

# 2012



## Lesson 4: Enrollment

Mini-workbook

Updated 1/31/2012

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## About the Mini-workbooks

The **mini-workbooks** are designed to use with the *Interactive Homelessness Lessons* on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC). The mini-workbooks are optional. You can successfully complete the Web version of the lessons without this resource. However, the mini-workbooks offer a multidimensional learning experience for programs who want to use the *Interactive Homelessness Lessons* as a training tool with groups of staff. You will find that the mini-workbooks point to the Web version to find answers and to discover more information.

The **Explore Information** tab in the Web version of each Lesson contains information, resources and materials to support your knowledge gathering and knowledge sharing. Some of the resources that are listed in the Web version are also included in the mini-workbooks. The computer symbol  indicates resources that are included in the Web version of the *Interactive Homelessness Lessons*. This symbol  indicates resources that are included in the mini-workbook version of the *Interactive Homelessness Lessons*. These symbols are used in the table on the next page.

Throughout the mini-workbook you will be asked to share your thoughts in the “Idea Box”. The light bulb is the symbol for the idea box.

This symbol  precedes instructions that direct you to a particular section of the Web version of the *Interactive Homelessness Lessons* for answers and for more information.

The Web version can be found on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC). The instructions on page 6 display how to access the ***Interactive Homelessness Lessons***.

The ***Interactive Homelessness Lessons*** take account of many real-life scenarios that may occur in programs and communities. The Lessons include a myriad of useful resources to support your learning and discovery of new strategies and ideas as you work with families experiencing homelessness.

In **Lesson 4: Enrollment**, Kiersten Beigel discusses the importance of enrolling children and families experiencing homelessness.

In this lesson you will be guided to build a comprehensive enrollment plan that supports children and families experiencing homelessness. You are asked to consider six critical elements that can possibly impact enrolling children and families in homeless situations. For each element you are provided a *build your plan* checklist. Review listen, and consider your program in each of the six elements. In the end, you will build a comprehensive enrollment plan.

## About the Mini-workbooks (continued)

Resources that are listed in the **Explore Information** sections of the Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4 are included in this table:

<b>Lesson 4: Enrollment – Explore Information Resources</b>	
Legal Definition of Homelessness	 
Selection Forms	
Selection/Prioritization Strategies	 
Khari, Collaboration Director, Talks about Selection	
Available Slots	 
Grace, Collaboration Director, Talks about Referral Forms and Home-based Options	
Mary, Collaboration Director, Talks about Spending Time in Shelters	
Strategies for Obtaining Documents/Records	 
Mary, Collaboration Director, Talks about Documentation and Enrollment	
Khari, Collaboration Director, Talks about Collecting Paperwork	
Transportation Strategies	 
Mary Lynne, Collaboration Director, Talks about Transportation Funding	
Attendance Strategies	 
Mary, Collaboration Director, Talks about Supporting Children and Parents and Transporting Children	
Transition Strategies	 
Kim Garcia, Family Advocate, Talks about Transitioning Children	
Enrollment Process	 
Enrollment Summary	
Voices from the Field	 

## How to Access the Interactive Homelessness Lessons on the ECLKC

The Interactive Homelessness Lessons can be found on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC).

1. Enter [ECLKC.ohs.acf.hhs.gov](http://ECLKC.ohs.acf.hhs.gov) in the browser. After the ECLKC page appears, enter 'Interactive Homelessness Lessons' in the search box. Click on 'search'.

...enter 'Interactive Homelessness Lessons' in the search box



2. Select the Interactive Homelessness Lessons icon.



3. Welcome to the Interactive Homelessness Lessons page will appear.



4. Go to the **Enrollment** tab.

## Why Enrollment is Important

According to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (1305.2 (b)), enrollment is "...the official acceptance of a family by a Head Start program and the completion of all procedures necessary for a child and family to begin receiving services."

The Head Start Act states:

(m) The Secretary shall issue rules to establish policies and procedures to remove barriers to the enrollment and participation of homeless children in Head Start programs. Such rules shall require Head Start agencies—

(1) to implement policies and procedures to ensure that homeless children are identified and prioritized for enrollment;

(2) to allow families of homeless children to apply to, enroll in, and attend Head Start programs while required documents, such as proof of residency, immunization and other medical records, birth certificates, and other documents, are obtained within a reasonable time frame; (Sec. 640. [42 U.S.C. 9835] (m) as amended December 12, 2007)

Furthermore, the Head Start Act states:

(O) the plan of such applicant to meet the needs of homeless children, including transportation needs...; (Sec. 640. [42 U.S.C. 9835] (d)(2)(O) as amended December 12, 2007)

Enrollment is about removing barriers to access, and also about expedited services due to the impact of homelessness on child development. The high rate of mobility, coupled with wait lists, mean that homeless children and families face significant barriers to enrollment. The Head Start Demonstration Projects Serving Homeless Families showed that homeless children, compared to housed Head Start children, struggled at a higher rate with developmental issues.

## Why Enrollment is Important (continued)

It is the rare case that homelessness is the only challenge a family is experiencing. Often there are other risk factors, such as domestic violence or substance abuse. Homelessness exacerbates those challenges and all risk factors need to be examined closely. Prioritization for enrollment of families experiencing homelessness is more appropriately understood as indicating a crisis on top of a crisis, and not in isolation.

This lesson offers opportunities for staff who work with families experiencing homelessness to examine the elements of the enrollment process including how to:

- Apply selection criteria and determining priority ranking;
- Manage slots in your program;
- Obtain documentation/records;
- Examine transportation options;
- Address attendance issues; and
- Plan for transitions.

## Legal Definition of Homelessness

According to section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)), the term “homeless children and youths”—

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence ...;  
and

(B) includes—

(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings ...

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Children and youth are considered homeless if they fit both part A and any one of the subparts of part B of the definition above.

*What is the Meaning of Fixed, Regular, and Adequate Nighttime Residence?*

### **Fixed, Regular, and Adequate Nighttime Residence**

**Fixed nighttime residence:** Stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.

**Regular nighttime residence:** Used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis.

**Adequate nighttime residence:** Sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

## Legal Definition of Homelessness (continued)

*What is Substandard Housing?*

### **What is Substandard Housing?**

Excerpt from The Office of Head Start Policy Clarification (OHS-PC- I-086) states:

“...In determining whether a child is living in "substandard housing," Head Start staff must evaluate whether the child's housing situation falls short of community standards or is of lower quality than the law prescribes. Staff should consider factors such as whether there are health and safety concerns related to the housing; the number of occupants per square foot; the age(s) of the occupants; and whether the housing meets State or local building codes. Does a comparison of the housing in question with community norms and laws lead staff to conclude that it is lower than what community norms or laws require?...”

Informal Guidance, May 8, 2008

## Selection/Prioritization - Case Study #1

Two families are applying to the Poplar Head Start program. Each family has a boy who is a little over 4-years-old. The program has immediate space for only one child, either Collin or Preston.

### Your Task:

1. Review and analyze Collins eligibility and selection forms.
2. Review and analyze Preston's eligibility and selection forms.
3. Which child should be enrolled immediately in Poplar Head Start and why. Record your thoughts or discuss with a colleague.



➔ Go to ***Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Selection/Prioritization***  
Read the analysis of which child Poplar Head Start selected and why.

