning system overview
- McKinney-Vento and early childhood programs
- Collaboration and enrollment
- Resource and Questions

Homelessness and young children

Homelessness among young children

- In 2018-2019, there were **1,297,513** children under six years old who experienced homelessness.
- Nearly half of all children staying in HUD-funded emergency and transitional housing are age 5 and under
- Children under age one account for about 10% of the child population served by HUD-funded shelters
- Pregnancy and parenthood are common among youth experiencing homelessness
 - As many as **4.2 million** adolescents and youth adults who experience homelessness in a 12-month period
 - **44%** of young women and **18%** of young men age 18-25

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

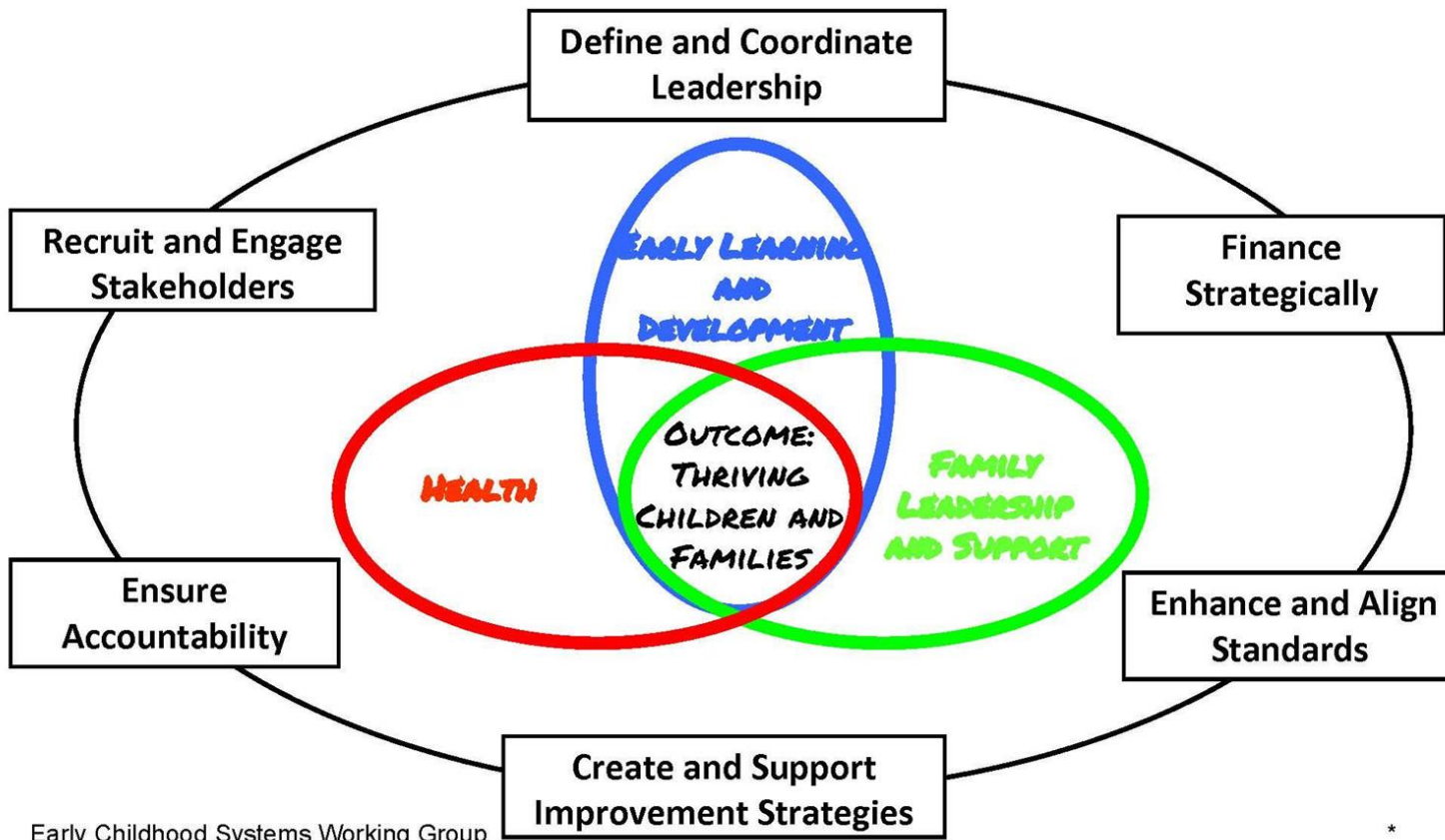


*Most incidents of homelessness occur during **the most critical period of development** in the entire human lifespan*

Early childhood landscape



What are the functions of a Comprehensive Early Childhood System?



Important considerations

- We do not have universal access to education for young children
 - Limits ability to provide immediate enrollment
 - Universal pre-k is expanding so this could be changing in some communities; more expansion on the horizon at the federal level
- McKinney-Vento rights/protections don't apply to all ECE programs in the same way
 - Most programs use the MK-V definition
 - No universal access (or even access for all who are eligible) for other ECE programs and services
 - Policy language often falls short of requirements; may vs. shall, “to the extent possible” and “collaborate to provide”

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

Home visiting services

Services include:

- One-on-one meetings in the home or community
- Parent-child interaction activities/support
- Education on child health and development
- Parent coaching
- Developmental screening and referral to services
- Maternal health/mental health screening and referral to services
- Coordination and support for connecting with other services

Early Head Start and Head Start

- Federally funded program
- Two primary goals: break the cycle of poverty and improve school readiness
- Head Start created in 1965 as part of the “War on Poverty”
- Early Head Start created in 1995 to serve infants and toddlers
- Only a fraction of eligible children are served
- “Gold standard” early childhood program



Early Head Start and Head Start

Eligibility:

- Early Head Start: children ages birth-3 and expectant parents
- Head Start: children ages 3-5
- Children experiencing homelessness regardless of income
- Foster children regardless of income
- Children whose families receive public assistance (TANF or SSI)
- Children whose families' income is below the Federal Poverty Guidelines
- 10% of enrollment must be children with disabilities

Early Head Start and Head Start

Program Options:

- Center-based
 - Full day, part day, and child care collaboration schedules
- Home-based
