Connecting Young Children Experiencing Homelessness with Early Care and Education Services

Presented by:
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About Us

- NY Early Childhood Professional Development Institute at CUNY
  - Operates New York’s early childhood workforce registry and quality rating and improvement system
  - Supports the work of the Early Childhood Advisory Council though participation in the Homeless and Workforce Workgroups

- NYS-TEACHS
  - Funded by the New York State Education Department and housed at Advocates for Children of NY
  - Provides technical assistance on homeless education issues to school districts, social service providers, parents, youth, and other professionals.
  - Services include: Infoline (800-388-2014), website: www.nysteachs.org; and webinars and trainings
What best describes where you work?

- Shelter provider
- Housing provider
- School district
- Early care and education provider
- Department of social services
- Other

Key Takeaways

- Greater understanding of:
  - Available early care and education programs in the community;
  - Special protections for children experiencing homelessness in accessing early care and education programs and services; and
  - Strategies for better connecting young children experiencing homelessness with early care and education programs.
Approximately how many children under 6 experience homelessness in NYS?

- 1 in 100
- 1 in 50
- 1 in 25
- 1 in 10

Prevalence of Family Homelessness

- In NYS, an estimated:
  - 135,952 children under 6 were homeless in 2015-16. **1 in 10 children** under 6 experienced homelessness.
  - Of those children, 12,306 (9%) were enrolled in Head Start/Early Head Start or McKinney-Vento-funded ECE programs.

What percentage of a person’s brain is developed by the time he or she is five years old?

- 10%
- 40%
- 70%
- 90%

What factor is most closely associated with young adult homelessness?

- Poverty
- Racial minority
- Lack of high school diploma
Quality Early Care is a Critical Tool that Can Help Disrupt the Cycle of Homelessness!

Access to early care and education can help break this cycle!

Use this tool to connect families!

Available at:

https://nysteaches.org/topic-resource/early-childhood-education-services-for-students-experiencing-homelessness/
Barriers to participation in early care and education programs

- No available seats
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of awareness
- Separation anxiety
- Need for full-day coverage
- Not eligible for a subsidy
Which of these programs must school district MV Liaisons ensure that eligible children who are homeless have access to?

- Home visiting programs
- Early Intervention
- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Pre-K
- Preschool special education services

True or False?

Head Start programs must guarantee spots to preschoolers who are homeless.
Approximately 45% of preschoolers living in shelters have at least one major developmental delay.

True or False?
Young children who are homeless

- Approximately:
  - 75% - at least one major developmental delay
  - 40% - two or more major developmental delays
  - 35% - emotional or behavioral problems

Children with Disabilities

- **Early Intervention:**
  - Children ages birth– up to 3 yrs old
  - In NYS, usually administered local county department of health

- **Preschool Special Education:**
  - Children ages 3-5
  - In NYS, administered by the school district and services provided by the county

NYS-TEACHS - (800) 388-2014
In April, Maya and her family are evicted and are placed into emergency housing by the Department of Social Services. Maya is 2 years, 11 months old. Her mother really wants Maya to attend preschool. Maya's mother thinks that Maya may have a speech and language delay.

Which program(s) should Maya's mom look into?

a. Early Intervention
b. Head Start program
c. Pre-K
d. Preschool special education services

Tips for shelter providers and others

- Raise awareness!
  - Get to know your local early care and education programs
  - Share a list of local resources with parents in temporary housing who have young children using the chart from the Early Care and Education Services for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness tool

- Spread the word with parents! Make sure they know that:
  - Children in temporary housing are eligible for Pre-K and Head Start
  - Participation in quality early childhood education programs has long-term benefits
  - Pre-K, Head Start, and Child Care programs have rigorous safety and licensing requirements. Many parents experiencing homelessness are understandably reluctant to be separated from their young children. Validate those feelings and share information about the safe and engaging environments local early care and education programs offer
  - Most programs are FREE, and many programs are full-day and offer comprehensive family support services

- Post visible outreach materials for parents. Place in areas frequented by the community – laundromats, libraries, food pantries, grocery stores, office of MV liaison, etc.

- Encourage parents to participate in open-house events at local early care and education programs

- Invite representatives from local early care and education programs to come speak with parents at the shelter
Questions?

Resources

- Early Care and Education Services for Children Experiencing Homelessness in NYS tool
- NYS Head Start Tip Sheet for Serving Children in Temporary Housing and Housing Questionnaire
- Head Start/ECLKC Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness learning series, 15-minute videos
- Sesame Street: Family Homelessness: Meet Lily!
- SchoolHouse Connection Early Childhood Resources: tip sheets and strategies for shelter providers, early care providers, and more
- Developmental Milestones from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, which can help parents track their children’s development and act early if they have a concern
- Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters from U.S. HHS to help shelters become more safe and developmentally appropriate for young children
- Change the First Five Years and You Change Everything, a video from Ounce of Prevention Fund that can raise awareness about the importance of quality early childhood programs
Thank you!

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