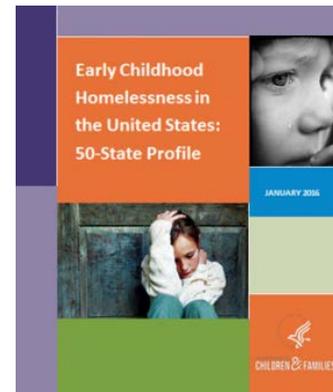


Early Childhood Homelessness – Articles from 2016/2017 ECD Newsletters

January 2016 Newsletter

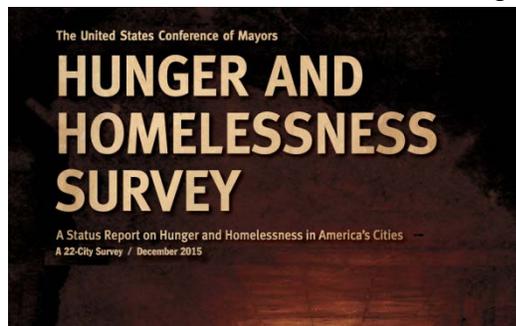
[Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile.](#)

ACF released [Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile](#), providing data for children experiencing homelessness in each state and the District of Columbia. The report can be used as a tool for states to meet the needs of vulnerable children and provide information for local, statewide, and federal conversations and planning toward the goal of ending family homelessness. Individual profiles will soon be on the website.



Conference of Mayors Report

Each year, since October 1982, when The U.S. Conference of Mayors and The U.S. Conference of City Human Services Officials first brought the shortage of emergency services to national attention through a survey of cities of all sizes, the Conference of



Mayors presents a report on the problems of hunger and homelessness in America's cities. The survey includes questions on family homelessness. It does not include questions regarding young children.

The 22 Task Force cities responding to this year's survey are Asheville, NC; Baltimore, MD; Charleston, SC; Chicago, IL; Cleveland, OH;

Dallas, TX Des Moines, IA; Los Angeles, CA; Louisville, KY ; McKinney, TX; Memphis, TN; Nashville, TN; Norfolk, VA; Philadelphia, PA; Providence, RI; Saint Paul, MN; Salt Lake City, UT; San Antonio, TX; San Francisco, CA; Santa Barbara, CA; Seattle, WA; District of Columbia

Ensuring the well-being of our youngest children is essential to the work of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). HHS is especially focused on the challenges faced by families with young children who are homeless or at risk for homelessness. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) reached out to states and programs with guidance in 2013 and continues to provide resources to the field. These can be [accessed here](#).

Most recently, both ACF and HRSA encouraged strategies and collaboration on early childhood homelessness to Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), Tribal MIECHV and Healthy Start grantees. See more [here](#).

Looking for past articles on early childhood homelessness? The [Highlights on Homelessness](#) from the ECD Newsletters in 2015 provides resources from ACF and partners including Project CATCH in Raleigh, NC; Primo Center for Women and Children, Chicago, IL; a Research to Policy Resource List by Research Connections; UMOM in Phoenix, AZ and Families in Transition, Rockford, IL.

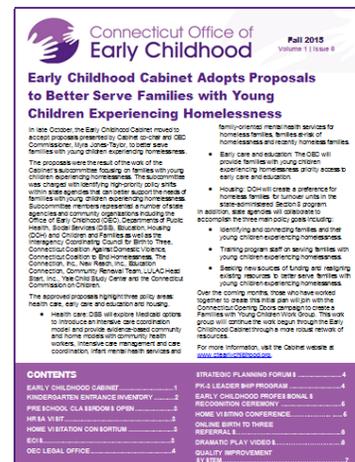
February 2016 CT's State Advisory Council (SAC) Takes on Homelessness

The State Advisory Council (SAC), known as the Early Childhood Cabinet, moved to accept proposals presented by Cabinet co-chair and OEC Commissioner, Myra Jones-Taylor, to better serve families with young children experiencing homelessness.

The approved proposals highlight three policy areas: health care, early care and education and housing.

- Health care:** DSS will explore Medicaid options to introduce an intensive care coordination model and provide evidence-based community and home models with community health workers, intensive care management and care coordination, infant mental health services and family-oriented mental health services for homeless families, families at-risk of homelessness and recently homeless families.
- Early care and education:** The OEC will provide families with young children experiencing homelessness priority access to early care and education.
- Housing:** DOH will create a preference for homeless families for turnover units in the state-administered Section 8 program.

For more information, visit the Cabinet website at http://www.ctearlychildhood.org/uploads/6/3/3/7/6337139/homeless_policy_proposals_final.pdf



ACF released [Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile](#), providing data for children experiencing homelessness in each state and the District of Columbia. The report can be used as a tool for states to meet the needs of vulnerable children and provide information for local, statewide, and federal conversations and planning toward the goal of ending family homelessness. You asked for us to provide the state profiles individually as well. ACF heard you request. [Individual State Profiles](#) are available on the ECD website here – <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/50-states-profile>

March 2016

Improving the Health of the Homeless in Hawaii



ANA Commissioner Lillian Sparks-Robinson wrote about a recent trip to Hawaii to attend a quarterly training and technical assistance meeting and visit with grantees in the Pacific region. They were warmly greeted by many of ANA's former and current grantees, and they had the chance to visit their projects and see how ANA's support is helping Native Hawaiians.

One such project was the Ka Pa'alana Homeless Family Education Program, created by the Partners in Development

Foundation, which is working to educate and enable homeless and at-risk Native Hawaiian families living in Oahu's Leeward Coast at their nine sites in the area, specifically in the area of health. Under the grant, Ka Pa'alana is educating children and caregivers on healthy habits, and better connecting homeless Native Hawaiians with medical professionals. The Partners in Development Foundation hopes to serve 500 preschool-aged children and 300 caregivers throughout this project.

A recent survey showed that many homeless Native Hawaiian families haven't received health screenings in at least two years, and they often postpone or forgo necessary treatments. See the full blog on The Family Room Blog at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/blog/2016/02/improving-the-health-of-the-homeless>.

April 2016

Early Childhood Homelessness



On March 30, 2016, U.S. Senator Patty Murray and U.S. Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott sponsored a Congressional Briefing on Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States.

