

**Young Children Experiencing Homelessness or in Foster Care**

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***Risk Factors***

- Poverty
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Mental Illness
- Affordable Housing
- Economic crises
- Inconsistent and inadequate health care or nutrition
- Adolescent mothers
- Disrupted or limited family support
- LGBTQ+

## ***Poverty & Special Needs***

- *“Poverty and its attendant stressors have the potential to shape the neurobiology of the developing child in powerful ways...”*  
*(Duncan, Ziol-guest, Kalil, 2010)*

- Experiences build brain architecture
  - Connections and pruning



## ***Homeless and Special Needs***

“Compared to middle class peers and low-income children who are housed, “young homeless children experience more developmental delays, emotional problems such as anxiety and depression, and behavior issues.”

— Education Law Center, 2010





When children experience 6-7 risk factors, what is the chance of development delay?

- a. 25 – 50%
- b. 50 – 75%
- c. 75 – 85%
- d. 90 – 100%



***Head Start and Homelessness***

- Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007
- Rule 2-9-15
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, EHCY Program

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act  
Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program**

Title IX, Part A  
Every Student Succeeds Act

***WHO* IS HOMELESS?**

- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
  - ESEA, Title IX, Part A
- Same definition referenced in
  - IDEA 2004
  - Child Nutrition Act
  - Head Start Act
  - Higher Education Act
  - Child Care Block Development Fund



## ***Defining homelessness***

An individual who lacks a ***fixed, regular, and adequate*** nighttime residence, including children and youth:

- ***sharing housing*** due to loss of housing or economic hardship or similar reason
- living in ***motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds*** due to lack of alternative adequate housing
- living in emergency or ***transitional housing***

Including children and youth :

- abandoned in hospitals
- ~~awaiting foster care~~
- having a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations





– living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations

– *migratory students* meeting the description

– *unaccompanied youth* meeting the description

How eligibility is determined by a liaison:  
[https://nche.ed.gov/ibt/sc\\_eligibility.php](https://nche.ed.gov/ibt/sc_eligibility.php)

## Fixed, Regular, and Adequate



- **Fixed:** Stationary, permanent, and not subject to change
- **Regular:** Used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis (*e.g. nightly*)
- **Adequate:** Sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments

**Can the student go to the SAME PLACE (fixed) EVERY NIGHT (regular) to sleep in a SAFE AND SUFFICIENT SPACE (adequate)?**