## Collin's Eligibility Form

### Head Start Eligibility Verification



1. Child's name: Collin xxx
2. Child's date of birth: July 23, 2006
3. The child is eligible to participate in the program.  Yes  No
4. Check the applicable category of eligibility for this child:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SSI                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Income ( <i>check box that applies</i> ):   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Homeless | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Below federal poverty guidelines</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care         | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Between 100-130% of federal poverty guidelines (no more than 35% of enrolled children may fall into this category)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public assistance   |  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Over- Income  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Counted as part of 10% maximum for non-AI/AN programs)</i>   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Counted as part of the 49% maximum for AI/AN programs)</i>   |

5. What documentation was used to determine eligibility?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Income Tax Form 1040      | <input type="checkbox"/> Written statements from employers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W-2                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster care reimbursement         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TANF documentation        | <input type="checkbox"/> SSI documentation                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pay stub or pay envelopes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment              | If Other, please explain: <u>mother's statement</u>        |

Documentation of no income: \_\_\_\_\_

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 5. Staff signature: | Date of eligibility verification: October 8, 2010 |
| 6. Staff name:      | Title:  |

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## Collin's Selection Form

Note: The following selection form is adapted from SPCAA Head Start, Rev. 9-2-10.

Child's Name: Collin xxx

Birthday: 07 / 23 /2006

**Instructions:** Check one criterion in each area based on information from the application and/or other sources. When appropriate, write in comments in each area to support points awarded. Write in selected points for each area in space provided. Add up points by area and write in total and sign. **(\*) Documentation must be attached**

AREAS	DESCR.	PTS	SELECT	PTS AREA
<b><i>FAMILY STATUS (select one)</i></b>				
*F - Foster Child (Authorized Care)	FOST	72	( )	
G - Guardian/Caretaker	G	50	( )	
SWP - Single Working Parent or Student	SWP	60	( )	
SP - Single parent, Not working or Student	SP	30	( )	
TWP - Two Parents, Both Working or Students	TWP	40	( )	
TPOW - Two Parents, One Working or Student	TPOW	20	( )	
TP - Two Parents, Neither Working or Students	TP	10	( )	
MV - McKinney Vento Act	MV	70	( x )	
				<u>70</u>
<b><i>SPECIAL NEED (select one)</i></b>				
<i>(MUST be approved by Mental Health/Disability staff if points given, Documentation must be attached)</i>				
Z - No Suspected Special Need/Disability	Z	0	( x )	
X - Potential or Suspected Special Need/Disability	SUSP (X)	40	( )	
*A To Y - (Diagnosed Condition - Abbreviated Type)	_____	70	( )	
				<u>0</u>
<b>Comments:</b>				
<b><i>INCOME (select one)</i></b>				
Eligible Due To Public Assistance	EPA	70	( )	
Income Eligible at or Below Poverty Level	ELIG	70	( )	
Low Income 25% Below Poverty Level	L25%	80	( )	
Low Income 50% Below Poverty Level	L50%	90	( )	
Low Income 75% Below Poverty Level	L75%	100	( )	
				<u>0</u>

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**AGE BY September 1 (select one)**

4 years 6 months or older	4 - _____	70	(    )
4 years 0 months to 4 years 5 months	4 - _____	60	( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )
3 years 6 months to 3 years 11 months	3 - _____	30	(    )
3 years 0 months to 3 years 5 months	3 - _____	20	(    )
Transitioning from EHS to HS	TR	40	(    )
(Must have completed 6 month process)			
			<u>60</u>

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER (select all that apply)**

Referral from other Agency/Professional	REF	40	(    )
Family Health Problems/Disability	FHP/D	30	(    )
Family In Transition	FT	30	(    )
No Referral	NR	0	( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )
*Eligible due to McKinney Vento Act	EMV	101	( <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> )
			<u>101</u>

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of HS Employee Verifying Recruitment Application, Selection Criteria  
and Supporting Documentation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of HS Employee Approving Recruitment Application, Selection Criteria  
and Supporting Documentation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Total Pts: 231

# Preston's Eligibility Form

## Head Start Eligibility Verification



1. Child's name: Preston xxx
2. Child's date of birth: August 2, 2006
3. The child is eligible to participate in the program.  Yes  No
4. Check the applicable category of eligibility for this child:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SSI               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Income (check box that applies):  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Below federal poverty guidelines  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care       | <input type="checkbox"/> Between 100-130% of federal poverty guidelines (no more than 35% of enrolled children may fall into this category) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public assistance |   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Over- Income   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Counted as part of 10% maximum for non-AI/AN programs)   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Counted as part of the 49% maximum for AI/AN programs)   |

5. What documentation was used to determine eligibility?
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Income Tax Form 1040      | <input type="checkbox"/> Written statements from employers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W-2                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster care reimbursement         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TANF documentation        | <input type="checkbox"/> SSI documentation                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pay stub or pay envelopes | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unemployment   | If Other, please explain: _____                            |

Documentation of no income: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Staff signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of eligibility verification: October 14, 2010  
6. Staff name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Preston's Selection Form

Note: The following selection form is adapted from SPCAA Head Start, Rev. 9-2-10.

Child's Name: Preston xxx

Birthday: 08 / 02 / 2006

**Instructions:** Check one criterion in each area based on information from the application and/or other sources. When appropriate, write in comments in each area to support points awarded. Write in selected points for each area in space provided. Add up points by area and write in total and sign. **(\*) Documentation must be attached**

AREAS	DESCR.	PTS	SELECT	PTS AREA
<b>FAMILY STATUS (select one)</b>				
*F - Foster Child (Authorized Care)	FOST	72	( )	
G - Guardian/Caretaker	G	50	( )	
SWP - Single Working Parent or Student	SWP	60	( x )	
SP - Single parent, Not working or Student	SP	30	( )	
TWP - Two Parents, Both Working or Students	TWP	40	( )	
TPOW - Two Parents, One Working or Student	TPOW	20	( )	
TP - Two Parents, Neither Working or Students	TP	10	( )	
MV - McKinney Vento Act	MV	70	( )	
				<u>60</u>
<b>SPECIAL NEED (select one)</b>				
<i>(MUST be approved by Mental Health/Disability staff if points given, Documentation must be attached)</i>				
Z - No Suspected Special Need/Disability	Z	0	( x )	
X - Potential or Suspected Special Need/Disability	SUSP (X)	40	( )	
*A To Y - (Diagnosed Condition - Abbreviated Type)	---	70	( )	
				<u>0</u>
<b>Comments:</b>				
<b>INCOME (select one)</b>				
Eligible Due To Public Assistance	EPA	70	( )	
Income Eligible at or Below Poverty Level	ELIG	70	( )	
Low Income 25% Below Poverty Level	L25%	80	( )	
Low Income 50% Below Poverty Level	L50%	90	( )	
Low Income 75% Below Poverty Level	L75%	100	( x )	
				<u>100</u>

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**AGE BY September 1 (select one)**

4 years 6 months or older	4 - _____	70	(    )
4 years 0 months to 4 years 5 months	4 - _____	60	( x )
3 years 6 months to 3 years 11 months	3 - _____	30	(    )
3 years 0 months to 3 years 5 months	3 - _____	20	(    )
Transitioning from EHS to HS	TR	40	(    )
(Must have completed 6 month process)			
			<u>60</u>

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER (select all that apply)**

Referral from other Agency/Professional	REF	40	(    )
Family Health Problems/Disability	FHP/D	30	(    )
Family In Transition	FT	30	( x )
No Referral	NR	0	(    )
*Eligible due to McKinney Vento Act	EMV	101	(    )
			<u>30</u>

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of HS Employee Verifying Recruitment Application, Selection Criteria  
and Supporting Documentation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of HS Employee Approving Recruitment Application, Selection Criteria  
and Supporting Documentation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Total Pts: 250

## Selection/Prioritization - Case Study #2

The Cedar Early Head Start program received applications from two families. The program currently has an opening because one child just moved to another state. Before filling the opening from their waiting list, program staff reviewed the new applications from Glenda and Reggie.