 - Weekly home visits
 - Parent-child education groups
- Family child care homes
- Other options include locally designed, combination, or mixed

Early Head Start and Head Start

Comprehensive services:

- Child development and education
- Determination of child's health status
- Disabilities services
- Nutritious meals
- Mental wellness
- Parent education
- Home visits
- Parent conferences
- Staff development
- Community connections
- Parent involvement in decision-making
- Socialization
- Tracking and referrals
- Male involvement
- Developmental screenings
- Vision and hearing screenings

Early Head Start and Head Start and homelessness

Programs are required to:

- Use the McKinney-Vento definition of “homelessness”
- Identify and prioritize children experiencing homelessness for enrollment
- Take steps to coordinate with local “feeder schools” to:
 - establish ongoing communication with liaisons
 - develop a coordinated strategy for family support services

Early Head Start and Head Start and homelessness

Programs are permitted to:

- Reserve slots for homeless children for a period of 30 days whenever a vacancy occurs
- Enroll immediately while required enrollment documents are obtained in a *reasonable* timeframe

State pre-k programs

- State funding of preschool services for 4-year-olds or for 3- and 4-year-olds
 - Both school based and community providers
 - 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 children experiencing homelessness

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
- establish procedures to permit enrollment of homeless children while required documentation is obtained
- provide training and technical assistance on identifying and serving homeless children and their families
- engage in 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

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Requires states to identify children with disabilities and provide a free, appropriate, public education
- Originally passed in 1975 as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act
- Reauthorized in 1990 → IDEA
- Four parts
 - A. general provisions of the law
 - B. covers assistance for providing a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities ages three through 21
 - C. covers services to infants and toddlers
 - D. provisions for federal grants available to support activities related to improving services for children with disabilities

IDEA Part C “Early Intervention”

- Federal grant program that assists states in operating a comprehensive statewide program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers under the age of three who have developmental disabilities, developmental delays, or are at risk
- Goals include:
 - enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities;
 - reduce educational costs by minimizing the need for special education through early intervention;
 - minimize the likelihood of institutionalization, and maximize independent living; *and,*
 - enhance the capacity of families to meet their child's needs.

