



**TONY THURMOND**  
State Superintendent  
of Public Instruction

# Homeless Education and Early Education

---

**JULY 2021**

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



# Facts and Figures (1 of 3)

---

- In California, in 2018–19 there were 269,699 homeless children and youth enrolled in public schools.
- In 2015, it was estimated 220,940 children under age six in California experienced homelessness.
- Only nine percent were served by Head Start or Early Head Start or by McKinney-Vento-funded early learning and care (ELC) programs.

# Facts and Figures (2 of 3)

---

- Over half of children living in federally funded homeless shelters are five years old or younger
- Consider the following statistics from the National Center on Family Homelessness
  - Infants who are born into homelessness need special care right after birth at four times the rate of housed children
  - Children who are experiencing homelessness tend to have very high rates of acute illness

# Facts and Figures (3 of 3)

---

- Infants and babies who are experiencing homelessness may show significantly slower development than housed peers the same age
- More than one-fifth of children who are homeless between three and six years of age have emotional problems serious enough to require professional care

# Public Preschool Programs (1 of 4)

---

- For children aged zero to five
- Funded with public funds
- Local educational agency (LEA) or school district is a financial or administrative agent or is accountable for providing services
- Children may attend preschool at a specific location or participate in a home-based program

# Public Preschool Programs (2 of 4)

---

- Programs operated or administered by the LEA and considered mandatory under state law
- Head Start programs receiving funding from the LEA or for which the LEA is the grant recipient
- Preschool special education services operated or funded by the LEA or mandated under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Preschool programs and services administered or funded by the LEA through Title I or similar government grants

# Public Preschool Programs (3 of 4)

---

- There are different names and types of public preschool programs. Here are some:
  - California State Preschool Programs
  - State-funded Programs
  - Federal Head Start
  - Federal Early Head Start

# Public Preschool Programs (4 of 4)

---

- American Indian Early Childhood Education Program
- Federal Title I Preschool
- State Alternative Payment Programs

# Homeless Definition (1 of 3)

---

- Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
  - A **fixed** residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change
  - A **regular** residence is one that is used on a normal, standard, and consistent basis
  - An **adequate** residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments

# Homeless Definition (2 of 3)

---

- Examples of homelessness include children and youth living in:
  - Shared housing due to economic hardship, loss of housing, or natural disasters
  - Motels or hotels
  - Public or private places not designed for sleeping
  - Trailer parks or campgrounds
  - Cars, parks, and abandoned buildings
  - Emergency or transitional shelters

# Homeless Definition (3 of 3)

---

- To determine if a homeless child or youth lives in substandard living conditions consider:
  - Health and safety concerns
  - Number of occupants per square foot
  - Age of occupants
  - State and local building codes

# Causes and Barriers

---

## Causes of Homelessness

- Lack of affordable housing
- Poverty
- Health problems
- Domestic violence
- Natural and other disasters
- Abuse, neglect, and/or abandonment

## Barriers to Accessibility

- High mobility accompanying homelessness
- Lack of enrollment documents needed
- Lack of transportation
- A shortage of classroom slots
- Lack of awareness

# The Law: McKinney-Vento (1 of 4)

---

- Originally passed in 1987
- Reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which went into effect on October 1, 2016
- Provides stability, access, and support for academic success for homeless children and youth, including preschool-aged children

# The Law: McKinney-Vento (2 of 4)

---

- Under the 42 United States Code Section 11432(g)(6)(A), it states that homeless liaisons should identify preschool aged children experiencing homelessness through outreach and coordination activities with outside agencies
- Coordinate with social service agencies, child development programs, early intervention programs, and other preschool programs (such as Head Start, State-funded preschool, etc.)