### Your Task:

1. Review and analyze Glenda's eligibility and selection forms.
2. Review and analyze Reggie's eligibility and selection forms.
3. Should Cedar Early Head Start select from the waiting list or enroll one of the new applicants? Record your thoughts or discuss with a colleague.



- Go to ***Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Selection/Prioritization***  
Read the analysis of what Cedar Early Head Start did and why.

## Glenda's Eligibility Form

### Head Start Eligibility Verification



1. Child's name: Glenda xxx
2. Child's date of birth: February 21, 2009
3. The child is eligible to participate in the program.  Yes  No
4. Check the applicable category of eligibility for this child:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SSI                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Income ( <i>check box that applies</i> ):   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Homeless | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Below federal poverty guidelines</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care         | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Between 100-130% of federal poverty guidelines (no more than 35% of enrolled children may fall into this category)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public assistance   |  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Over- Income  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Counted as part of 10% maximum for non-AI/AN programs)</i>   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Counted as part of the 49% maximum for AI/AN programs)</i>   |

5. What documentation was used to determine eligibility?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Income Tax Form 1040      | <input type="checkbox"/> Written statements from employers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W-2                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster care reimbursement         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TANF documentation        | <input type="checkbox"/> SSI documentation                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pay stub or pay envelopes | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment              | If Other, please explain: _____                            |

Documentation of no income: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Staff signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of eligibility verification: September 16, 2010
6. Staff name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Glenda's Selection Form

Note: The following selection form is adapted from a North Carolina Head Start program.

**HEAD START/SCHOOL READINESS  
PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA 2008-2009 Revised**

Child's Name Glenda xxx D.O.B. Feb. 21, 2009

Circle points for the criteria that apply to the child and/or family.

- 30 Child 4 years old by Dec. 31
- 10 Child 3 years old by Dec. 31
  
- 30 Child-Disabilities Identified
- 20 Child Previously Enrolled in a Head Start Center
- 30 Homeless
- 20 Substance Abuse Issues
  
- 16 Single Parent (Mother Or Father Figure only)
- 16 Parent Incarcerated
- 16 Other Relative is Raising Child
- 30 Income is under 100% of Poverty Guidelines
- 10 Income is 100-130% of Poverty Guidelines
  
- 30 Assistance: Public (TANF)
- 30 Assistance: Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI)
- 30 Foster Care/Adoption Subsidy
- 6 Unemployment Insurance
- 1 Assistance: Child Support/Alimony
- 1 Assistance: Energy Program
- 1 Assistance: Food Stamps
- 1 Assistance: Medical
- 1 Assistance: Public Housing/Section 8
- 1 Assistance: WIC
  
- 10 Previously in Another Child Dev. Program: HRA Day Care
- 20 Referred by Child Welfare: DCF
- 4 Referred by Hospital/Wheeler Clinic  
Recommendation of ERSEA Admin. or Head Start Director:

66 TOTAL      \_\_\_ Qualifies for School Readiness

ERSENPI Manager's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date Sept. 16, 2010

**Reggie's Eligibility Form**

# Head Start Eligibility Verification



1. Child's name: Reggie xxx
2. Child's date of birth: March 11, 2009
3. The child is eligible to participate in the program.  Yes  No
4. Check the applicable category of eligibility for this child:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SSI               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Income ( <i>check box that applies</i> ):  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Below federal poverty guidelines</i>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care       | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Between 100-130% of federal poverty guidelines (no more than 35% of enrolled children may fall into this category)</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public assistance |  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Over- Income  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Counted as part of 10% maximum for non-AI/AN programs)</i>   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Counted as part of the 49% maximum for AI/AN programs)</i>   |

5. What documentation was used to determine eligibility?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Income Tax Form 1040      | <input type="checkbox"/> Written statements from employers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W-2                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster care reimbursement         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TANF documentation        | <input type="checkbox"/> SSI documentation                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pay stub or pay envelopes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment              | If Other, please explain: <u>father's statement</u>        |

Documentation of no income: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Staff signature:

Date of eligibility verification: September 8, 2010

6. Staff name:

Title:

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## Reggie's Selection Form

Note: The following selection form is adapted from a North Carolina Head Start program.

**HEAD START/SCHOOL READINESS  
PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA 2008-2009 Revised**

Child's Name Reggie xxx D.O.B. March 11, 2009

Circle points for the criteria that apply to the child and/or family.

- 30 Child 4 years old by Dec. 31
- 10 Child 3 years old by Dec. 31
  
- 30 Child-Disabilities Identified
- 20 Child Previously Enrolled in a Head Start Center
- 30 Homeless
- 20 Substance Abuse Issues
  
- 16 Single Parent (Mother Or Father Figure only)
- 16 Parent Incarcerated
- 16 Other Relative is Raising Child
- 30 Income is under 100% of Poverty Guidelines
- 10 Income is 100-130% of Poverty Guidelines
- 30 Assistance: Public (TANF)
- 30 Assistance: Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI)
- 30 Foster Care/Adoption Subsidy
- 6 Unemployment Insurance
- 1 Assistance: Child Support/Alimony
- 1 Assistance: Energy Program
- 1 Assistance: Food Stamps
- 1 Assistance: Medical
- 1 Assistance: Public Housing/Section 8
- 1 Assistance: WIC
- 10 Previously in Another Child Dev. Program: HRA Day Care
- 20 Referred by Child Welfare: DCF
- 4 Referred by Hospital/Wheeler Clinic
- Recommendation of ERSEA Admin. or Head Start Director:

66 TOTAL                           Qualifies for School Readiness

ERSENPI Manager's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date Sept. 8, 2010

## Strategies for Selection/Prioritization

Below are ideas for developing and implementing a selection process:

Action	Strategies
Develop a selection system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that your service area plans describe how you will accommodate children in homeless situations in your Head Start/Early Head Start program.</li> <li>• Put a system in place to guide the process of determining eligibility (standards).</li> <li>• Verify that there are no gaps in your application and intake process that may result in the failure to identify families that are eligible based on experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>• Reserve a percent of enrollment opportunities for children in homeless situations.</li> <li>• Review and update your selection process periodically.</li> </ul>
Create a form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update your point criteria to include homeless children as a priority.</li> <li>• Include questions about living situations on your enrollment applications.</li> <li>• Separate income and homelessness. A family experiencing homelessness is eligible for Head Start services regardless of their income.</li> <li>• Change the way questions are posed on your enrollment application in order to properly determine eligibility. Avoid questions such as, “Is your family homeless?” Families who are doubled-up may be experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act, yet they may not identify themselves as being homeless. Instead, use questions that get at the families’ living situation and that can help you make a determination about their status, based on the legal definition: families that lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. For example, you may include questions on your enrollment application like: Do you move around a lot?; Are you currently living with another family; Do you have to pay anything to stay where you are now; or Are you living in a temporary housing situation?</li> <li>• Create a selection form that will properly identify children and families who are eligible for educational services according to the federal definition and criteria set forth in the law. For example, adjust the point system to give vastly more points to homelessness as a risk factor. Such a form will help you in prioritizing for enrollment those children experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>• Change your selection criteria as necessary. Consider homelessness as a risk factor and give it additional points.</li> </ul>
Work with personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with all program staff, secretaries, family service workers, and directors on the legal requirements for enrollment.</li> <li>• Ensure that your program is clear about the criteria for eligibility in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act or Head Start Act.</li> </ul>

## Build Your Plan: Selection/Prioritization

- I have reviewed the *Strategies for Selection/Prioritization and the strategies used at Poplar Head Start and Cedar Early Head Start*.