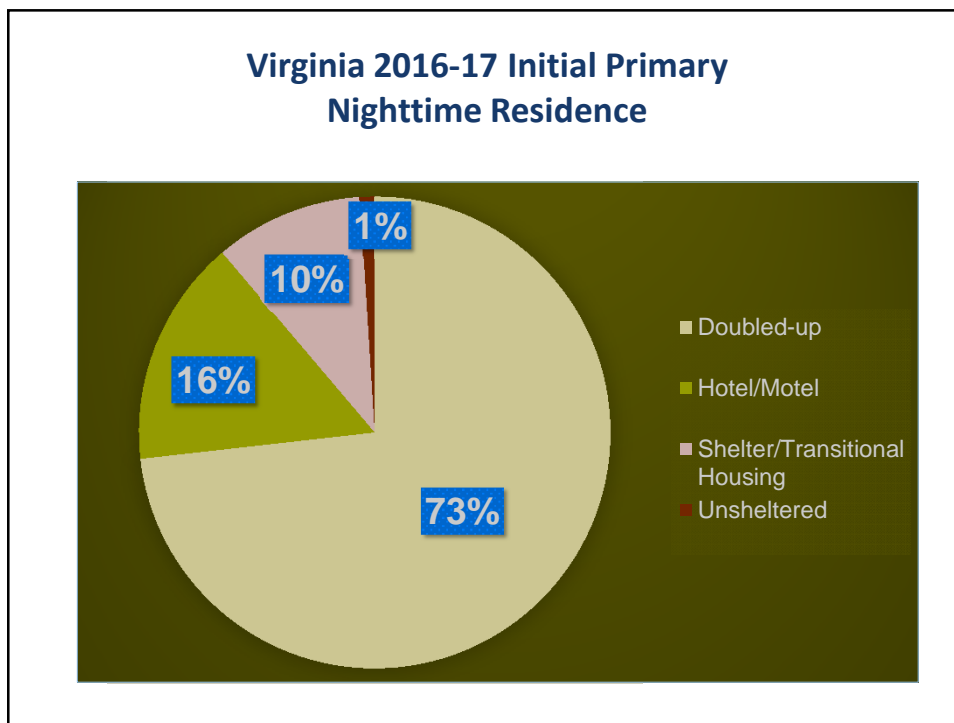
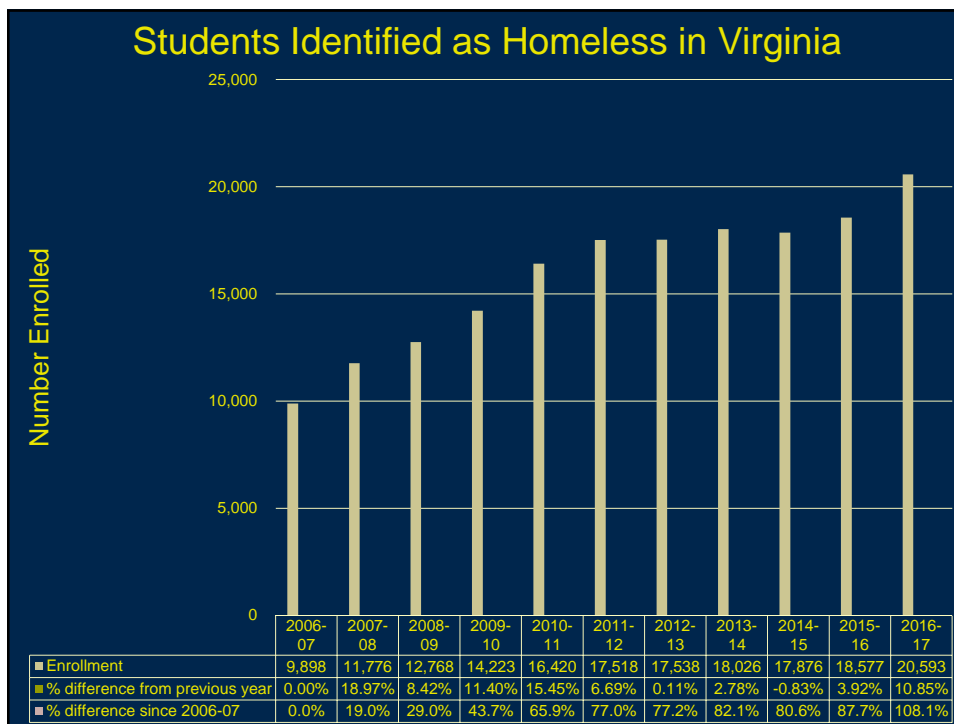
**Homeless or NOT Homeless**  
 Check the box with the correct answer

	Homeless	NOT Homeless
In a shelter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In a motel after an eviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living with grandparents to save money for a house down payment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In a motel while house is renovated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living with aunt following a foreclosure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In an overcrowded trailer with 6 children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>


**Children Experiencing Homelessness**

- One in 30 children (NCFH, 2014)
- 1.30 million in SY 2015-2016 (USED, 2017)
- *Families with young children are the fastest growing subgroup*









### ***Young Children Experiencing Homelessness***

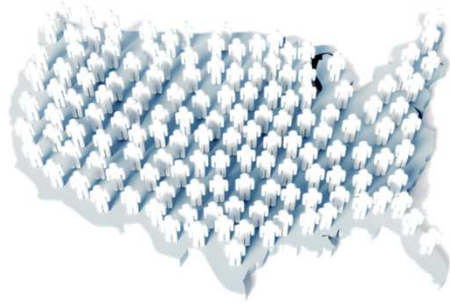
- Nationally, more than half of all sheltered children were under age 6
- Virginia, 45% of children in homeless shelters under age of five. (3470 of 5552 in 2010)
- Virginia 2016-17
  - 529 enrolled 3-5 not Kindergarten
  - Subgrants served 805 birth-preK