The briefing provided an overview of early childhood homelessness, including available federal data as summarized in the recently released [**"Early Childhood Homelessness: A 50 State Profile."**](#) Panelists described local and state innovations

in increasing homeless children's access to quality early childhood programs, as well as the remaining challenges they face. Linda Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary reviewed steps that have been taken to remove barriers to early childhood programs, including CCDF, Head Start, and technical assistance activities.

Moderator: Barbara Duffield, Director of Policy and Programs, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Panelists:

- Linda K. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families
- Kresta Horn, Director of Children and Youth Services, UMOM New Day Centers; Phoenix, AZ
- Stephanie, parent (video)
- Khari Garvin, Director, Great Expectations Initiative; Forsyth County, NC (Former North Carolina Head Start State Collaboration Director)
- Carie Bires, Policy Manager, Ounce of Prevention Fund, Chicago, IL

See presentations from the Briefing at

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/e cd /congressional-briefing-early-childhood-homelessness-in-the-united-states>

See The Family Room Blog by Patrick Fischer, Public Affairs Specialist at

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/blog/2016/04/early-childhood-homelessness-in-the-united-states>

May 2016 Early Childhood Homelessness

Research from [Children's HealthWatch](#) illustrates there is **no safe level of homelessness**. The timing (pre-natal, post-natal) and duration of homelessness (more or less than six months) compounds the risk of harmful child health outcomes. The younger and longer a child experiences homelessness, the greater the cumulative toll of negative health outcomes, which can have lifelong effects on the child, the family, and the community. Pre-natal and post-natal homelessness have long-term negative health impacts on children, families and communities. See the new research [here](#).



Public Housing Authorities and Early Childhood

By Marsha Basloe, Senior Advisor for Early Childhood Development



Last month, I had the opportunity to participate on behalf of the Office of Early Childhood Development in CLPHA's second annual Affordable Housing & Education Summit. ([CLPHA stands for Council of Large Public Housing Authorities.](#)) Early childhood was ever present as part of the two day discussion! HUD Secretary Julián Castro kicked off his keynote

speech by pointing out that we are currently at a nexus between housing opportunities and educational opportunities, and that we are coming together at a time of extraordinary change. He talked about our work being more than bricks and mortar and that opportunity does not stop at the front door.

He also said, "brain power is the new currency of success." We know that birth to five is a time of unparalleled growth. The brain development during these critically important years are depend on the quality of experiences they have with adults in their lives, including families, child care providers, preschool teachers, and housing providers. It is little wonder, then, that the 120 attendees who were working to engage new ideas and develop innovative practices connected on the importance of early childhood education. Secretary Castro also recognized educators and public housing authorities in the communities of Vancouver, Washington; Akron, Ohio and New Haven, Connecticut, saying, "Whether it's **early childhood education**, or lowering the dropout rate, or ensuring that young girls and boys of color have the same opportunity as everyone else, you also are doing fantastic work across this country."

I had the chance to talk with a number of housing authority staff members and learn about their efforts around early childhood development in their communities. I also had the chance to talk with researchers and foundations that support the efforts between housing and education, including early childhood education. I look forward to learning more!

Jenn Ramirez Robson, Director of Resident Services for the [King County Housing Authority](#) shared information on their Gates Foundation funded early learning pilot, Greenbridge Learning and Education Advocacy (GLEA). Greenbridge is the Hope VI community in the suburb south of Seattle. GLEA is a partnership program between King County Housing Authority, the Highline School District, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The program's goal is to educate and connect the families of infants and toddlers to community and district programs that support kindergarten readiness skills and academic success. An advantage of the approach is that it gives the participating elementary school access to children before they enroll in pre-school or kindergarten, when intervention is more powerful and effective. The program includes 9 weeks of classes for parents and academy babies along with home visits. During each session, academy babies go to our preschool classrooms with early learning teachers and staff where they have their first classroom learning experiences. Based on the multi-national makeup of the families and toddlers, the element of cultural sensitivity is incorporated into the tenets of the program. The video is wonderful! **See it here at** <https://vimeo.com/145626988>.

Learn more at their home page at www.kcha.org or the Greenbridge community page at <http://www.kcha.org/development/greenbridge/>.

At the heart of every housing authority's mission is improving the lives of the families and individuals they serve. I learned so much from being at the Summit, and look forward to partnering with CLPHA as we continue to work to end family homelessness and meet the needs of young children and families for future success.

June 2016

Early Childhood Homelessness

[BELL](#) is launched!

The research from the past 40 years conclusively argues that early childhood education is a leading strategy to end poverty.

Last month, more than 80 homeless advocates, early childhood educators, funders, and developmental scientists launched [Building Early Links for Learning](#) (BELL), a

project to support 2,000+ young children experiencing homelessness in accessing high quality early learning programs in Philadelphia. At the meeting June 14, a host of leaders shared a new vision for young children.

BELL's two main goals are to enhance the developmental friendliness of emergency housing, and to better understand and remove barriers that keep young homeless children from reaping the benefits of early education.



One of the expected outcomes is to increase homeless children's participation in Head Start, PA Pre K Counts and high quality child care by 20 percent.

Originally conceived by the late **Dr. Staci Perlman** and with support from the **William Penn Foundation**, [BELL](#) will promote ways that the Philadelphia emergency housing system can better encourage early development for the 2,000 children who are served in emergency housing every year.

The key is a linkage between the systems that don't normally collaborate. Build new partnerships and relationships, more children get served. Sounds that simple, but we have a lot of work to do. The forum was opened by Kathy Desmond (People's Emergency Center - PEC) and Tara Gaudin (Office of Supportive Housing - OSH) who both described the need and purpose of the BELL project. OSH's Roberta Cancellier reviewed 'next steps.' Other BELL leaders shared their work. View their **presentations** on PEC's **new** web pages focusing on BELL by [clicking here](#).

The project involves collaboration between the Philadelphia Office of Supportive Housing, People's Emergency Center, Public Health Management Corporation, researchers from Villanova University, Rutgers University-Camden, and the University of Delaware, the Cloudburst Group, and the Children's Workgroup-Early Childhood Committee, which includes family housing providers and others who serve families experiencing homelessness.