Think about these questions:

- Did you notice the numbering system Poplar Head Start used?
- Did you notice the point system Cedar Early Head Start used?
- How do these systems take into account families experiencing homelessness?
- Do these systems ensure that families experiencing homelessness will be given top priority?

- I have examined parts of the eligibility and selection forms to determine if they can be adapted to work in my program.

Think about these questions:

- Are there parts of the Poplar Head Start or Cedar Early Head Start forms that you can use in your own program? Which parts?
- Are there parts of the forms that will not work in your program? Which parts? Why won't they work? Can you modify them to make them work better for your program?
- Are there other things you might want to include on your form?

- I have thought about my selection form and prioritization strategies and how I might change them to take families experiencing homelessness into account.

Think about these questions:

- What kind of selection system will work in your program?
- What should you include on your selection form that will support families experiencing homelessness?
- Does your current selection form ensure that families experiencing homelessness receive a priority rating?

- I have begun to create, or update, my existing selection form and prioritization strategies.

Think about these questions:

- Is there information in the *Explore Information* tab that can help you create or update your selection form?
- Do you need to change your existing form to take into account families experiencing homelessness? How should you change it?
- What elements do you need to include in your form to support families experiencing homelessness?
- Have you tested your form to see if it gives families experiencing homelessness a priority rating?

## Available Slots

### Crystal's Story

Crystal is a two-year-old girl who lives with her mother. She is eligible for Early Head Start services based on homelessness and Early Head Start must enroll her. Programs don't always have slots available for new enrollees even though they are eligible for services.

### Your Task

**Question:** What would you do if Crystal came to your program?

**Your Task:** Record your thoughts in the box.



- Go to ***Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Available Slots***. Read the program strategies implemented by 3 three different programs.

## Strategies for Available Slots

Children experiencing homelessness must be prioritized for enrollment. Consider the following as you review your service area plans:

- Reserve, if possible, a small percentage of enrollment opportunities for children in homeless situations
- Ensure that your plans describe how you will accommodate children in homeless situations in your Head Start/Early Head Start program.

It is important to maintain full enrollment without over-enrolling, and this may result in a shortage of classroom slots in many Head Start centers, particularly those operating on a full-day, full-year basis. In order to meet this challenge of providing slots to children experiencing homelessness, consider using the following strategies:

- Develop a transitional classroom with a large percentage of slots designated for homeless children;
- Develop an on-site Head Start classroom at shelters or transitional housing facilities; and
- Provide services to families, including medical/dental resources, food banks, etc. until there is a vacancy.

Children and families experiencing homelessness make up one category of eligible families who must be prioritized for enrollment in Early Head Start/Head Start programs. Multiple strategies should be employed with respect to enrollment, including reserving slots as one allowable strategy. Read what the Congressional Report says:

“It is the intent of the Conferees that Head Start agencies, in carrying out the requirements of paragraph (1), employ a variety of strategies to help remove barriers to the enrollment and participation of homeless children in Head Start, including conducting targeted recruitment of homeless children, including homelessness as a priority criterion in selection policies, reserving slots for homeless children, filling vacancies with homeless children, and other activities as determined necessary by the community-wide needs assessment. In addition to these strategies, Head Start agencies may find it appropriate, in some instances, to place a homeless child ahead of other eligible children on waiting lists in order to address their mobility and special needs. In general, when a grantee works on its community-wide needs assessment, it should ensure that it accounts for homeless families. Grantees are encouraged to engage school district homeless liaisons, private and public shelter providers, HUD Continuums of Care, and other homeless service agencies in the community-wide needs assessment.”

Conference Report on H.R. 1429, Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (House of Representatives – November 09, 2007).



## Build Your Plan: Available Slots

- I have reviewed the *Strategies for Available Slots* and the strategies implemented at the 3 Head Start programs.

Think about these questions:

- Did you notice that the strategies regarding available slots may change depending upon the location of the program (rural, suburban, or urban)?
- Did you notice that the strategies regarding available slots took into account how many families experiencing homelessness the program usually serves?
- Do the strategies regarding available slots ensure that children experiencing homelessness will be able to attend a program?

- I have considered whether any of the strategies regarding available slots will work in my program.

Think about these questions:

- Can you use any of the strategies regarding available slots in your own program? Which ones?
- Are there any of the strategies regarding available slots that will not work in your program? Which ones? Why won't they work?
- Are there other strategies regarding available slots you might want to include in your enrollment plan?

- I have thought about my strategies regarding available slots and how I might change them to help families experiencing homelessness.

Think about these questions:

- Do your current strategies regarding available slots ensure that children experiencing homelessness will be able to attend your program?
- What kind of strategies regarding available slots will work in your program?
- What type of strategies regarding available slots should you include in your enrollment plan that will support families experiencing homelessness?

- I have begun to formulate my strategies regarding available slots or have updated my existing strategies.

Think about these questions:

- Is there additional information in *Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Available Slots* that can help you create or update your strategies?
- Do you need to change your existing strategies regarding available slots to take into account families experiencing homelessness? How should you change them?
- What strategies regarding available slots do you need to include in your enrollment plan to support families experiencing homelessness?
- Have you tested your strategies regarding available slots to see if they ensure that children experiencing homelessness will be able to attend your program?

## Documentation/Records

### Roberto's Story

You have identified that four-year-old Roberto is eligible for Head Start based on homelessness and you will be enrolling him in your Head Start program. You have learned that Roberto previously attended a Head Start program in another state. You will need to obtain the records from that program such as Roberto's birth certificate, immunization records, and other health records. You have some concerns because you know the family has moved a number of times and may not have the necessary documentation/records.

**Questions:** What will you tell Roberto's family about providing you with documentation/records? During the time you are obtaining the documentation/records, what will happen with Roberto?

**Your Task:** Record your thoughts in the box



➡ Go to ***Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment-Documentation/Records***. Read what some programs have done.

## Strategies for Obtaining Documentation/Records

Action	Strategies
<p>Have parents complete the required forms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have staff available to help parents fill out the forms.</li> <li>• Have forms in the parent's primary language or a staff member available to translate.</li> <li>• If a family has transportation issues, go to the family.</li> <li>• Develop affidavits to serve as alternative forms of documentation/records normally required for enrollment, such as proof of guardianship. Such forms should be crafted carefully so that they do not create further barriers or delay enrollment.</li> </ul>
<p>Enroll children before obtaining documentation/records</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll children in homeless situations immediately.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ You can enroll children based on the family's description of its living situation (if that description meets the definition).</li> <li>○ You can enroll children even if they lack documentation/records normally required for enrollment, such as medical or immunization records, birth certificate, proof of guardianship, or other documents.</li> <li>○ A Head Start or Early Head Start program may be the only opportunity for these children to benefit from a stable environment, uninterrupted adult attention, peer relations, stimulation, and reliable meals. Immediate enrollment provides them with needed stability while documents/records are gathered.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide immediate access to services and obtain required verification of circumstances and collection of documents within a reasonable time frame.</li> <li>• Accept previous school records directly from families.</li> <li>• Link the family with community services.</li> <li>• Train staff, secretaries, family service workers, directors, and others on the legal requirements for enrollment.</li> </ul>
<p>Locate or obtain the required documents/records for enrollment. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immunization record(s)</li> <li>• Proof of guardianship</li> <li>• School physical/health record(s)</li> <li>• Proof of identity</li> <li>• School record(s)</li> <li>• Birth certificate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a child was in a program previously, contact that program to obtain records and information. In the meantime, enroll the child in your program.</li> <li>• Get as much information from the family as possible and assist the family in navigating through the bureaucracy to obtain the necessary documentation/records including medical and immunization records, and birth certificates.</li> <li>• Establish relationships with health care agencies to provide free physical examinations and immunizations for children experiencing homelessness on an expedited basis, and accompany parents and children to their service appointments. It is often difficult for parents to obtain medical records because of the stresses and disorganization caused by being in a</li> </ul>

