

Minibibliography

Homelessness and Young Children: Early Childhood Care and Education

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Compiled by Susan Goode, MLS, PT and Evelyn Shaw, MEd

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, states must have policies and procedures in place that ensure timely assessment, appropriate services, and continuity of services for children with disabilities who are homeless. IDEA 2004 specifically requires states to comply with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which establishes protections and educational rights for all children experiencing homelessness, including children with disabilities.

In the United States, families with children are one of the fastest growing segments of the homeless population. It is estimated that over 1.35 million children experience homelessness each year and over 42 percent of these children are under the age of six (National Center on Family Homelessness, 2003). Homeless infants are more likely to have low birth weights and are at greater risk of being exposed to environmental risks than other infants. Many homeless toddlers demonstrate developmental delays that can lead to later behavioral and emotional problems (Hart-Shegos, 1999) and studies indicate that children who are homeless are more likely to have learning disabilities or emotional disturbance than children who are not homeless (Better Homes Fund, 1999).

This minibibliography provides a selection of resources that address the needs and educational rights of young children experiencing homelessness, as well as strategies for working with these vulnerable children and their families in early childhood care and education programs. Many of these resources are available online. Abstracts come from the source or from ERIC (<http://www.eric.ed.gov>), if in the public domain. Other abstracts were written by NECTAC staff.

Better Homes Fund. (1999). *Homeless children: America's new outcasts*. West Newton, MA: Author.

Abstract: This report presents information on homeless children in the United States, based on years of rigorous scientific research. The includes concrete strategies to help homeless children and families secure food, shelter, health care, and schooling. It also describes strategies to address the underlying causes of homelessness. Topics discussed include: Homelessness Makes Children Sick; Homelessness Wounds Young Children; Homelessness Devastates Families; Homeless Children Struggle in School; Family Homelessness: A New Social Problem; More Than One

Million Homeless Children; and Family Homelessness Will Increase. Immediate and long-term recommendations are included. Selected information from this report is available at http://www.familyhomelessness.org/pdf/fact_outcasts.pdf

Bruder, M. B. (1997). Children who are homeless: A growing challenge for early care and education. In C. J. Dunst & M. Wolery (Eds.), *Advances in early education and child care, Vol. 9: Family policy and practice in early child care* (pp. 223-246). Stamford, CT: JAI Press.

Abstract: This chapter provides an overview of issues related to the growing number of families and children who are experiencing homelessness. It specifically includes recommendations for early childhood providers as they work with and educate young children who are homeless. It also discusses the history and incidence of homelessness, living options for the homeless, the needs of children who are homeless, and service implications for children who are homeless.

Children's Defense Fund. (2005). *Summary: Improving education for homeless and foster children with disabilities in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004 – P.L. 108-446)*. Retrieved September 1, 2005 from http://www.childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/adoption/IDEA_2004_summary.pdf

Abstract: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) includes a number of amendments that are meant to improve the access of children who are homeless and children who are wards of the state to special education services and to improve the quality of those services. This document reviews and discusses these changes.

Douglass, A. (1996). Rethinking the effects of homelessness on children: Resiliency and competency. *Child Welfare, 75*(6), 741-751.

Abstract: This article describes an early childhood education program at an urban family shelter that serves both low-income children (aged 6 wks to 6 yrs) who are homeless, as well as those who have homes. It describes the struggles and successes of preschool-aged children experiencing homelessness and discusses the coping strategies used by these children to manage stress. The author emphasizes the importance of differentiating between coping strategies and developmental delays or emotional disturbances when evaluating these young children.

DuPlessis, H. M., Cora-Bramble, D., & American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Community Health Services. (2005). *Providing care for immigrant, homeless, and migrant children*. Retrieved August 15, 2005, from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/115/4/1095>

Abstract: This policy statement replaces two earlier statements, "Health Care for Children of Immigrant Families" (1997) and "Health Needs of Homeless Children and Families" (1996). It is a broader discussion of the issues and addresses not only immigrant but also homeless and migrant child populations. It provides pediatricians with the necessary framework for addressing underserved children who face substantial barriers that limit access to appropriate health care services. This statement supports a community-based approach to health care delivery to ensure that underserved children have a medical home.