# The Law: McKinney-Vento (3 of 4)

---

- Preschool programs are required to:
  - Enroll homeless children in their programs, even if the parent or guardian cannot provide the paperwork normally required such as immunizations, proof of residence, etc.
  - Offer comparable services, including transportation, to preschoolers who are homeless and collaborate these services with LEAs and other service providers

# The Law: McKinney-Vento (4 of 4)

---

- Under ESSA, school of origin now includes preschool and school of origin refers to the school in which the homeless child was last enrolled
- LEAs and preschool programs are required to continue the child's education in the school of origin for the duration of their homelessness

# Homeless Liaisons (1 of 3)

---

- All LEAs must designate a homeless liaison to assist homeless children and youth with identification, enrollment, accessibility, and success in school
  - A list of all homeless liaisons can be found on the California Department of Education (CDE) Homeless Education web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>
- LEA liaisons must ensure that:
  - Homeless children and youth are identified including infants, toddlers, and preschool age children

# Homeless Liaisons (2 of 3)

---

- Access is provided for enrollment and retention
- Families are informed of and receive educational opportunities and services
- Children and youth who do not have immunizations are assisted
- Ensure that educational rights are at each “parent area” within each early education program

# Homeless Liaisons (3 of 3)

---

- Public notice of educational rights should be posted in locations frequented by parents and guardians of such children and youth, including schools, shelters, libraries, and soup kitchens, in a form understandable to the parents and guardians. Posters can be accessed at the CDE Resources for Homeless Children and Youth web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/>. You can also obtain free Spanish and English posters by contacting the CDE Homeless Education Program by email at [HomelessED@cde.ca.gov](mailto:HomelessED@cde.ca.gov).

# Effect of Homelessness (1 of 3)

---

## Before Birth

Obstacles to healthy pregnancies

- Poor nutrition
- Chronic and acute health problems
- Lack of prenatal healthcare
- Substance abuse issues

## Infants (0-18 Months)

- Low birth weight, poor nutrition
- Lack of healthcare, daily routines, and immunizations
- Unhealthy living environment
- Exposure to disease/illness
- Physical effects due to unhealthy pregnancy

# Effect of Homelessness (2 of 3)

---

## Toddlers (Up to 3 Years)

- Significant developmental delays that are linked to subsequent behavioral and emotional problems
- Reactions to continual stress such as insecurity, fear, distrust, irritability, and regression in cognitive development

## Preschoolers (3 to 6 years)

Thirty-five percent of homeless preschoolers have emotional or behavioral problems:

- Cries more easily
- Intense reaction to minor events
- Depressed, withdrawn, anxious, or aggressive

# Effect of Homelessness (3 of 3)

---

- Approximately 75 percent of preschoolers who are homeless have at least one major developmental delay
- Approximately 40 percent of preschoolers who are homeless have two or more major developmental delays

# Barriers to Participation (1 of 2)

---

- Eligibility requirements
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of toys, equipment, etc.
- Poor health, fatigue, hunger, anxiety, and/or trauma
- Lack of outreach to homeless families

# Barriers to Participation (2 of 2)

---

- Lack of identification of homeless children
- Lack of parent involvement strategies
- Invisibility (lack of awareness)
- Prejudice and misunderstanding

# Benefits

---

- Benefits to early identification and early education:
  - Helps to address developmental delays and disabilities early
  - Offers positive experiences with peers and other nurturing adults
  - Connects families with schools, agencies, and service providers

# Outreach Strategies (1 of 8)

---

These outreach strategies can be applied to staff members from both the LEA and the preschool program. Working together would be beneficial to homeless children and youth and the implementation of this law

- Initiate interagency communication and collaboration, together
- Build awareness by training family advocates

# Outreach Strategies (2 of 8)

---

- Post notice of rights under Education of Homeless Children and Youth in places that homeless families with young children frequent and in a manner that they can understand
  - Posters can be accessed at the CDE Resources for Homeless Children and Youth web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/>, or by contacting the CDE Homeless Education Program by email at [HomelessED@cde.ca.gov](mailto:HomelessED@cde.ca.gov)
  - Ensure that these posters are at each “parent area” within each early education program