Action	Strategies
	<p>homelessness situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin providing services to parents immediately, even before you have the records and even before a child's enrollment in the classroom, by making home visits to families and offering housing-related and/or crisis intervention services.</li> <li>• Enroll children in classes as soon as they have immunization records and establish a 30-day grace period for obtaining other documentation/records.</li> <li>• Expedite the process of getting the paper work together or of obtaining medical services.</li> <li>• Engage your school district homeless liaisons, private and public shelter providers, HUD Continuum of Care, and other homeless service agencies in your service area to assist in the verification and documentation process.</li> <li>• For those children whose records might be damaged, destroyed, or otherwise unavailable, begin to build new records immediately based on information gathered from families, local district or state-level student databases, and any other reliable sources of student information.</li> </ul>
Determine whom to contact for verification purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that your verification activities do not increase the risk that families may be evicted or suffer other resulting adverse consequences.</li> <li>• Ensure that residency verification processes do not jeopardize a family's living situation.</li> </ul>
Ensure medical exams and follow-up, including obtaining the resulting records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop partnerships with healthcare providers to provide free exams and records to families at no cost.</li> <li>• Establish school-based immunization clinics or other opportunities for on-site immunizations or collaborate with community-based organizations or public agencies.</li> <li>• Establish immunization databases, school-based immunization clinics, or mobile health units.</li> </ul>

## Build Your Plan: Documentation/Records

- I have reviewed the Strategies for Obtaining Documentation/Records and reviewed what other programs have done.

Think about these questions:

- Do you think that the ideas from Ohio and California are reasonable and address the issues?
- Do the strategies for obtaining documentation/records ensure that a child experiencing homelessness will be able to attend the Head Start program?

- I have considered whether any of the ideas for obtaining documentation/records in the will work in my program.

Think about these questions:

- Can you use any of the strategies for obtaining documentation/records in your own program? Which ones?
- Are there any of the strategies for obtaining documentation/records that will not work in your program? Which ones? Why won't they work?
- Are there other strategies for obtaining documentation/records you might want to include in your enrollment plan?

- I have thought about my strategies for obtaining documentation/records, and how I might change them to help families experiencing homelessness.

Think about these questions:

- Do your current strategies for obtaining documentation/records ensure that children experiencing homelessness will be able to attend your program?
- What kind of strategies for obtaining documentation/records will work in your program?
- What type of strategies for obtaining documentation/records should you include in your enrollment plan that will support families experiencing homelessness?

- I have begun to formulate (or update my existing) strategies for obtaining documentation/records.

Think about these questions:

- Is there information in the *Explore Information* tab that can help you create or update your strategies for obtaining documentation/records?
- Do you need to change your existing strategies for obtaining documentation/records to take into account families experiencing homelessness? How should you change them?
- What strategies for obtaining documentation/records do you need to include in your enrollment plan to support families experiencing homelessness?
- Have you tested your strategies for obtaining documentation/records to ensure that they support families and children experiencing homelessness?

## Transportation

### A Head Start Story

I was working with a family who had been experiencing homelessness for the last five years.

There were multiple reasons for this period of homelessness and they had stayed with several families during that time. The fourth of their five children was now ready for Head Start and she was very excited about going to school. We gave her a new backpack and new school shoes.

She was ready to go but didn't have a way to go. The family didn't have a car or access to one.

They lived a mile and a half from the Head Start site. The mother walked the little girl to school for two days and said it was very difficult as there were no sidewalks and it was a busy road.

Public transportation does not run in that area. The Head Start bus could not pick her up because it would mean some children would be on the bus for more than an hour which is against company policy. A special education bus had a pick up on that street but the Head Start student was not a special education student so who would pay for her seat? I suggested that I would pay what they are receiving for the empty seat this student would be taking.

Emails were flying and the little girl was sitting home with her new backpack and new shoes.

Could we look at another Head Start parent helping out? Can we revisit the special education bus? Can we contract a taxi service? Another day went by and the little girl sat home, trying to keep her new shoes new by not going outside. Can we use a K-12 bus to transport a Head Start student? No, Head Start students require seat belts.

## Transportation

**Question:** This child's ability to get to school is affecting her attendance. What will you do about getting her to school?

**Your Task:** Record your thoughts in the box.



➡ Go to ***Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Transportation***. Read what the Head Start program did.

## Strategies for Transportation

Action	Strategies
Fund transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the community and school districts. See Example 1.</li> <li>• Use a home-based option.</li> <li>• Combine resources throughout the community to fund transportation. See Example 2 and Example 3, which are examples from school districts.</li> <li>• Share costs for transportation and other direct services with local school systems.</li> <li>• Take into account special regulations, such as the Head Start requirement to use special harness restraints for children and to have bus monitors on board.</li> <li>• Use a combination of funds (McKinney, Title I, Title IV, other federal and local funds) to provide a vehicle that will be used to transport children in homeless situations or to defray the cost of providing transportation using existing systems to additional children.</li> <li>• Partner with community and faith-based organizations to address transportation costs.</li> </ul>
Coordinate transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact and facilitate collaboration between all stakeholders including shelter and service providers/staff, school bus dispatchers and drivers, special education transportation personnel, personnel in other school districts, area homeless education liaisons, area transportation directors, parents, teachers/counselors, public transportation systems officials.</li> <li>• Designate a district-level point of contact to arrange and coordinate transportation (e.g. local transportation director).</li> <li>• Emphasize the importance of stability for families in homeless situations.</li> <li>• Take advantage of transportation systems used by public assistance agencies (e.g., Access to Jobs Program). Coordinate with public assistance agencies whose clients cannot work unless their children are in school.</li> <li>• Collaborate with local public agencies, service providers, and shelter directors to develop transportation plans or provide transportation. Explore opportunities for collaboration with AmeriCorps or VISTA volunteers.</li> </ul>

Action	Strategies
Provide adequate transportation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-route school buses to travel to shelters, transitional living projects, and motels where families experiencing homelessness reside. Arrange for these sites to be the first and last stops to keep a family's living situation confidential.</li> <li>• Use vehicles which provide transportation to out-of-zone or district special education children for educational purposes and explore the possibility of expanding their routes to include children in homeless situations.</li> <li>• Provide passes for families to use existing public transportation routes where possible. Work with public transportation officials to explore altering existing routes to better service these families.</li> <li>• Reimburse families for gas.</li> <li>• Contact public transportation to offer bus tokens and passes at discounted rates for families in homeless situations</li> <li>• Use vans from other agencies (including Boys and Girls Club, faith-based organizations, and shelters).</li> </ul>

**Example 1: Collaborate with the community**

Talk to your community agencies about the possibility of providing limited transportation for students who are homeless. Emergency shelters may be willing to temporarily transport children to the program while the program is making other transportation arrangements. Shelters should be reimbursed for transportation costs.

**Example 2: Combine resources**

Transportation in the Bloomington, Illinois school district is supported by funds solicited from private organizations and fundraisers as well as McKinney-Vento.