Hart-Shegos, E. (1999). *Homelessness and its effects on children*. Retrieved April 27, 2006 from <http://www.fhfund.org/dnld/reports/SupportiveChildren.pdf>

Abstract: Homelessness influences the physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and behavioral development of young children. Homeless infants are more likely to have low birth weights and

are at greater risk of being exposed to environmental factors that endanger their health. Many homeless children demonstrate significant developmental delays after 18 months of age, which can lead to later behavioral and emotional problems. Homeless toddlers are often separated from their parents, which can cause long-term negative effects, and they receive fewer services than other toddlers. Studies show that early, consistent intervention can help children overcome many of the detrimental effects of poverty and homelessness. Priority access for homeless families to such services is essential.

Hicks-Coolick, A., Burnside-Eaton, P., & Peters, A. (2003). Homeless children: Needs and services. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 32*(4), 197-210.

Abstract: A survey of 102 shelters in Georgia showed that approximately two-thirds of the shelters that served children provided food, clothing, and school supplies. 40% offered some form of transportation. More than 75% of the shelters were full and did not have space currently available for children. Most of the shelters lacked important services in the areas of medical and developmental assessments, access to education, childcare, and parent training. 47% lacked onsite worker training related to the characteristics and needs of homeless children. Furthermore, while the McKinney-Vento Act mandates services for homeless children, the study findings demonstrated that 50% of key informants in the homeless shelters were unfamiliar with the law.

Jackson, T. L. (2004). Homelessness and students with disabilities: Educational rights and challenges. *Quick Turn Around, January 2004*. Retrieved August 15, 2005, from http://www.nasdse.org/publications/homelessness_and_SWD.pdf

Abstract: The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness, including those with disabilities. Students who are both homeless and eligible for special education services present unique challenges for schools in terms of identification and continuity of service. This publication is intended to provide state- and local-level special education policy makers with information regarding the educational rights of children and youth who are homeless and have disabilities.

Kelly, J. F., Buehlman, K., & Caldwell, K. (2000). Training personnel to promote quality parent-child interaction in families who are homeless. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 20*(3), 174-185.

Abstract: This article reports on a study that was done to train parent-child advocates serving homeless parents and children (birth-3). Four advocates were trained over a 20-week period in providing one-on-one early intervention to facilitate healthy parent-child interactions. After training, all advocates increased their use of positive, contingent, and instructive feedback. Additionally, mothers receiving intervention became more contingent, social-emotional growth fostering, and stimulating in their parent-child interactions

Kling, N., & et al. (1996). Homeless families in early childhood programs: What to expect and what to do. *Dimensions of Early Childhood, 24*(1), 3-8.

Abstract: This article describes the characteristics of homeless families and their living conditions. It presents characteristics specific to homeless children and discusses strategies for working with homeless children and their families in early childhood care and education settings.

Knitzer, J., & Lefkowitz, J. (2006). *Pathways to early school success: Helping the most vulnerable infants, toddlers, and their families*. Retrieved May 2, 2006 from http://www.nccp.org/media/pew06e_text.pdf

Abstract: This issue brief highlights 10 program and community strategies that can help these most vulnerable families and promote early school success even in the face of multiple demographic, economic, and parental barriers like depression, trauma and homelessness that so impact young children. It is based on a meeting that brought together policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and advocates to explore the challenges and opportunities for focusing more attention on these families while at the same time working to expand access to supportive programs for all families with very young children.

Koblinsky, S. A., Gordon, A. L., & Anderson, E. A. (2000). Changes in the social skills and behavior problems of homeless and housed children during the preschool year. *Early Education and Development, 11*(3), 321-338.

Abstract: This study compared the social competence and mental health of homeless Head Start preschoolers with their housed peers. Parents and teachers identified more behavioral problems in the homeless children. After 6 months, mothers reported declines in the homeless children's compliance and teachers noted declines in their compliance and expressive skills. Homeless preschoolers had greater increases in behavior problems over 6 months than housed preschoolers.

Myers, M., & Patricia A. Popp. (2003). *Unlocking potential! What educators need to know about homelessness and special education*. Retrieved April 27, 2006 from <http://www.wm.edu/hope/infobrief/personnel-complete.pdf>

Abstract: This information brief provides school personnel with the information about how to enroll, promote the attendance, and support the success of students with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness.

Myers, M. (2003). *Unlocking potential! What families and shelters need to know about homelessness and special education*. Retrieved May 2, 2006 from <http://www.wm.edu/hope/infobrief/family-complete.pdf>

Abstract: The purpose of this information brief is to provide families experiencing homelessness and service providers who work with these families an overview of the special education process.