Part C services

- Eligibility for families varies state to state
 - Definition of delay, percentage of delay
- Some physical or mental conditions with a high probability of resulting in delay make a child automatically eligible
- States can elect to serve children who are at risk of delay, which is also defined by the state
- Clinical opinion can inform eligibility
- Multidisciplinary evaluations must be completed within 45 days
- If a child is found to be eligible, the families and providers work together to create an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)

Part C services

- Services must be delivered in the “natural environment”
 - Home, child care program, community setting
- Services may include:
 - Screening and assessment
 - Service coordination including Transition to Part B
 - Speech and language therapy
 - Physical or occupational therapy
 - Psychological services
 - Medical, nursing or nutrition services
 - Hearing (audiology) or vision services
 - Social work services
 - Transportation

Part C and homelessness

- Use a definition of homeless consistent with McKinney-Vento
- Have policies and procedures for identifying homeless infants and toddlers who are eligible for Part C
 - May do outreach to primary referral sources like shelters
 - May include homelessness as an at-risk criteria
- Make available appropriate EI services for families experiencing homelessness
- Include McKinney-Vento State Coordinator (or designee) on SICC
- ESSA requires liaisons to ensure access to EI for infants/toddlers experiencing homelessness

Section 619 “Preschool Special Education”

- Federal grant program intended to help states ensure that all preschool-aged children (age 3-5) with disabilities receive special education and related services in their least restrictive environment
- The goal of preschool special education services is to enable young children to be active and successful participants in home, school, and community settings resulting in positive outcomes for children and their families

Section 619 services

- Evaluation and eligibility determination is the responsibility of the LEA
- If a child is found eligible, the family and school personnel work together to create an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Service array is similar to EI and can include anything a child needs in order to participate in school
- Services must be delivered in the Least Restrictive Environment
- Dear Colleague Letter on LRE:
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/preschool-lre-dcl-1-10-17.pdf>
- Dear Colleague Letter on Highly Mobile Students:
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/12-0392dclhighlymobile.pdf>

Screening for delays

- All children should receive developmental screening at recommended periodicity
- Screening should be done using a validated screening tool
 - Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- Screenings are widely available
 - Child Find
 - Early childhood programs
 - Pediatricians
 - Other service providers

State Advisory Councils

- 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
- Some local communities also have active councils and coalitions

Build Back Better Framework

- Historic expansion of access to child care and preschool; improvements to Early/Head Start
 - States have to opt in; option for localities to opt in if state does not
 - Phase in period starting in FY22; ends FY27
- Child care
 - Caps family contributions for child care at 7% of income for families earning under 250% of the State Median Income
 - Would apply to about 90% of all families; currently less than 17% qualify for assistance
 - Increase compensation for providers; increase credentials
 - Inclusive of centers, family child care, FFN, faith-based and local schools
- Universal preschool
 - Mixed-delivery (school and community-based)
 - 3s and 4s
- Read more here: <https://www.ffyf.org/faq-on-the-child-care-and-preschool-provisions-in-the-build-back-better-act/>

McKinney-Vento and young children

McKinney-Vento and preschool

- States must ensure that homeless children have access to public preschool programs
- McKinney-Vento State Coordinators must collaborate with the early childhood community
- LEA homeless liaisons must ensure that homeless children have access to Head Start and Early Head Start programs, early intervention services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part C), and other preschool programs administered by the LEA
- Preschool is considered a “school of origin”

Transportation for preschool-aged children

- Because preschool can be considered a “school of origin” schools now may have to provide transportation
- Under last iteration of ESEA, transportation was only provided to preschoolers experiencing homelessness if transportation was provided to non-homeless students
- Under ESSA, transportation must be provided if the child needs transportation to their school of origin
- Transporting young children can come with different sets of requirements: car seats, restraints, time in the vehicle, adult supports during transportation, etc.