**Example 3: Combine resources**

In Vancouver, Washington, 22 districts pooled resources to purchase buses and drivers and incorporated them within an existing special education pupil transportation cooperative to also provide services for homeless students.



## Build Your Plan: Transportation

I have reviewed the *Strategies for Transportation* and what the Head start program did.

Think about these questions:

- Did you think that the transportation ideas the program came up with were reasonable and addressed the issues?
- How did the program tailor the ideas to fit the individual circumstance?
- Does the transportation strategy ensure that a child experiencing homelessness will be able to attend the Head Start program?

I have considered whether any of the transportation ideas in the *Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment-Transportation* will work in my program.

Think about these questions:

- Can you use any of the transportation strategies in your own program? Which ones?
- Are there any of the transportation strategies that will not work in your program? Which ones? Why won't they work?
- Are there other transportation strategies you might want to include in your enrollment plan?

I have thought about my transportation strategies and how I might change them to help families experiencing homelessness.

Think about these questions:

- Do your current transportation strategies ensure that children experiencing homelessness will be able to attend regularly?
- What kind of transportation strategies will work in your program?
- What type of transportation strategies should you include in your enrollment plan that will support families experiencing homelessness?

I have begun to formulate (or update my existing) transportation strategies.

Think about these questions:

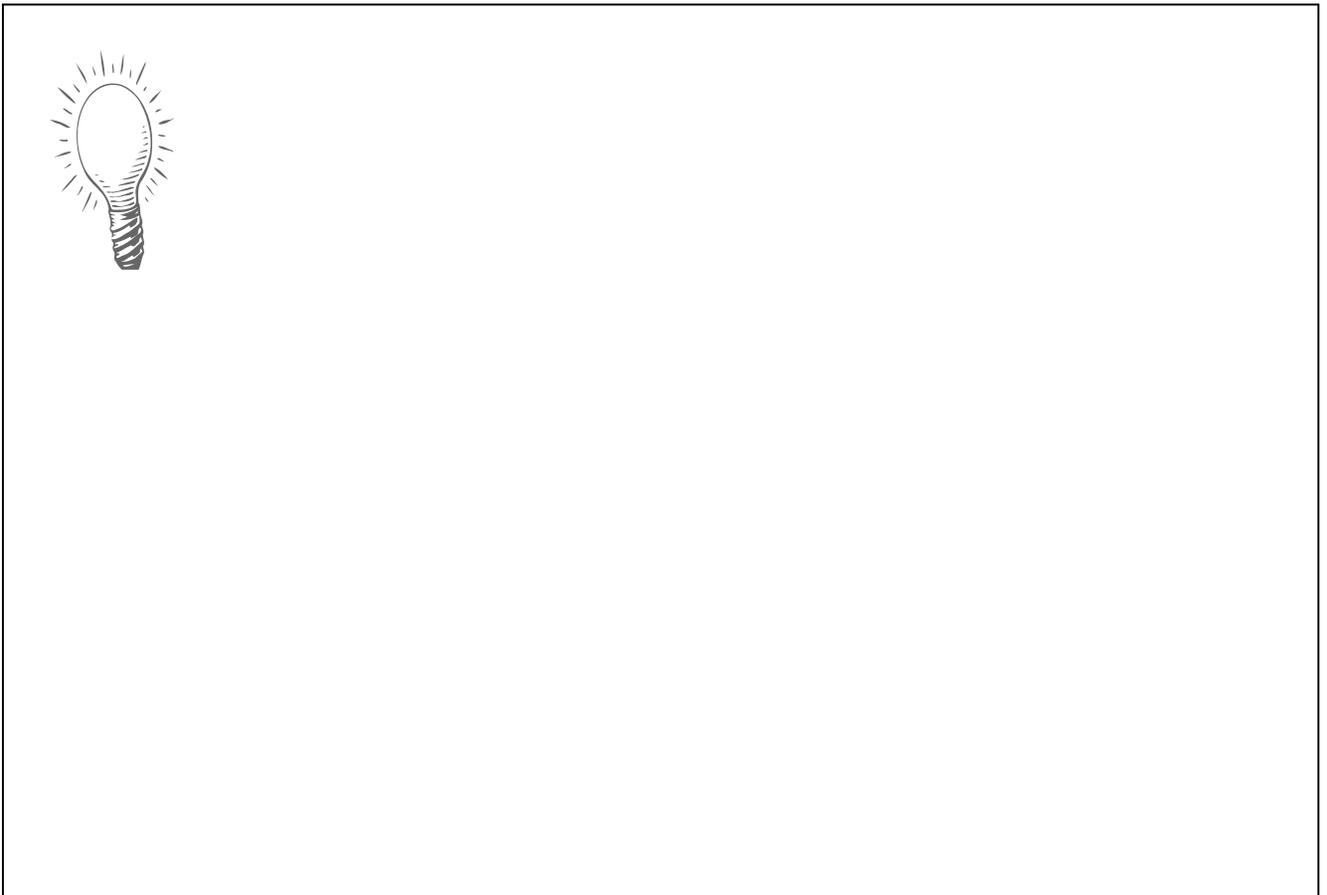
- Is there other information in the *Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment-Transportation* that can help you create or update your transportation strategies?
- Do you need to change your existing transportation strategies to take into account families experiencing homelessness? How should you change them?
- What transportation strategies do you need to include in your enrollment plan to support families experiencing homelessness?
- Have you tested your transportation strategies to ensure that they support families and children experiencing homelessness?

## Attendance – Case Study #1

Evan is a 4-year-old boy who is experiencing homelessness. He has been attending his Head Start program regularly for three months, but has been absent for the past two days.

**Question:** If Evan was in your program, what would you do?

**Your Task:** Share your thoughts in the box.

A large empty rectangular box for writing, with a lightbulb icon in the top left corner. The lightbulb is a simple line drawing with a spiral base and several short lines radiating from the top, indicating it is lit or glowing.

- Go to ***Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Attendance***. Read what the internal systems manager at Northeast Michigan Community Services Agency does.

## Attendance- Case Study #2

Krista is a 2 ½-year-old girl who just moved into a homeless shelter with her mother. The shelter partners with an Early Head Start program that currently has an opening. Krista will attend that program.

**Question:** If Krista was in your program, what would you do to help her feel comfortable in the classroom?

**Your Task:** Share your ideas in the box.



➡ Go to ***Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Attendance***. Read what the education specialist at the Head Start program in Franklin County does.

## Strategies for Attendance

Action	Strategies
Establish a record-keeping and follow-up system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track each child’s attendance each day.</li> <li>• Follow up immediately when there is an absence by visiting or directly contacting the family.</li> <li>• Document all contacts and special family support service activities with the family.</li> <li>• Ensure that attendance policies regarding children experiencing homelessness are a part of your program’s written policies.</li> <li>• Form an attendance monitoring committee to continually review attendance records and follow up with absenteeism.</li> </ul>
Integrate the child into the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that your service area plans describe how you will provide continuity of services for children in homeless situations.</li> <li>• Assess the child quickly.</li> <li>• Establish classroom routines for new children.</li> <li>• Introduce new children to the class.</li> <li>• Be sensitive about smoothly integrating new children into the classroom and Head Start community.</li> <li>• Keep a short, simple list of classroom rules and procedures.</li> <li>• Make sure all children have a chance to have a class job/role and to participate in all activities.</li> <li>• Start a portfolio of class work for the child.</li> <li>• Provide a special place for the child to keep belongings.</li> </ul>
Integrate the family into the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with parents when they register.</li> <li>• Talk to and welcome new families individually.</li> <li>• Give new families a “welcome gift” (e.g. school supplies, school clothes).</li> <li>• Develop a partnership with each family and determine what services and supports they want and need.</li> <li>• Be available for home visits for families who want more support.</li> <li>• Work with community partners to provide the necessary information to help support families.</li> </ul>
Address the high mobility of families and the transient nature of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that your service area plans address the issues your community faces regarding families in homeless situations.</li> <li>• When a family moves, allow a child to remain in a program when it is in his or her best interest.</li> <li>• Let a family know that it is important to notify the program if they move.</li> <li>• Minimize educational disruption due to homelessness.</li> <li>• Connect the available community resources to improve the provision of comprehensive services to children and their families who are experiencing homelessness.</li> </ul>



## Build Your Plan: Attendance

- I have reviewed the Strategies for Attendance and the strategies implemented at NEMCSA Head Start and a Franklin County Head Start program.