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children. (2005). *Homelessness and Head Start*. Retrieved March 14, 2006 from <http://www.naehcy.org/nhsamaterials.html>

Abstract: This Web site includes materials from the Town Hall Meeting, "Helping Homeless Head Start Children," which was offered on April 22, 2005 at the National Head Start Association's 31st Annual Training Conference in Anaheim, California. It includes information on state level strategies, local strategies, and federal law and policy.

National Center for Homeless Education. (2005). *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004: Provisions for children and youth with disabilities who experience homelessness*. Retrieved March 14, 2006 from <http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/idea.pdf>

Abstract: This issue brief explains the provisions of IDEA 2004 the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act that pertain to children and youth experiencing homelessness. It includes suggested strategies for implementation.

National Center on Family Homelessness. (2003). *America's homeless children*. Retrieved April 25, 2006 from http://www.familyhomelessness.org/pdf/fact_children.pdf

Abstract: This fact sheet provides information on the more than one million children who are homeless during a year's time. It presents data that identify the causes of family homelessness and demonstrate both that homelessness hurts children and that homeless children are not receiving the services they need.

National Coalition for the Homeless. (2005). *Education of homeless children and youth*. Retrieved April 27, 2005 from <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/publications/facts/education.pdf>

Abstract: This fact sheet examines the barriers to public education faced by homeless children and youth, the progress states have made in removing those barriers, and current policy issues. A list of resources for further study is provided.

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. (2005). *The 100 most frequently asked questions on the education rights of children and youth in homeless situations*. Retrieved April 25, 2006 from <http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/100%20Most%20Frequently%20Asked.pdf>

Abstract: This document provides answers to frequently asked questions on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the education rights of children and youth in homeless situations. The answers are general responses based on the law and could change depending on the facts of a particular case. It contains a section related to preschool education and a section related to children receiving special education and related services.

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. (1997). *Blocks to their future: A report on the barriers to preschool education for homeless children*. Retrieved May 1, 2006 from <http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/Blocks.pdf>

Abstract: This document analyzes the progress made in advancing homeless children's access to public preschool education pursuant to the McKinney Act Education Program (MAEP) mandates. It assesses the level of access that homeless children have to preschool education; identifies barriers that prevent their enrollment, attendance and participation in preschool; and presents policy recommendations to ensure compliance with MAEP mandates.

O'Connor, M. A. (2005). *Education rights of homeless children*. Retrieved September 16, 2005 from <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/homeless.educate.htm>

Abstract: This document summarizes the basic education rights of all homeless children and specifically, the rights of children with disabilities. The article includes references and links to many Web sites with more detailed information.

Pardeck, J. T. (2005). An exploration of child maltreatment among homeless families: Implications for family policy. *Early Child Development and Care*, 175(4), 335-342.

Abstract: This study explored the incidence of child maltreatment among homeless families, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The data demonstrated a high incidence of maltreatment in the lives of homeless children. Policy implications are discussed.

Park, J. M., Metraux, S., Brodbar, G., & Culhane, D. P. (2004). Child welfare involvement among children in homeless families. *Child Welfare, 83*(5), 423.

Abstract: This study looked at child welfare involvement in the lives of 8,251 homeless children in New York City. 18% of the children received child welfare services over the five-year period following their first shelter admission. An additional 6% had a history of having received such services before their first shelter admission. These findings suggest the need for service coordination for children in homeless families.

Parke, B. N., & Agness, P. (2002). Hand in hand: A journey toward readiness for profoundly at-risk preschoolers. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 30*(1), 33-37.

Abstract: This article presents the seven principles of the Hand in Hand early childhood program, which was designed to give profoundly at-risk preschoolers the tools they need to lessen their risk for failure on entry to kindergarten. Some of the risk factors these children experience include abandonment, homelessness, starvation, and abuse.

Reed-Victor, E., Popp, P., & Myers, M. (2003). *Using the best that we know: Supporting young children experiencing homelessness*. Retrieved on May 1, 2006, from <http://www.wm.edu/hope/infobrief/ECSE-educ.pdf>

Abstract: This document, developed by Project HOPE, explores the effects of homelessness on preschool-aged children and discusses best practices in early intervention for young children experiencing homelessness.