Collaborating with early childhood programs and services

Ways to connect and collaborate

- Learn
 - Locate programs in your service area - reach out
 - Webinars
 - List-servs
 - EC Connector?
- State and local advisory councils
 - EI councils
 - State Advisory Councils
- CoC's
 - EC Homeless workgroup
- Universities, Colleges and Higher Education
 - EC Education Programs
 - class placements and volunteering opportunities
 - Mentoring and Tutoring
 - BASES -UW

Thoughts from Wisconsin

- Universities, Colleges and Higher Education
 - EC/ Education Programs
 - class placements and volunteering opportunities
 - awareness opportunities
 - Mentoring, Tutoring, Awareness
 - BASES -UW
 - UW lead classes shard in the school district for staff and families -chronic stress
 - BUilding BASES club on campus
 - other organizations and sororities on campus support
- CoC's
 - Whose collecting the data and asking the questions?
 - Doubled Up Workgroup
 - has representation from EC Homeless Workgroup
 - Awareness has always included EC views and info data when available.
 - EC Homeless workgroup
 - community awareness events
 - community training events esp for child care facilities
 - Training specifically for EC directors - [Self Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness Self-Assessment Tools](#)
 - Child Care forms and conversations

A few words about forms...

Use forms to screen for homelessness sensitively

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

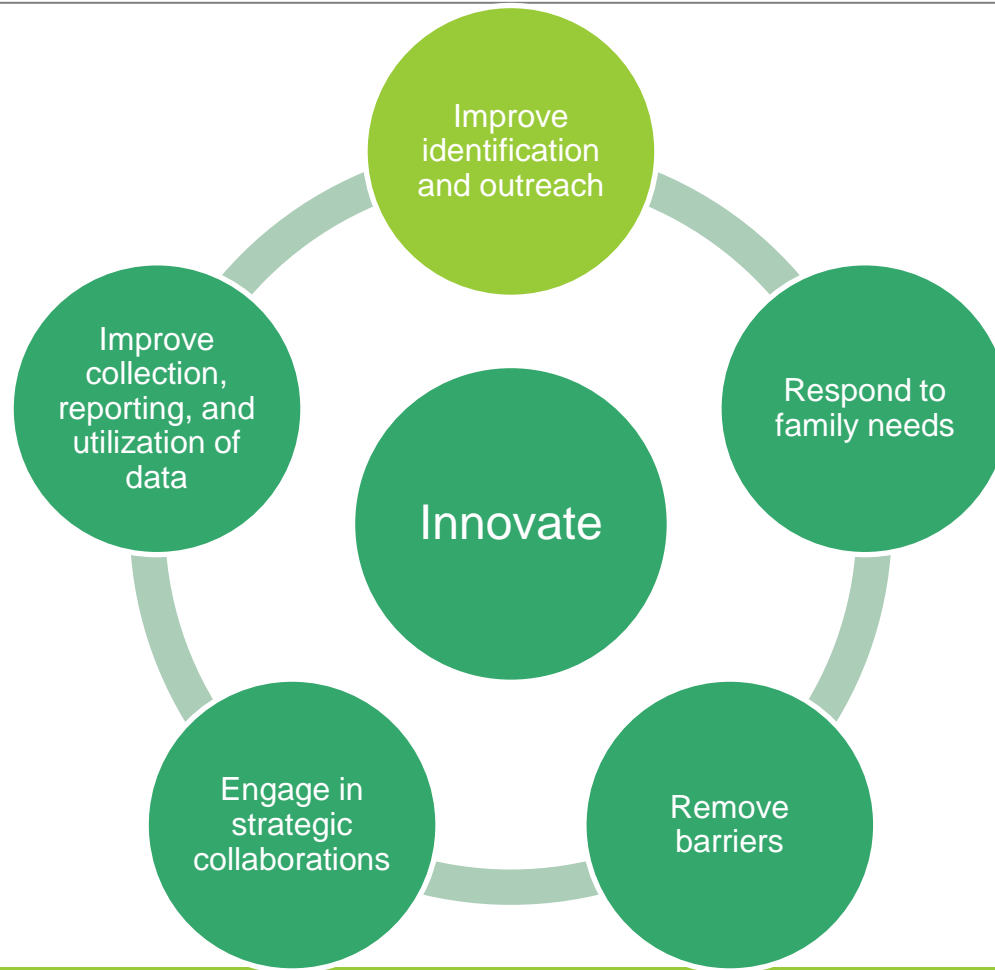
Follow up with a conversation whenever possible