Think about these questions:

- Did you think that the attendance ideas from NEMSCA and Franklin County were reasonable and addressed the issues?
- Do you think the tracking strategy will ensure that you will know whether a child experiencing homelessness is attending the Head Start program on a regular basis?
- Do you think the classroom strategy will help the child acclimate to the classroom?

- I have considered whether any of the attendance ideas in the *Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Attendance* will work in my program.

Think about these questions:

- Can you use any of the attendance strategies in your own program? Which ones?
- Are there any of the attendance strategies that will not work in your program? Which ones? Why won't they work?
- Are there other attendance strategies you might want to include in your enrollment plan?

- I have thought about my attendance strategies and how I might change them to help families experiencing homelessness.

Think about these questions:

- Do your current attendance strategies ensure that you will know whether a child experiencing homelessness is attending Head Start regularly? Do you have a system in place to follow up on absences immediately?
- What kind of attendance strategies will work in your program?
- What type of attendance strategies should you include in your enrollment plan that will support families experiencing homelessness?

- I have begun to formulate (or update my existing) attendance strategies.

Think about these questions:

- Is there information in the *Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment-Attendance* that can help you create or update your attendance strategies?
- Do you need to change your existing attendance strategies to take into account families experiencing homelessness? How should you change them?
- What attendance strategies do you need to include in your enrollment plan to support families experiencing homelessness?
- Have you tested your attendance strategies to ensure that they support families and children experiencing homelessness?



## Transitions

### Mario's Story

In two months, Mario will turn 3-years-old. Mario and his family only speak Spanish. They are in a homeless situation and Mario is currently in the Ivy Early Head Start program.

**Statement:** Think about how you would plan for Mario's transition to a Head Start program.

**Your Task:** Share your thoughts in the box.



➡ Go to *Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Transitions*. Read what Ivy Head Start program did.

## Transitions

### Lisette's Story

Lisette's family is experiencing homelessness and recently enrolled Lisette in the Spruce Head Start program. Lisette is almost 5-years-old and she has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) because of her hearing impairment.

Statement: Think about how you would plan for Lisette's transition to kindergarten.

**Your Task:** Share your thoughts in the box.



➔ Go to ***Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Transitions***. Read what Spruce Head Start program did

## Transitions

### Nina's Story

Nina's family is in a homeless situation and is currently enrolled in the Holly Head Start program. Her family was doubled-up with some friends but now will need to move to live with another family on the other side of town. There is another Head Start program there, but Nina has been doing very well in the Holly program.

**Statement:** Think about how you would handle Nina's move.

**Your Task:** Share your thoughts in the box.



➡ Go to ***Interactive Homelessness Lesson 4: Enrollment- Transitions***. Read what Holly Head Start program did.

## Strategies for Transitions

Action	Strategies
Provide continuity of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that your service area plans describe how you will provide continuity of services for children in homeless situations.</li> <li>• Meet with parents when they register.</li> <li>• Assess the child quickly.</li> <li>• Establish classroom routines for incoming and departing children.</li> <li>• Develop a partnership with each family and determine what services and supports they want and need.</li> <li>• Prepare families when it is time to separate from Early Head Start or Head Start.</li> <li>• To ensure smooth transition for families, communicate with the programs.</li> <li>• Identify staff who will coordinate the transition process for each family.</li> <li>• For children moving to elementary school, contact the homeless liaison.</li> <li>• Provide staff visits between the receiving and sending programs to encourage communication and collaboration.</li> <li>• Establish a record-keeping process for transitions.</li> <li>• Prepare to address staff reactions to transitions of families.</li> <li>• Coordinate with other programs and agencies to create a transition system.</li> <li>• Ensure continued services during and after the transition.</li> <li>• For families in shelters, obtain their consent for release of information so shelter staff can relay a family's forwarding address and services can continue.</li> </ul>
Support children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know new families with a "get-to-know-you" questionnaire or conversation.</li> <li>• Talk to and welcome new families individually.</li> <li>• Give new families a "welcome gift" (e.g. school supplies, school clothes).</li> <li>• Introduce new children to the class.</li> <li>• Be sensitive about smoothly integrating new students into the classroom and Head Start community.</li> <li>• Identify staff and peer buddies.</li> <li>• Keep a short, simple list of classroom rules and procedures.</li> <li>• Make sure all children have a chance to have a class job/role and to participate in all activities.</li> <li>• Start a portfolio of class work for children to take with them when leaving the program.</li> <li>• Maintain a relationship with departing families by providing them with stamped, self-addressed envelopes and stationery.</li> </ul>

Action	Strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with families to discuss the transition process.</li> <li>• Arrange for a family to visit the receiving program, or spend a day there, and accompany the family if necessary.</li> <li>• Prepare the child in terms of skills and competencies for the transition.</li> <li>• To support transitions, provide orientation events and written materials such as transition handbooks.</li> <li>• Be available for home visits for families who want more support during transitions.</li> <li>• Be an advocate for the child and the family.</li> </ul>
Address the high mobility of families and the transient nature of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that your service area plans address the issues your community faces regarding families in homeless situations.</li> <li>• When a family moves, allow a child to remain in a program when it is in his or her best interest.</li> <li>• Let a family know that it is important to notify the program if they move.</li> <li>• Minimize educational disruption due to homelessness.</li> <li>• Connect the available community resources for young children to improve the provision of comprehensive services to children experiencing homelessness and their families.</li> <li>• For families in shelters, obtain their consent for release of information so shelter staff can relay a family's forwarding address and services can continue.</li> </ul>
Use a transition card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print transition cards with your program's contact information.</li> <li>• When a new family arrives, ask if they have a transition card from their previous program. If they do, obtain parent consent for transfer of records, contact the former program, and arrange for the release of information and transfer of records.</li> <li>• Complete a new transition card for the family. On the back of the card, include enrolled siblings.</li> <li>• Give the new card to the family when they enroll or just before they leave your program. Ask them to keep it in a safe place and to show it to the next program during enrollment or to the elementary school.</li> </ul>



## Build Your Plan: Transitions

I have reviewed the *Transition Strategies* and read what Sycamore Head Start did.

Consider these questions:

- Did you notice that the transition strategies may change depending upon the type of transition it is?
- Did you notice that some transition strategies can be used for more than one type of transition?
- Do the transition strategies include special approaches for families experiencing homelessness?

I have considered whether any of the transition ideas will work in my program.

Consider these questions:

- Can you use any of the transition strategies in your own program? Which ones?
- Are there any of the transition strategies that will not work in your program? Which ones? Why won't they work?
- Are there other transition strategies you might want to include in your enrollment plan?

I have thought about various transitions that might arise in my program and how to address them.

Consider these questions:

- What are some transitions that might arise in your program?
- Have you thought about strategies to address those transitions?
- Have you considered additional strategies that take families experiencing homelessness into account?