## **Program Information Report Head Start PIR Data 2013-14**

- Total number of children experiencing homelessness that were served during the enrollment year
- National: **48,754**, 4.6%
- Virginia: **854**, 6%

## McKinney-Vento EHCY Requirements

- Appoint a local homeless education liaison in every school division
- For Virginia liaisons, visit:  
[www.wm.edu/hope](http://www.wm.edu/hope)



## EHCY Requirements



- Enroll students *immediately* in local school OR
- Maintain student enrollment in the *school of origin* when feasible and in the student's best interest
  - Includes transportation
  - Even across school division lines

**Find the students, get them  
student and  
keep them enrolled!**

## Recent ESSA Requirements for Preschool

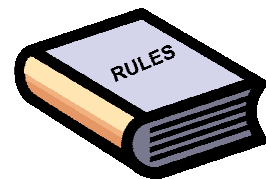
- School of origin includes preschools\*
- If SOO is in the best interest of the child, transportation must be provided.



\*LEA or SEA administered is current interpretation

## Final Head Start Rules and Homelessness

- Effective November 7, 2016
- Include homeless in:
  - Needs assessment 1x/5 years
  - Annual review and update of community assessment
- Categorical eligibility (no income proof)
- Confirming age cannot be a barrier
- May reserve enrollment slots
  - Max. 3 percent
  - Must fill within 30 days or use as vacant



## Final Head Start Rules and Homelessness (cont'd)

- Attend up to 90 days without all records
  - As long as state licensing requirements allows. Make efforts to maintain enrollment.
- Implement a recruitment process
- Establish selection criteria/prioritization
- Use community resources, where possible, to provide transportation
- Support effective transitions when families move



## Importance of Education for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness



## ***Promising Practice and Resources***

- Parent Pack adapted for younger children



## ***Implementation Challenges***


- Verification: who is homeless
- Lack of space
- Mobility and lack of notice





*Tips for discussing/  
identifying*

- Avoid using “homeless”
- Focus on temporary nature of housing or being in transition



*Lack of  
Space*

- Invite to socialization activities
- Provide books or toys
- Home visiting when doubled up or shelter space are inappropriate

## ***Mobility and lack of notice***

- Build trust
- Have other contacts on file – release of information
- Recognize fear to share what basics are not available



## ***Helpful Websites***

- Administration for Children and Families – <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ecd/interagency-projects/ece-services-for-homeless-children>
- Project HOPE-VA – [www.wm.edu/hope](http://www.wm.edu/hope)
- NCHE – <https://nche.ed.gov/>
- NAEHCY – [www.naehcy.org](http://www.naehcy.org)
- SchoolHouse Connection – <https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/>



## **Foster Care: Federal Laws**

- Fostering Connections Act (2008)
- Every Student Succeeds Act (2015)

## **ESSA: Title I, Part**

- Education has a parallel mandate
- FC in Title I, Part A (Lynn Sodat, PAA director)
- MV SC cannot be SEA contact (OK at local level)
- Jo Ann Burkholder, Director of Student Services is official contact
- Bethany Robinson is VDSS partner



## Liaisons

- Foster Care Liaisons
- Point person for communication with LDSS
- [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student\\_family/foster\\_care\\_students/fostering\\_connection\\_liaisons.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_family/foster_care_students/fostering_connection_liaisons.pdf)
- Educational Stability Liaisons
- Oversight role
- Direct work/ communication remains with the case worker
- <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/fc/index.cgi>

**School Divisions**

**Local Departments of Social Services**

## Educational Requirements Apply to All Foster Care Placements

- ▶ Requirements apply when child is in foster care (i.e., LDSS has responsibility for placement & care of child).
- ▶ Regardless how child enters foster care:
  - Court commitment (e.g., abuse, neglect)
  - Voluntary entrustment agreement when parents request LDSS assume custody of child for a temporary period or permanently.
  - Voluntary noncustodial agreement with parents for child to receive foster care services while they retain legal custody and LDSS assumes placement, care, and case management responsibility.
- ▶ Includes initial and subsequent placements of children