Early Childhood and Supportive Housing

As communities, family service agencies and housing providers seek ways to best serve homeless families and children, it is important to consider various tools and best practices across all sectors. Since there is no one program that can adequately address every need, intentional partnerships between providers and agencies not only ensure families are receiving necessary and appropriate attention, but alleviate pressures on



Crosswalk

Early Childhood Home Visiting and Supportive Housing for Families:
Making the Connections



those that may be filling service gaps that other programs can address more effectively. To facilitate partnerships between Early Childhood Home Visiting and Family Supportive Housing providers, CSH and Ounce of Prevention Fund have worked together to create a Crosswalk aimed at informing and encouraging grantees of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program and other home visiting providers to pursue recent

guidance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services urging efforts to identify additional strategies to serve homeless women and children and collaborate with community partners serving families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Find the Crosswalk: <http://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Crosswalk.pdf> ECD is in contact with The Ounce and CSH to continue this work with other early childhood programs.

See The Family Room Blog by Mark Greenberg, Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families on Supporting Families to End Homelessness [here](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/blog/2016/07/supporting-families-to-end-homelessness) at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/blog/2016/07/supporting-families-to-end-homelessness>. "We believe that when services targeted toward the needs of vulnerable families are combined with affordable housing, we can succeed in ending family homelessness."

August 2016 Early Childhood Homelessness

ACCESS TO EARLY
CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES FOR
HOMELESS FAMILIES
WITH YOUNG
CHILDREN: AN
EXPLORATORY
PROJECT

July 2016

ACF released a new brief "*Access to Early Childhood Development Services for Homeless Families with Young Children: An Exploratory Project.*"

This brief examines the challenges of families with young children and how they manage daily life and child development when they experience episodes of homelessness, including times when they temporarily live doubled-up or in a hotel or motel due to a loss of housing or economic hardship.

Find this brief [here](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ece-services-for-homeless-children) at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ece-services-for-homeless-children>.

Trauma-Informed Environments to Promote Healing Through Play and Build Capacity for Change

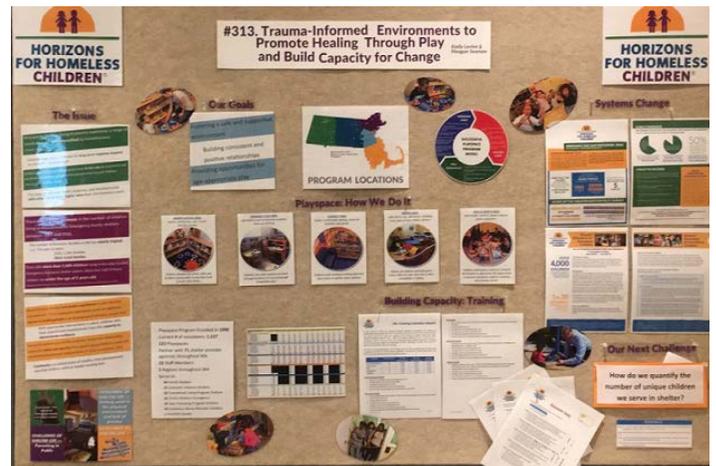
To mitigate the impacts of homelessness on healthy child development, Horizons for Homeless Children created its [Playspace Program](#), which establishes partnerships with family shelters across the state of Massachusetts to create safe, supportive environments that make healthy play possible for over 2,000 homeless children each week. Each of the more than 120 [Horizons Playspaces](#) is intentionally designed using research-based evidence that facilitates trauma-informed care and promotes resiliency among young homeless children throughout the state.

A dedicated team of Horizons staff is responsible for building and stewarding relationships with shelter staff, managing the operations of these shelter-based spaces, and recruiting, training, and coaching more than **1,200 volunteers** who provide consistent opportunity for play for the children residing in the shelters.

In each [Horizons Playspace](#), kid-friendly playrooms are created to include five defined areas of play, which are based on best practices for early education and childcare settings:

- 1) Literacy: books, comfortable seating, music for activities and games.
- 2) Dramatic Play: play kitchen and accessories, puppets, costumes, and dolls/doll bed.
- 3) Manipulatives: blocks, sorting toys, cars, trucks, animals, and puzzles.
- 4) Arts & Crafts: play dough, markers, crayons, paper, paint, and pom-poms.
- 5) Infant: soft mat or rug, soft blocks, climbing area, pop-up toys, rattles, and mirrors.

Through these intentional partnerships, family shelter programs in Massachusetts are better equipped to provide significantly enhanced intervention and trauma-sensitive services to have a localizing impact on over 2,000 children each week.



September 2016

Early Childhood Homelessness

Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Program Brings Trauma-Informed Care and Services to Homeless Infants and Toddlers in Maryland

Between 2014 and 2015, Maryland saw a 7% rise in homelessness, particularly among families. Young children whose families are experiencing homelessness are more likely to suffer from negative impacts on their healthy growth and development, with long-range effects on their overall school readiness and well-being. As a result of the 2014-funded Early Head Start – Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership initiative, an increased number of infants and toddlers whose families are homeless in Baltimore, MD, now have access to high-quality, therapeutic EHS services on site in a family residential shelter.

In a center operated by PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs, *Sarah's Hope*, located in the Sandtown- Winchester community, now provides EHS to an additional 24 homeless infants and toddlers whose families also receive intensive and residential support from the shelter. Together, the EHS-CC Partnership Grantee, *Maryland Family Network* (MFN), and their delegate agency, PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs, facilitate an innovative and collaborative program model that brings essential therapeutic and comprehensive services to this vulnerable population of young children and their families. MFN has successfully leveraged the child care subsidy program and EHS resources, as well as the power of parents and community collaboration, to implement the EHS-CC Partnership program in the Sarah's Hope shelter.

Earlier this summer, Rachel Demma, Marsha Basloe, Melissa Brodowski, and ACF Deputy Assistant Secretary Linda Smith traveled to Baltimore for a site visit to learn more about the EHS-CC Partnership and MFN's efforts on behalf of young children and families. They also had the chance to visit PACT and to tour the new early childhood center at Sarah's Hope, where they met with PACT staff and observed parent engagement.

The EHS-CC Partnership's distribution of startup funds allowed the staff at PACT an 18-month on-ramp to ensure community coordination for the delivery of comprehensive services; staff members were trained and supported in implementing Head Start standards; and program enrollment was representative of MFN's commitment to serving subsidy children across the state. Through relationships with community behavioral and mental health providers executed by formal agreements, MFN ensures that infants and

toddlers receive the trauma-informed care that promotes positive and enriching early care and learning experiences, which research has shown can improve early social-emotional and executive function outcomes.¹In addition, the shelter's early childhood program now has a new playground, and staff members have seen tiered increases in salaries based on the qualifications of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or an Associate's degree (A.A.) and higher.

