Families on the Move: Families Experiencing Homelessness and Mobility—The Impact on Children with Disabilities

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The College of William and Mary
Goals

• Highlight key McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act requirements
  – Who is considered homeless?
  – What can we do to support our children and families?
Warm Up
How frequently do you work with families experiencing homelessness?

a. Never
b. Seldom
c. Occasionally
d. Frequently
Project HOPE VIRGINIA

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Virginia Department of Education
Coordinated by the College of William and Mary
Risk Factors

- Housing
- Inconsistent and inadequate health care
- Inadequate nutrition
- Adolescent mothers
- Disrupted or limited family support
- Emotional stress or depression
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

19% of students identified as homeless by Virginia subrants receive special education services.
Causes and Impact of Homelessness

• Causes
  – Poverty
  – Substance Abuse
  – Domestic Violence
  – Mental Illness
  – Affordable Housing
  – Economic crises

• Impact
  Absenteeism is greater
  Developmental delays occur at 4 times the rate reported for other children
  Learning disabilities identified at double the rate
  Twice as likely to repeat a grade
McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program

Title X, Part C
2001 Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
McKinney-Vento Act, EHCY

• Reauthorizes the Stewart B. McKinney Act, originally enacted in 1987
• Provides states with funding to support local grants and statewide initiatives
• Requires educational *access, attendance*, and *success* for homeless children and youth
WHO IS CONSIDERED HOMELESS?
WHAT’S YOUR MENTAL IMAGE?
WHO IS HOMELESS?

• McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
  - ESEA, Title X, Part C
• Same definition referenced in
  – IDEA 2004
  – Child Nutrition Act
  – Head Start Act
  – Higher Education Act
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
- 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:
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)?
• Avoid using “homeless”
• Focus on temporary nature of housing or being in transition
### Homeless or NOT Homeless

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

• Approx. one-third are families
• 1.6 million - One in 45 children (NCFH, 2011)
• 1,168,354 in SY 2011-2012

• National Profile
71% increase
Virginia 2012-13 Initial Primary
Nighttime Residence

- Nighttime Residence: 70%
- Other: 2%
- Other: 14%
- Other: 14%
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)
Older Youth and Unaccompanied

- About 1000/grade total homeless
- 8-12 grade – 2008 UHY
- 400 UHY Seniors
Now that you know...

Raise your hand if you have served a family experiencing homelessness in the last year.
What can WE do?
The child’s classroom may be the only place where the child can experience quiet, interact with children his/her age, and experience success...

School is the most normal activity that most children experience collectively…For homeless children it is much more than a learning environment. It is a place of safety, personal space, friendships, and support.

Oakley & King, 2000
McKinney-Vento EHCY Requirements

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

- 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

Get the student enrolled and keep the student enrolled!
Ensuring Access to Educational Services

- Free and reduced price breakfast & lunch programs
- Title I
- Special education
- Gifted programs

- Transportation
- After school and summer programs
- Head Start, VPI, ECSE, EI
Virginia’s On-Time Graduation Rate:

Helpful Websites

- Project HOPE-VA –
  www.wm.edu/hope
- CoC –
  http://www.hudhre.info
- NCHE –
  http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_preschool.php
- NAEHNCY –
  www.naehcy.org
“HOME” work

- Get to know homeless liaisons in your area
- Build relationships with shelters in your community
- “See” a child
- Others??
Thanks for all you do!
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