Stronge, J. H. (1997). A long road ahead: A progress report on educating homeless children and youth in America. *Journal of Children and Poverty, 3*(2), 13-31.

Abstract: This article describes progress made in recent years in addressing the educational needs of homeless children and youth in America and notes concerns that remain, including awareness and perceptions of homelessness, early childhood educational needs, interventions, interagency collaboration, and the need for comprehensive evaluations of educational efforts for the homeless.

Swick, K. J., & Bailey, L. B. (2004). Communicating effectively with parents and families who are homeless. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 32*(3), 211-215.

Abstract: This article presents strategies for establishing effective and meaningful communication with parents and families who are homeless. Staff development ideas, parent and family involvement, and school-community support strategies are highlighted.

Swick, K. J. (2004). The dynamics of families who are homeless: Implications for early childhood educators. *Childhood Education, 80*(3), 116.

Abstract: Over the past 25 years in the United States, the homeless population has changed significantly. Families (often women with two children under age 5) now make up 30 percent of the homeless population. Some researchers suggest that families may make up 40 to 50 percent of the homeless population. This article describes the various dynamics of families who are homeless, what this means for the early childhood education profession, and what strategies can be employed to effectively support homeless families with young children.

Swick, K. J. (1999). Empowering homeless and transient children/families: An ecological framework for early childhood teachers. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 26(3), 195-201.

Abstract: This article discusses the basic needs of young homeless or transient children and how early-childhood practitioners can meet their immediate and long-term needs. It presents suggestions for supporting homeless/transient children in the classroom and describes how empowering teachers can create more positive attitudes toward, and outcomes for, homeless/transient children.

Swick, K. J. (1997). Strengthening homeless families and their young children. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, 25(2), 29-34.

Abstract: This article reviews the causes of homelessness and the needs of homeless families and their young children. Several strategies to develop effective services are presented, emphasizing parental involvement, school and community collaboration, and a comprehensive approach.

Taylor, T. D., & Brown, M. C. (1996). *Young children and their families who are homeless. A university affiliated program's response*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child Development Center.

Abstract: This monograph describes an initiative that focused on the developmental needs of young children from birth to age five experiencing homelessness and the services and supports provided to their families. It offers strategies for identifying and referring children with developmental delays and disabilities and describes interventions that have been found to be successful, as well as barriers to accessing services. Recommendations for advocacy and policy development within the developmental disabilities network are included.

U. S. Dept. of Education. (2004). *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Non-regulatory guidance*. Retrieved April 27, 2006 from <http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf>

Abstract: This revised non-regulatory guidance for the McKinney-Vento program replaces the March 2003 guidance. It includes new questions that address the following issues: whether children awaiting foster care placement are eligible for McKinney-Vento services; if children displaced from their homes by a natural disaster are eligible for McKinney-Vento services; and if an LEA must provide transportation services to homeless children attending preschool.

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Head Start Bureau. (1999). *Head Start demonstration projects serving homeless families*. Retrieved April 28, 2006 from http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/im99/im99_02.htm

Abstract: In 1993 the Head Start Bureau (HSB) funded 16 Head Start Grantees to implement three-year demonstration projects for homeless children and their families. At the end of the three-year demonstration period, the HSB transitioned the demonstration projects and funds to the Grantee's regular Head Start budgets to assure continuation of services for homeless families. This Report provides the following information about the Demonstration projects: (1) The characteristics of the projects and families served; (2) Critical issues relevant to project implementation; (3) Challenges encountered and effective practices with respect to each issue; and (4) Key lessons learned. It also reports on effective approaches and experiences, accompanied by

recommendations provided by Project Directors. Information about the challenges of providing a continuum of services to homeless children and families is included.

Additional Resources

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth – <http://www.naehcy.org>

National Center on Family Homelessness - <http://www.familyhomelessness.org/>

National Center for Children in Poverty - <http://www.nccp.org/about.html>

National Center for Homeless Education – <http://www.serve.org/nche>

Additional Resources (cont'd)

National Coalition for the Homeless – <http://www.nationalhomeless.org>

National Law Center for Homelessness and Poverty – <http://www.nlchp.org>

Project HOPE: Virginia Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program - <http://www.wm.edu/hope/homeless.php>

*To search the ERIC databases or access the references herein,
see <http://www.nectac.org/chouse/>*



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