# Outreach Strategies (3 of 8)

---

- Incorporate questions on housing status on enrollment applications. Housing Questionnaire can be accessed at the CDE Resources for Homeless Children and Youths web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/>
- Immediately enroll a child in a state educational agency- (SEA) or LEA-run program, even if documentation is lacking
- Train early intervention staff, regional centers, and LEAs about homeless rights and provisions

# Outreach Strategies (4 of 8)

---

- Ensure that families receive information about preschool programs such as, Head Start, Early Head Start, and state-funded preschool programs
- Identify all infant/toddler programs, both public and private, within the community
- Continuously connect with homeless families prior to enrollment to build the relationship

# Outreach Strategies (5 of 8)

---

- Work with school personnel, including registrars, enrollment coordinators and liaisons, in identifying children under five years of age in the community
- Visit homeless shelters in your community to better gain awareness and reach out to the community
- Adjust program schedules to accommodate homeless families, particularly parents who work

# Outreach Strategies (6 of 8)

---

- Coordinate and collaborate with the homeless liaison
- Make sure that the preschool programs are part of kindergarten transition and enrollment activities
- Be flexible with policies that may serve as a barrier such as enrollment, attendance, and parent participation
- Participate in various “events” such health fairs, job fairs, parent activities, etc.

# Outreach Strategies (7 of 8)

---

- Include the homeless liaison's contact information on preschool applications as a resource for families without proof of address
- Work with
  - Shelters to refer families with young children
  - Medical outreach programs, especially in rural areas
  - Programs serving young homeless parents

# Outreach Strategies (8 of 8)

---

- Be familiar and a part of the California Child Care Resource & Referral (R&R) Network. This is a coordinating entity that provides support, technical assistance, training, and a unified voice to the local R&Rs. For more information, please visit their web site at <https://rrnetwork.org/>

## Questions to Ask in Regards to a Needs Assessment?

- What programs or supports do you have available that help ensure that early care and education settings are able to connect families in crisis to needed programs or services (for example, family violence programs, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment)?
- What in these programs and supports works well?
- What could work better?

# Management Bulletin 18-04 (1 of 2)

---

- The Early Learning and Care Division released Management Bulletin (MB) 18-04 in July 2018 which can be accessed on the CDE web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/mb1804.asp>
- It provided recent changes to the definition of homeless children and youth
- These directives are in alignment with the Child Care and Development Block Grant regulations

# Management Bulletin 18-04 (2 of 2)

---

- The MB also provided detailed information regarding the requirements for the determination of both need and eligibility for homeless children and youth
- Families may be enrolled before all documentation of need and eligibility is received, including immunization records

# Resources (1 of 4)

---

- The Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center web page can be found at <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
- There is an Early Learning and Care Division Field Services Consultant who is always your point of contact for questions and support as we provide continuous quality early learning and care services through our subsidized programs. The CDE Consultant Regional Assignments web page lists these contacts at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ci/assignments.asp>

# Resources (2 of 4)

---

- The American Institutes for Research (AIR) worked with the CDE and its partners to plan and conduct the ELC needs assessment in the state. This report is an assessment of the current state of the ELC system in California and provides a baseline to help inform the state's Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five (PDG B–5). The California Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Birth Through Five Program Needs Assessment can be accessed at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/pdgneedsassessment.asp>

## Resources (3 of 4)

---

- National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) web site at <http://nche.ed.gov/>
- NCHE also has a brief entitled *Early Care and Education for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness* at <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Early-Care-and-Education-for-Young-Children-Experiencing-Homelessness.pdf> that provides further guidance and information

# Resources (4 of 4)

---

- CDE Homeless Education web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>
- CDE Homeless Education Program's Toll-free Number is 1-866-856-8214 and the general email is [HomelessED@cde.ca.gov](mailto:HomelessED@cde.ca.gov)