From grantee leadership to program staff, which includes parent volunteers, all the members of the MFN EHS-CC Partnership program at Sarah's Hope point to the flexibility of the EHS-CC Partnership model as a key contributor to their progress to date. By bringing together resources and relationships that span programs and funding streams, this EHS-CC Partnership allows the youngest residents of Sarah's Hope increased access to high-quality program supports and services that lead to a lifetime of thriving and learning, despite the adversity of homelessness.

Learn more about ***Sarah's Hope***, Baltimore's largest homeless shelter for families. St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore opened the newly renovated and expanded Sarah's Hope family shelter in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of Baltimore. The \$8 million project doubled the shelter's capacity to 150 beds to meet increased demands, making it the city's largest homeless shelter for families. The renovations created family-style living units, expanded space for improved services, and added a new early childhood center for homeless children operated by PACT.

Maryland Family Network was formed in 2009 with the merger of two leading nonprofit organizations— Maryland Committee for Children, founded in 1945 to advocate for high-quality child care, and Friends of the Family, founded in 1986 to administer Maryland's network of Family Support Centers.

PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs, a nonprofit organization in the city of Baltimore, offers a Therapeutic Nursery for homeless children younger than age 3 and their families. Serving 24 children and their families at a time, the Therapeutic Nursery provides specialized child care services, with an emphasis on mental health interventions to enhance family stability and parent-child interactions.

Babies in Emergency Housing

Is Philadelphia Doing
All That It Should?

Sara Shaw,
Joe Willard
June, 2016



Supporting Infants and Families Experiencing Homelessness

A recent policy brief, *Babies in Emergency Housing: Is Philadelphia Doing All That It Should?*, from the People's Emergency Center focuses on infants in Pennsylvania experiencing homelessness who tend to encounter more risks to positive development than their housed peers. The findings suggest that home-visiting programs and quality early education can be of particular benefit for infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness. The results support the importance of conducting developmental screenings and assessments of infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness and of ensuring that children identified with developmental delays have access to early intervention services. The stipulation that early childhood service providers should prioritize the needs of young children who experience homelessness was also identified as a priority.

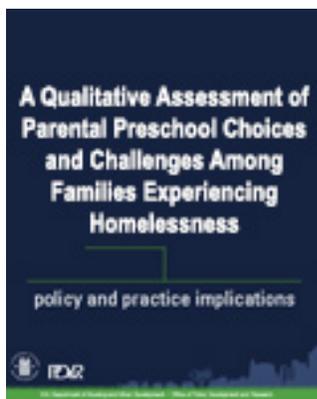
(Endnotes)

¹ *When the Bough Breaks: The Effects of Homelessness on Young Children*. BUILD Initiative. January 2012. Available from: <http://www.buildinitiative.org/WhatsNew/ViewArticle/tabid/96/ArticleId/120/When-the-Bough-Breaks-The-Effects-of-Homelessness-on-Young-Children.aspx>.

October 2016

Early Childhood Homelessness

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) supports the Department's efforts to help create cohesive, economically healthy communities.



HUD recently released "[A Qualitative Assessment of Parental Preschool Choices and Challenges Among Families Experiencing Homelessness: Policy and Practice Implications](#)"

Research suggests that early childhood education can help mitigate the developmental delays and decreased academic achievement often observed in children experiencing homelessness. Yet very few of these children are enrolled in preschool, and the reasons why have not been fully explored. In a recent study, "A Qualitative Assessment of Parental Preschool Choices and Challenges Among Families Experiencing

Homelessness: Policy and Practice Implications," researchers interviewed families who

had recently experienced homelessness to determine what factors influence preschool participation. Based on their findings, the researchers make policy and community practice recommendations to facilitate preschool enrollment for children experiencing homelessness.

On a single night in 2013—as measured by the Point-In-Time count conducted by homeless services providers under the auspice of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—more than 70,000 families and 130,000 children were experiencing homelessness across the United States. Of these families, 80 percent were headed by single mothers, and 40 percent had at least one child under the age of 1 (HUD, 2013a).

Update: Early Childhood State Policy Profiles, National Center for Children in Poverty

The **National Center for Children in Poverty** has just updated its [Early Childhood State Policy Profiles](#). The profiles provide a two-generation view of current policies affecting children birth to age 8, nationally and state-by-state, in the areas of early care and education, health, and parenting/family economic supports. This update includes three new policies that identify states offering a minimum of 28 weeks of Unemployment Insurance benefits, Medicaid-covered maternal depression screening under the child's Medicaid, and an online dual-benefit application for Medicaid and SNAP that helps families gain access to these benefits. Visit NCCP's website to view these profiles and other NCCP resources that can inform efforts to help America's most vulnerable children.

November 2016

Joint Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness Released

“I’m heartbroken that any child in America is homeless.... Part of the change in attitudes that I want to see here in Washington and all across the country is a belief that it is not acceptable for children and families to be without a roof over their heads in a country as wealthy as ours.”

President Obama¹

¹ Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness Amendment 2012;
https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_OD_Amendment_WEB_091112v2.pdf



Homelessness in the United States is a complex and persistent problem. For families with young children experiencing homelessness, the challenges are highlighted based on their unique needs and characteristics. Challenges begin early and without intervention can continue throughout the lives of children

experiencing homelessness. Hunger, homelessness, violence, and parental attention all affect childhood well-being. Children who are born to mothers who are homeless have low birth weight and require specialized care at four times the rate of their non-homeless peers.²

We know that families experiencing homelessness share the same characteristics as other low-income families. They are usually headed by a single woman in her late 20s, with approximately two children, one or both under six years of age. They face significant challenges, including poverty and exposure to family and community violence. However, families experiencing homelessness have less access to housing subsidies and supportive services and have weaker social networks. More than 80% have experienced domestic violence.³

[Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#) is based on the vision that no one should experience homelessness—no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home. It remains focused on four goals:

- Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans in 2015;
- Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness in 2017; Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth and children in 2020; and
- Set a path to ending all types of homelessness.

