

2009 Audio Cast Series

Part 2: Creating Safe Havens through Community Connections: Serving Expectant Families and Infants, Toddlers and Their Families Experiencing Homelessness

Applying the Information

Use the questions below to help you reflect on your work with young children and families. Respond to the questions yourself, or work with a partner or others on your team to discuss how you identify and serve families experiencing homelessness.

1. Consider the definition of homelessness provided in the Policy Clarification on the handouts page. Are you serving families who would be considered homeless under this definition? How do you consider homelessness in determining eligibility at your program? How do you document homelessness?
2. How do you or might you prioritize children experiencing homelessness in your enrollment process? Knowing that homeless children are categorically eligible, how will you need to change your enrollment priorities?
3. How do you work with families who are missing income verification or medical records?
4. What challenges have come up for you in your work with families experiencing homelessness? How can you work with your program specialist to anticipate and problem-solve around those challenges? What additional resources/support might your program need?
5. Consider the information and questions in the handouts. How do you address homelessness in program planning and community assessment? Will you/how will you look more closely at this issue in the future?
6. What resources are there for homeless families in your community? Describe your relationship with them. Consider the information shared by the faculty on this audioconference. How will you strengthen your partnership(s) with those local resources after this call?
7. Consider the list of potential partners provided in the handouts. You may have many of these partners already. How do you work with them? How might you work differently with them following this audioconference? Which potential partner(s) will you approach to build a new connection? How will you approach them?
8. Do you know the McKinney-Vento homeless liaison(s) serving your community? How will you reach out to learn more about them and the services they provide?
9. Faculty talk about the importance of developing relationships with individual staff at community organizations. Why is that important to families experiencing homelessness? How do you keep your contacts at local organizations up to date?
10. Working with intensely stressed families and children is very difficult and can raise many emotions. *For caregivers and home visitors:* How do you deal with the stress that comes from that work? What supports does your program offer? *For administrators:* How do you support staff working with these families?



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Selected Resource List

For more information, see the following resources:

Articles, Books, and Brochures

Bassuk, Ellen, John Buckner, Linda Weinreb, Angela Browne, Shari Bassuk, Ree Dawson, and Jennifer Perloff. "Homelessness in Female-Headed Families: Childhood and Adult Risk and Protective Factors." *American Journal of Public Health* 87 (1997): 241-248.

Bassuk, Ellen and Steven Friedman. *Facts on Trauma and Homeless Children*. Los Angeles, CA: National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2005.

Hart-Shegos, Ellen. *Homelessness and Its Effect on Children*. Minneapolis, MN: Family Housing Fund, December 1999. Available online at <http://www.fhfund.org/dnld/reports/SupportiveChildren.pdf>

Honig, Alice. *Secure relationships: Nurturing infant/toddler attachment in early care settings*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2001.

Horizons for Homeless Children. *Supporting Children and Families Without Homes: How Can We Help?* Dorchester, MA: Author, 2005.

Lieberman, Alicia. *The Emotional Life of the Toddler*. New York, NY: Free Press, 1993.

Norris-Shortle, Carole, Alison Melley, Laurel Kiser, Eric Levey, Kim Cosgrove, and Audrey Leviton. "Targeted Interventions for Homeless Children at a Therapeutic Nursery." *Zero To Three* 26 (2006), 49-55.

Perry, Bruce. *Helping Traumatized Children: A Brief Overview for Caregivers*. Houston, TX: The ChildTrauma Academy, 2002.

Rice, Kathleen and Betsy Groves. *Hope and Healing: A Caregiver's Guide to Helping Young Children Affected by Trauma*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE, 2005.

Sumner, Georgina, and Anita Spietz. *NCAST: Caregiver/Parent-Child Interaction Teaching Manual*. Seattle, WA: NCAST Publications, 1999.

Web Resources

Homeless Resource Center
www.homeless.samhsa.gov

Horizons for Homeless Children
www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org

National Center on Family Homelessness
www.familyhomelessness.org

National Center for Homeless Education at the SERVE Center
www.serve.org/nche/ibt/ibt.php

National Coalition for the Homeless (including a directory of local homeless service organizations)
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/resources/local/local.html>