- 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

Pennsylvania - How can early childhood programs serve more children and families?



Pennsylvania activities

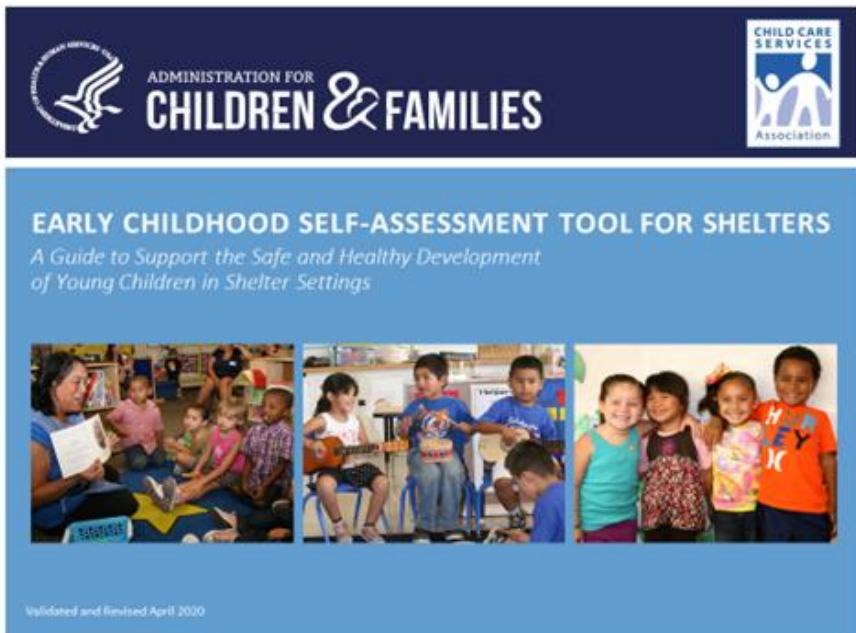
- ***State level Early Childhood Homelessness Stakeholders group***
 - CCDF State Plan
 - Recommendations from Education for Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness annual report
 - Recommendations from Annual BELL Summit
 - Data collection, analysis and reporting
- ***People's Emergency Center and the BELL Project***
 - Annual Summits and recommendations
- ***Early Learning Resource Centers (CCR&Rs)***
- ***Regional Roundtables***
- ***National Head Start / Schoolhouse Connection App***
- ***Training and Technical Assistance***
 - Contracting with Dr. Grace Whitney for training and technical assistance for statewide systems building
 - Interactive Learning Modules in PA PD Registry


Questions and discussion


- What questions do you have?
 - Is there anything you want to know more about?
- What is the role of McKinney-Vento liaisons in improving access to early care and education programs in the community?
 - What are the challenges?
 - What are some opportunities?
 - How can you support early childhood programs in doing better?
- How will you use what you learned today in your role?
 - What information was new to you?
 - What resonated most?
 - What action step(s) will you take?
- Other comments?

Resources


Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tools



 ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

 CHILD CARE
SERVICES
Association

EARLY CHILDHOOD SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR SHELTERS
*A Guide to Support the Safe and Healthy Development
of Young Children in Shelter Settings*



Validated and Revised April 2010



 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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Thank you!