² National Association of State Directors of Special Education; http://nasdse.org/DesktopModules/DNNspot-Store/ProductFiles/9_e1838c30-79a1-44a5-bcb3-6076b93f2e73.pdf

³ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, *Families with Children*, May 2016; <https://www.usich.gov/goals/families>

Families experiencing homelessness have varying housing and service needs. Therefore, [Family Connection: Building Systems to End Family Homelessness](#) is aimed at expanding an effective partnership with communities across the country to prevent and end homelessness for families. In our interagency work, since 2013, we've had a working group involving multiple federal agencies to better coordinate our work around family homelessness and early childhood homelessness.



On October 31st, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Education (ED) issued a joint [Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness](#). In the policy statement, we provide research and recommendations on ways in which early childhood and housing providers at the local and, in some cases, State levels can intentionally collaborate to provide safe, stable, and nurturing environments for pregnant women and families with young children who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. See the [Policy Statement](#), examples of collaborations around the country and recommended strategies and activities

Ending family and early childhood homelessness in America will require the concerted efforts of all of us. Every parent and child experiencing homelessness across the country is counting on us all to persevere.

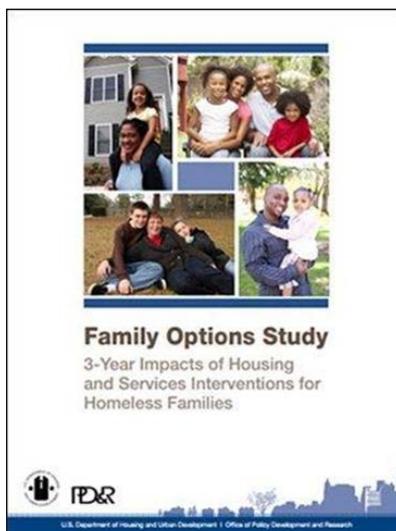
HHS, HUD and ED provide the recommendations and strategies above can help move us closer to this shared goal so every young child and parent has the opportunity to thrive.

New Resources That Help Align Early Childhood Programs to Serve Children Experiencing Homelessness

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) released two new resources that help align early childhood programs that serve children experiencing homelessness. Specifically, these resources will help educators, service providers, and advocates understand the changes due to ESSA, new Head Start Performance Standards and new Child Care Regulations.

New resources:

- **Aligning Early Childhood Programs to Serve Children Experiencing Homelessness.** A chart comparing preschool, Head Start, and child care policies for children experiencing homelessness. Organized by topic area, this chart compares effective dates; funding levels; definitions; eligibility; eligibility determinations; outreach and identification; enrollment; continuity/stability; transportation; collaborations; referrals; and family engagement. This publication was written in collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood Development. See the chart [here](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/preschool_head_start_and_child_care_policies_for_children.pdf) at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/preschool_head_start_and_child_care_policies_for_children.pdf
- **The Early Care and Education Infrastructure in My Community Grid and Resource List.** This grid provides a list of key public early childhood programs and provides space for users to record information about local programs, including the name and contact information for accessing the program and services. The Resource List contains a comprehensive, annotated list of public early childhood programs and links to the programs' websites, with state contacts who can help identify and access local programs. See the grid here at <http://naehcy.org/sites/default/files/dl/legis/ECE%20Landscape%209-26-2016.pdf>



December 2016

Early Childhood Homelessness

Family Options Study

Three-year findings from a major study released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Abt Associates show that long-term housing subsidies, particularly housing vouchers, are the best strategy. Providing priority access to long-term housing subsidies to homeless families helps keep families from becoming homeless again and has a variety of positive

benefits – from keeping families out of shelters and off the street, to preventing food insecurity and intimate partner violence and reducing school moves for children in homeless families.

With HUD support, Abt is continuing to track this sample of deeply poor families with histories of homelessness. [Read the report.](#)

Dr. Mary Haskett receives the Dr. Staci Perlman Achievements in Research Award



Over the years, the annual National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) awards have become an important mechanism by which NAEHCY can recognize colleagues for the outstanding service they have provided to children and youth experiencing homelessness. Award recipients are selected through a screening and selection process overseen by a dedicated committee of state coordinators and other experts in

the field. Award winners are recognized at a special ceremony held during the NAEHCY Annual Conference.

Pictured: Left to right: John McLaughlin, Grace Whitney, Barbara Duffield, Mary Haskett, Joe Willard, Marsha Basloe

Mary Haskett, a Professor of Psychology at North Carolina State University, has been doing research on childhood development for more than 25 years, and her experiences highlight a real and growing mental-health crisis facing homeless children. Dr. Haskett leads the NC State Family Studies lab that is committed to using research findings to inform social policy related to family well-being. She supervises graduate students who collaborate to conduct research, building the research field and helping budding researchers explore these topics.

The Early Childhood Shelter Initiative in Western North Carolina

The Early Childhood Shelter Initiative (ECSI) is a collaborative effort between the homeless education programs of Asheville City Schools and Buncombe County Schools in Western North Carolina. ECSI was created in an effort to offer homeless shelters in our community an opportunity to create safe, healthy, and developmentally appropriate shelter environments for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

ECSI works with the McKinney Vento program, Title I, homeless shelters, early childhood programs, the [Junior League](#), AmeriCorps and more. Together they identify preschoolers, ensure access to early education, provide community resources, and support strong development of young children experiencing homelessness.



Homeless shelters that serve families and children are not always equipped to meet the needs of young children. Since many of these young children will spend substantial time in these shelters, they are at risk of facing adverse situations that can negatively impact their development. Shelters are often limited on resources to mitigate these factors, but local homeless liaisons are in a perfect position to help shelters consider the needs of young children. ECSI identified four main focus areas for this initiative: Shelter Support, Enrichment & Education, Parent Education & Support, and Data Collection.

ECSI focuses on creating an environment in shelters that considers policy and law, training and engagement, evidence-based best practices, trauma-informed care, programming, school readiness and sustainability. All of these components rely on a myriad of professions and input from experts in the community. ECSI also hopes to create measurable outcomes to track future success, and use data to improve program development and capacity.