## Joint Guidance Documents & Forms

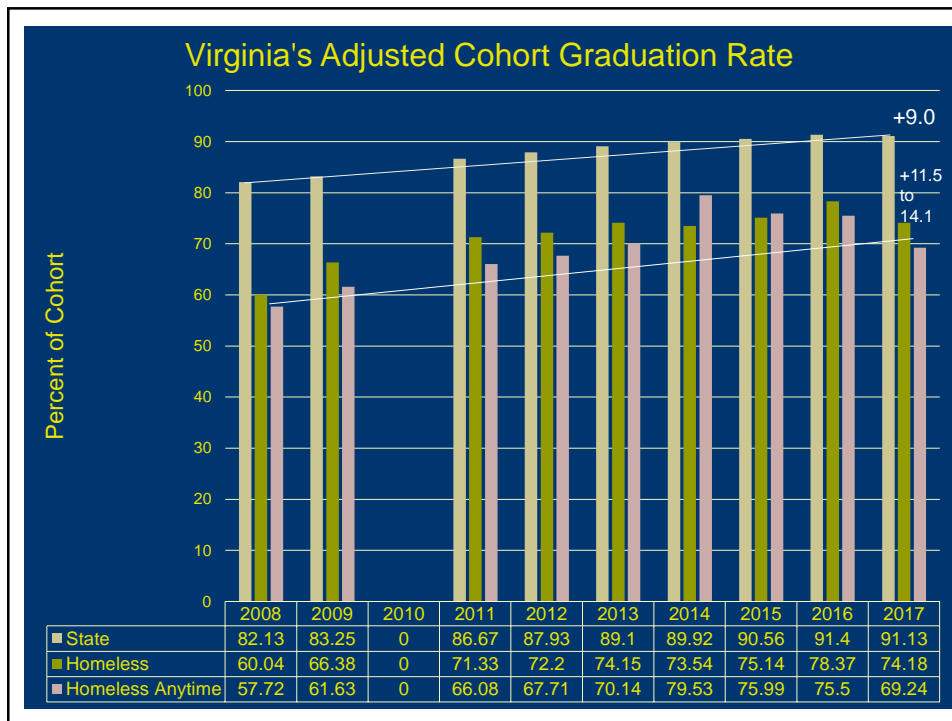
- VDOE/VDSS Joint Guidance On School Placement For Children In Foster Care – August 2013; [Revision 2017](#)
- Best Interest Determination for Foster Care School Placement Form – [Revision 2017](#)  
– [FC/ESSA Form B-17](#)
- Immediate Enrollment of Child in Foster Care Form – [Revision 2017](#)  
– [FC/ESSA Form C-17](#)

## Regular School Transportation

- For general education students and for students with disabilities who use regular school transportation, LDSS shall arrange for transportation and payment of transportation expenses.
- Reasonable costs are legitimate maintenance expense:
  - Title IV-E for eligible children
  - CSA State Pool Funds for non-Title IV-E eligible children
- Providers reimbursed state mileage rate with proof of miles driven
  - Foster parents
  - Friends, relatives and neighbors of child or foster parent
  - Employees of child placing agencies and residential programs
- Other transportation:
  - Local school bus\* (reimburse with signed agreement/contract)
  - Bus fare or similar reasonable public transportation at established rate.

## Specialized Transportation


- For students with an IEP that requires “specialized” transportation to current school, such costs are paid by the school division responsible for FAPE for student to remain in current school.
  
- Includes individualized provisions, noted in the IEP, that are needed because of the student’s disability and necessary to guarantee access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE).





## ***“HOME”* work**

- Get to know your homeless and foster care liaison(s)
- Build relationships with shelters and local DSS in your community
- Look for ways to share the story
- Others??



## ***And miles to go before I sleep; and miles to go before I sleep.***

Robert  
Frost

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