Young Children Experiencing Homelessness or in Foster Care

Presented by Patricia A. Popp, Ph.D. –
The College of William and Mary

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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

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**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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homeless</th>
<th>NOT Homeless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a shelter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a motel after an eviction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Living with grandparents to save money for a house down payment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In a motel while house is renovated</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Living with aunt following a foreclosure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In an overcrowded trailer with 6 children</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**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
Students Identified as Homeless in Virginia

Virginia 2016-17 Initial Primary Nighttime Residence

- Doubled-up: 1%
- Hotel/Motel: 10%
- Shelter/Transitional Housing: 16%
- Unsheltered: 73%
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**

- Project HOPE-VA – www.wm.edu/hope
- NAEHCY – 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

- Educational Stability Liaisons
  - Oversight role
  - Direct work/communication remains with the case worker

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