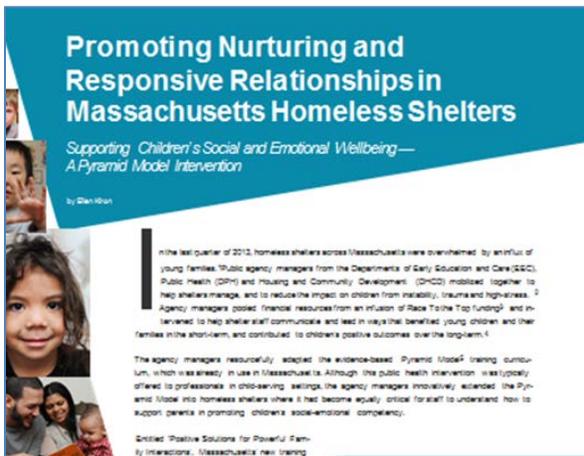
[ACF's Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters](#) is one of the major cornerstones of ECSI. This tool will help guide shelters to recognize their strengths, as well as promote a healthy early childhood environment. Based on the assessment's results, ECSI suggests strategies to increase early childhood resources and support, and to create a trauma-informed, child-centered shelter setting. Additionally, ECSI is creating a network of support to connect shelters, families, and their children to

resources in the community that will be sustainable and ongoing, even after a family finds housing.

For more information on the Early Childhood Shelter Initiative, contact Christine Craft, Homeless Liaison/Youth in Transition Coordinator at christine.craft@bcsemail.org.

January 2017

Early Childhood Homelessness



Promoting Nurturing and Responsive Relationships in Massachusetts Homeless Shelters

Massachusetts used a small amount of its Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge funds to focus on serving the needs of children experiencing homelessness through a collaborative project using the Pyramid Model. This brief *Promoting Nurturing and Responsive Relationships in Massachusetts Homeless Shelters* provides an overview of the

Massachusetts' shelter training that provided strategies and rules to guide staff in dyadic (between adult caregiver and child) and triadic (between adult caregiver, child, and staff-person) interactions. Staff learned how to set positive behavioral expectations and establish clear routines. The project helped create new mindsets to examine the shelters' physical environment and how it could be adjusted to support family functioning.

Included in the brief are recommendations from agency managers who spearheaded the Pyramid Model Training in Massachusetts' Homeless Shelters. [See the brief here](#). The Massachusetts' Pyramid Model for Shelter Staff training curriculum is in the public domain. Contact kate.roper@state.ma.us for copies.



The Importance of Play

A [post](#) from Georgetown University's Early Childhood Intervention Professional Development Center profiles the importance of

play in alleviating toxic stress for homeless children, looking specifically at D.C.'s Homeless Children's Playtime Project.

South Carolina Child Care Voucher Program Homeless Initiative

The South Carolina Child Care Voucher Program Homeless Initiative is a partnership between The Department of Social Services (DSS), Division of Early Care and Education, The Department of Education and the four regional South Carolina Coalitions for the Homeless. The primary goal of the SC Child Care Voucher Program Homeless Initiative is to assist individuals who meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness with the cost of child care. By providing child care assistance, SC strives to eliminate one of the universal barriers to families being able to work, enroll in school, attend a training program, participate in mental health/alcohol treatment programs or participate in an active job search.

Homeless Eligibility Recruitments for SC Vouchers

A family will be considered homeless as defined by the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness used by ED and DSS; when they lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. The lack of a fixed nighttime residence includes loss of housing, economic hardship, living in motels, hotels, trailer parks not in good condition, doubled up, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations or are living in emergency or transitional shelters. Furthermore, living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

The SC Voucher Program Homeless Initiative has specific staff assigned to handling the homeless child care slots, allowing for a more streamlined process. The Initiative is a result of a lot of work among the partners, especially efforts around becoming a team. They had to overcome some misconceptions of homelessness and DSS, educate themselves on families experiencing homelessness at a more personal level, invest time to truly understand each other's rules and programs, and reach out to any and every one that would listen. Communication and Compromise is important!

SC is now reviewing lessons learned and planning for the next level. They feel they are still missing an important sub-population of homeless families: families with only non-school aged children who are doubled up and families living in hotels or motels. They will look more at barriers to service and if the barriers are structural or personality driven. They will begin exploring continuity of care and



accessibility of quality care. SC will also continue to build on cross-collaboration for identified families to ensure all children are identified and served.

For others planning a Child Care Homeless Initiative, a few key items from lessons learned are:

- Cut out the middle man when possible
- Create a series of local face to face trainings and technical assistance to allow for questions and discovery of barriers
- Homelessness doesn't start at 8:00 am and end at 5:00 pm
- Families may be afraid to identify as homeless for fear that DSS would take their children
- Hire a dedicated technical assistance homeless liaison who will help address some of the next level questions
- Building a team of compassionate staff is key!

See the presentation on the SC Child Care Program Homeless Initiative at the NAEHCY Conference [here](#).

For more detailed information on what South Carolina is doing regarding the Homeless Initiative, please contact Christi L. Jeffcoat at 803-898-2741 or via email at christi.jeffcoat@dss.sc.gov .

March 2017

Idaho's New Training: Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors in Families Experiencing Homelessness

A new training for child care programs helps participants identify concrete strategies for promoting the five Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors in families experiencing homelessness.

Families needing child care are as different as their children. Child care programs never know which families will arrive at the door, but rest assured, they all have two things in common: (1) parents want what's best for their children, and (2) every family has strengths. When programs intentionally implement Strengthening Families: A Protective Factors Framework, from the Center for the Study of Social Policy, they promote five specific Protective Factors that reduce stress and promote optimal outcomes in families. Although every family



benefits from partnering with a program using Strengthening Families, a program infused with the framework can be an especially powerful resource for families experiencing homelessness.

Every family already has all the following five Protective Factors that program staff can recognize and promote through intentional, everyday actions.

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete support in times of need
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Social and emotional competence of children.

Idaho's training for child care programs teaches key strategies to promote the Protective Factors specifically in families who are homeless. The goal is to develop concrete strategies by studying the lived experience of a mother and her three children. Participants at the 2-hour training explore the definition, effects, and rates of homelessness in Idaho and across the Nation; identify signs and symptoms of trauma they might see in children experiencing homelessness; and most importantly, create an action plan to use the Protective Factors to reduce stress in families. The action plan draws on a list of recommended practices and is grounded in personal resolve.

The training is experiential, and its success depends on capturing the wisdom in the group of participants. Child care providers already naturally promote the Protective Factors through their everyday actions; with intentionality comes a higher level of awareness that focuses efforts to partner with families in a meaningful way. The Strengthening Families framework is central to safe, stable, and nurturing child care environments. Everyday actions that consciously promote resilience, contribute to the knowledge of parenting and child development, model social and emotional competence, offer a healthy social connection, and connect families to helpful resources reduce stress in families as they transition to a stable home.

For more information about Strengthening Families, visit *this Web site*.

To learn more about Idaho's new training, contact Jane Zink, IdahoSTARS Quality Rating and Improvement System Coordinator and Strengthening Families Coordinator, The IdahoSTARS Project, at jzink@idahoaec.org.

[HHS: Supporting Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness](#)

By Commander Kent Forde, DHHS



...Over the last several months of 2016, I spent one day a week with USICH. I had the opportunity to witness progress first hand. These successes include strengthening collaboration between health and housing agencies, expanding early care and education for children experiencing homelessness, and building upon guidance to help states connect families experiencing homelessness to stable, permanent housing. Each of those successes was built on a foundation of evidence-based and promising practices as well as a commitment to action.....

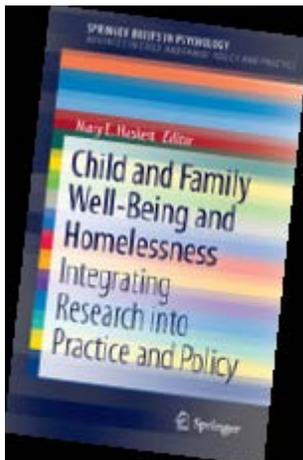
Read the full blog [here](#) at <https://www.usich.gov/news/hhs-supporting-individuals-and-families-experiencing-homelessness>.

USICH Releases Criteria and Benchmarks for Ending Family and Youth Homelessness

USICH released the criteria and benchmarks for achieving the goal of ending family homelessness and youth homelessness.

[Review the Criteria and Benchmarks for Ending Family Homelessness](#)

[Review the Criteria and Benchmarks for Ending Youth Homelessness](#)



The issue of ***Advances in Child and Family Policy and Practice***, focused on *Child and Family Well-Being and Homelessness*, was released (Editor, Mary E. Haskett, Department of Psychology, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina). This summary of policy recommendations focuses on three areas: (1) the integration of policies and practices for families experiencing homelessness, (2) the promotion of healthy families, and (3) a building of the evidence base to guide effective policy.

July 2017

Early Childhood Homelessness

A Focus Group Report on Parents' Perceptions about and experiences with accessing ECE programs while they are homeless

Building Early Links for Learning

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, now has a focus on increasing access to high-quality early care and education (ECE) programs by young children who experience homelessness. However, what are parents thinking about and experiencing with ECE; what are staff members at emergency housing programs saying about their families' experiences; and



what are ECE providers saying about working with homeless families?

The Cloudburst Group interviewed 33 parents or guardians who were residing in emergency or transitional housing in Philadelphia. They also interviewed 19 homeless service and ECE providers. An analysis of these dialogs generated themes and insights that could be applied to helping inform activities and commitments to increasing access to ECE for homeless young children.

Some of the recommendations include the following:

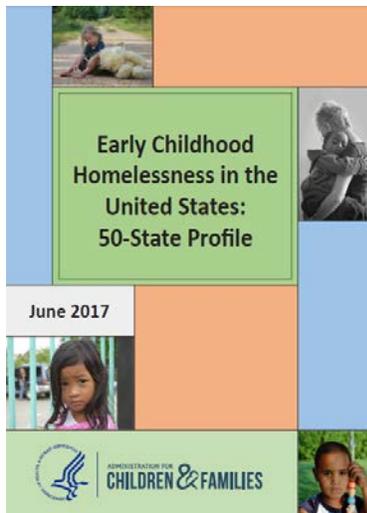
- Homeless service agencies should work more actively to help families access quality ECE.
- ECE programs should simplify enrollment documentation.
- The continuum-of-care should work with system partners to increase the numbers of ECE slots available to homeless children, with an emphasis on slots for infants in particular and for children ages 0–3 in general.
- Assess and address the ways in which companion mainstream systems affect family participation in ECE, including challenges that can be exacerbated by Child Care Information Services' policies and practices.

Read the [Executive Summary](#) and/or [full report](#).

Building Early Links for Learning (BELL) is an effort by homeless family advocates, early childhood educators, and developmental scientists to support young children

experiencing homelessness. BELL's two main goals are to enhance the developmental friendliness of emergency housing and to better understand and remove barriers that keep young homeless children from reaping the benefits of early education. For more information, contact policy@pec-cares.org.

Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile (Updated)



ACF released the updated [Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile](#). The updated profile provides a snapshot of early childhood data available for children who are experiencing homelessness; it includes publicly available data for 2014–2015. This profile also includes two new related factors—the percentage of families experiencing a high housing cost burden and the percentage of low-income working families with children younger than age 6. You can find other information about ACF efforts to expand ECE services for homeless children on [this website](#).

Los Angeles County Homeless Prevention Program supports At-Risk Families

By: Chris Chenet, Homeless Systems Analyst, Coordinated Entry System for Families, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

In October 2015, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion to allocate \$2 million in Homeless Prevention Initiative Funds, to fund prevention activities for families on the brink of homelessness, in coordination with the Coordinated Entry System for Families through June 30, 2017. The program was developed to **target families at-risk of homelessness** and who are at or below 50% Area Medium Income (AMI) with benefits and services in order to divert them from the Crisis Housing system. The Homeless Prevention Program was designed to work concurrently with the Rapid Re-Housing program and enroll any family who did not qualify for the RRH (Rapid Rehousing Program) program, would be enrolled in the homeless prevention program (or vice versa), if they qualified. The program was designed to prevent families from becoming homeless by either assisting them to retain current housing, or by diverting

families from the homeless system through rapid re-housing assistance. Families are then assisted to stabilize their housing crisis.

On November 1, 2016, LAHSA amended the family homeless services agencies existing contract to align their services for the County Homeless Strategy: Homeless Prevention for Families. With a goal to serve 500 families throughout the County of Los Angeles, this amendment introduced a onetime allocation of \$5,000,000 of Fraud Incentive dollars into the Coordinated Entry System for Families to continue the same services within the current program. In addition, the amendment allowed for funds to go to legal services which was an enhancement to the services provided under prevention. See the approved strategy to prevent homelessness in LA County at <http://homeless.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Strategy-A-1.pdf>.

As of the first quarter 2017, CES for Families has successfully served over **413 families!** Going forward with the Measure H allocation, we plan to strengthen the system resources and enhance the services provided by linking and coordinating with the other systems in the community (i.e. Head Start, McKinney-Vento). We work to enroll families who have children that are eligible for Head Start, but wait lists may develop and referrals can be difficult to navigate. Although, 3% of Head Start slots can be reserved for homeless/foster/pregnant women, the system is more aligned with the McKinney-Vento Liaison program in our community around school age.

Therefore, as of April 12th 2017, stakeholders in the community convened to launch a workgroup to address gaps, identify creative ways to link/train/share resources, and utilize data for the homeless and at-risk of becoming homeless children in our programs. With the passage of Measure H and the passage of our recommendations to the board, the community will incorporate a new position which will be incorporated and co-located at the sites for Coordinated Entry System for families and youth sites.

Also, with the passage of Measure H, County Board Supervisors approved a motion to use Measure H funds **specifically for child care for clients in the Coordinated Entry System** as they wait for an opening at a subsidized child care site. We are convening monthly with both subsidized and unsubsidized child care programs, and mental and physical health programs for children in order to develop a streamlined system that integrates outcomes, shares resources and utilizes data to address the gaps between systems (homeless, education, early education, and health).

August 2017

Early Childhood Homelessness

Young children experiencing homelessness

By: Marsha Basloe, senior advisor for early childhood development, ACF



Last month in Washington, D.C., I had the opportunity to participate in the [2017 National Conference on Ending Homelessness](#), which was sponsored by the [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#). More than 1,800 attendees focused on children, families, youths, and adults experiencing homelessness. Although the conference focused mostly on housing and shelter, I

worked with Sharon McDonald to plan a workshop on helping young children and families in need. The following day, I was invited to attend a briefing hosted by [First Focus](#) to hear Matthew Desmond, author of [Evicted](#), and accompanying panel members present on eviction issues from the research, philanthropy, and legal aid perspectives. My head was spinning after those two days! It would be too challenging to tell you about all of it, so I will share a few highlights.

- I attended a session on diversion. I'd heard about diversion but was not sure what it meant and how it affected families. Diversion is a strategy that prevents homelessness by helping people experiencing a housing crisis preserve their current housing situation or make immediate alternative arrangements without having to enter a shelter. It was the first time I'd heard a session on prevention and problem solving. This policy could reduce the trauma of entering a shelter. An example of diversion is paying to have someone's truck fixed so that he can go to work and continue to pay his rent. This kind of problem solving takes resources and, at this time, mostly private resources. However, foundations are stepping up to help with prevention in different communities.



- Secretary Ben Carson of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development was the keynote luncheon speaker. He talked about the loss of human potential and wondered how many potential engineers, doctors, and lawyers are out there who could be helped by giving them a new beginning? Secretary Carson talked about people not being able to find a steady job without an address, and he talked about our children: “They are our human capital.” This is why I work on early childhood homelessness and why the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has developed resources that focus on supporting our young children to attend quality early learning settings. The earliest years of a child’s life set the stage for life-long achievement. To develop the potential of young children, we must think of housing and services together. Key resources regarding homeless children can be viewed on [this website](#).

- I had the opportunity to present and moderate the “Helping Young Children and Their Families Thrive” panel with Janelle Leppa from [Simpson Housing Services](#) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Joe Williard from the [People’s Emergency Center](#) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I shared ACF information on the [Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014](#), a bipartisan re-envisioning of the Child Care and Development Fund program that made children who are experiencing homelessness a priority, on the new [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#) and their impact on serving children and families experiencing homelessness, and on a variety of other ACF resources. Janelle shared her agency’s efforts, which included having early childhood specialists work with their supportive housing program. Other staff members in the agency focus on housing but early childhood specialists’ sole focus is on the child and family! Joe shared the progress of the [Building Early Learning Links](#) (BELL) project, which included having all shelters in Philadelphia complete the [Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters](#). One result of completing the self-assessments is that the agencies and BELL have successfully increased their relationships. They have also fostered numerous connections between local early childhood education providers and housing providers, facilitating the enrollment of more children into high-quality early childhood programs!



- In *Evicted*, author and sociologist Matthew Desmond follows eight families in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as they struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Although



most examinations of the poorest poor look at those in public housing, not those who are part of the private rental market, this area of the housing market is exactly where most of the impoverished live, and they are evicted often—and most often if they have children. As stated in [this New York Times Book Review](#), “Children are scarred in the process.” Families with children who are evicted often face high rates of mobility and unstable living environments that result in negative consequences

for their children’s education, physical health, mental health, and interpersonal relationships. In fact, if you live with kids, your chances of getting evicted triple.

You can continue reading this article via [this Web link](#).

Newly revised criteria and benchmarks for ending homelessness among families with children

At the beginning of the year, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness released criteria and benchmarks for what an end to family homelessness would look like in communities.



After attending listening sessions from the field, they revised and strengthened the document to provide clearer guidance on the expectations for what it means to end family homelessness, ensuring that it is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Read the [revised Criteria and Benchmarks](#)!

Dispelling myths about the face of homelessness in the United States

- *Perception:* Homelessness is something that only happens to adults.
- *Evidence:* The number of children who accessed a homeless shelter in the United States in 2015 was 330,074. This estimate was 20 percent larger than the entire elementary school population of the Los Angeles school system (274,193), the second largest school system in the country. In addition, the number of children who accessed a homeless shelter without an accompanying adult increased by 21 percent (3,774 children) between 2014 and 2015.
- *Read:* You can read more information in the Perspectives Blog—[What Does Homelessness in the U.S. Really Look Like?](#)

APA Annual Convention—August 3–6, 2017
**Child and family well-being and homelessness: Integrating
research into practice and policy**

Dr. Mary E. Haskett, from North Carolina State University (NCSU), coordinated a symposium to highlight several pressing challenges in addressing the needs of families who are experiencing homelessness.



The presenters for the symposium are pictured from left to right: Carmela DeCandia, Psy.D.; Mary E. Haskett, Ph.D., NCSU; Preston A. Britner, Ph.D., University of Connecticut; Janette E. Herbers, Ph.D., Villanova University; Marsha Basloe, Administration for Children and Families; and Sara Shaw (doctoral candidate), University of Delaware.