I have thought about my transition strategies and how I might change them to help families experiencing homelessness.

Think about these questions:

- Do your current transition strategies take families experiencing homelessness into account?
- What kind of transition strategies will work in your program?
- What type of transition strategies should you include in your enrollment plan that will support families experiencing homelessness?

I have begun to formulate or update my transition strategies.

Think about these questions:

- Do you need to change your existing transition strategies to take into account families experiencing homelessness? How should you change them?
- What transition strategies do you need to include in your enrollment plan to support families experiencing homelessness?
- Have you tested your transition strategies to see if they support families experiencing homeless

## Putting It Together

### Tanya's Story

Four-year-old Tanya, her older brother Ezra, and their mother and father all live at Tanya's grandmother's house. They are staying there because both parents lost their jobs and could no longer afford their apartment. The parents are hoping to get new jobs and save enough money to get their own place again. Ezra goes to the local elementary school and the homeless liaison learned that he has a younger sister who might be eligible for Head Start. The homeless liaison notified the Sycamore Head Start program, which is close to where the family lives, about Tanya.

### Your Task

Sycamore Head Start's enrollment plan includes the six elements identified in this workbook:

- Selection/Prioritization
- Available Slots
- Documentation/Records
- Transportation
- Attendance
- Transitions

Think about what might be in Sycamore Head Start's enrollment plan to best serve Tanya.



## Build Your Plan: Putting It Together

I have reviewed all the elements of my enrollment plan.

Think about these questions:

- Did you notice how Sycamore Head Start addressed each element of the enrollment process?
- Are there enrollment strategies that Sycamore Head Start used that you can include in your own plan? Which strategies?
- Are there enrollment strategies that Sycamore Head Start used that will not work in your own plan? Which strategies? Why won't they work?
- What kind of enrollment strategies will work in your program?

I have put the elements of my enrollment plan together and ensured that it supports families experiencing homelessness.

Think about these questions:

- Is each element of your enrollment plan complete?
- Do the elements of your enrollment plan work together as a complete plan? Do any parts need to be modified?
- Does your plan ensure that families experiencing homelessness will receive services and be supported?
- Do you need to change any of your existing enrollment strategies to take into account families experiencing homelessness?
- How should you change them?

I am ready to put my enrollment plan into action.

Think about these questions:

- Does your plan include a system for review and update?
- Have you tried out your plan to make sure it works the way you want?

## Key Points About Enrollment Based on Homelessness

In this lesson, Enrollment, we unpacked the enrollment process focusing on, selection, prioritization, attendance, and transitions.

We then asked that you reflect on your program's enrollment plan and determine if there were areas you wanted to change, enhance, or revise.

We realize that children and families deserve the highest quality of services. And it is important that we continue to move forward, program by program, in meeting the spirit and the intention of the Act, by optimizing the services we provide to children and families experiencing homelessness.

## Voices from the Field

### Selection criteria and prioritization:

- **A suburban program in Los Angeles gives additional points to those automatically eligible for Head Start services**

Norwalk/LaMirada is careful to make sure that the automatically eligible families, such as those with experiences that are represented by the homelessness definition in the McKinney-Vento Act, have the highest rating points. Most of the priority ranking items are one to five points and the automatically eligible ones (McKinney-Vento, TANF recipient, foster child) are all at 20 points. So, as they do priority ranking, families in homeless situations mathematically come up higher on the waiting list.

- **An urban program in Indiana uses a checklist based on the definition of homelessness in the McKinney-Vento Act**

Indianapolis, Indiana begins asking questions about homelessness in the pre-enrollment application. To help them identify families that may be experiencing homelessness, they use a homeless checklist based on the definition of homelessness in the McKinney-Vento Act. For example, there are items on the checklist that relate to whether a family is experiencing any type of economic hardship, whether they are doubling up with a relative or friend, and whether they are living in a temporary housing situation such as a shelter or campground.

### Available Slots:

- **A rural program in Michigan works with families experiencing homelessness who are on the waiting list**

The Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency (NEMCSA) Head Start program makes serving homeless families a high priority and gives a family experiencing homelessness 95 points as an additional risk factor on their priority selection criteria. Families/children are then placed at the top of the priority/waiting list for placement into programs. If the program year has already started and there are no openings at that time, then the family/child remains on the waiting list but support is still provided. For example, while one family was waiting for placement into the program, the family service worker maintained contact with the parent to try to obtain housing and referred the family to any available services. This included notifying the family of events in the community that were free or of little cost including family events, parent training, and play groups. Another family had been in a shelter for several months and was eligible for McKinney-Vento services that included funding opportunities for transportation. The parent was not willing to use public transportation so it was difficult to help them get the child to and from the program site. Instead, the family was offered the home-based program and the teacher made several visits with the family in the shelter.

## Voices from the Field (continued)

- **A suburban program in Los Angeles refers families experiencing homelessness to other programs rather than having them remain on a waiting list**

Norwalk/LaMirada does not let a child sit on a waiting list if they know the child is experiencing homelessness. Families in homeless situations are the top priority for the first opening but at the same time Norwalk/LaMirada refers them to any other program they know about that has vacancies. In LA County, there is a county-wide waiting list system which is called the LA Centralized Eligibility List. All families go into that and so any other agency that's looking for children can go to the list and contact that family. It's for any state-funded childcare program. Any agency that puts their families on it is required to use it. It could be after-school care for an elementary child, it could be infant/toddler, and it could be preschool.

- **A rural program in Alabama uses blended centers**

Cheaha partners with daycare centers. If there is no space in one of their 16 Head Start centers, they place the child in a daycare center. The child remains on the Head Start waiting list and they notify the parents when space becomes available. Several of the centers are blended (daycare and Head Start). For example, if there are 200 children in the center, then maybe 100 are Head Start and 100 are daycare. The services are blended so if there isn't a slot at that particular moment in Head Start, the child can go in daycare until a slot becomes available.

### Documentation/Records:

- **An urban program in Ohio works with parents to obtain documentation/records**

An urban program in Ohio tells families in homeless situations not to worry about records such as birth certificates. They work with the families to get that information. The only requirement they have, because of the health issues, is the documentation of immunizations. Even without the documentation of the immunizations, they give the child a seat but do not allow the child to actually sit there until they receive the immunization records. One of the case manager's responsibilities is to get those records as quickly as possible so the child can attend class.

When the child transitions to kindergarten, the Head Start program makes sure the immunizations are current and gives the parent copies, upon request.

## Voices from the Field (continued)

### Transportation:

- **A rural program in Michigan uses various ideas for meeting transportation needs**

NE Michigan is a rural area and the families are quite spread out geographically. NEMCSA Head Start attempts to set up group bus stops as near in proximity as they can to the family that doesn't have transportation so they can be as close to door-to-door as possible. Sometimes that means they might have to cluster children in one area in order to allow enough time on the bus run to get a little closer to where the non-transportation family is. Licensing only allows children to be on the bus one hour and that's very challenging in a rural area. Placement in the program's morning or afternoon session may sometimes be determined by the location of the family home and proximity to the pickup point for the bus. They try to adjust transportation schedules if it's possible or find other resources with different organizations. Networking between parents, such as ride-sharing, is encouraged by the program to aid the families with transportation issues.

- **To reduce the need for transportation, a suburban program in Los Angeles puts new programs into areas that don't have service now**

Norwalk/LaMirada is a very wide district and many families do not have transportation. They have six bus stops where they pick up children for their center-based program at their two main sites. They also have bus tokens that they provide to parents for program participation, to take the children to the doctor or dentist, for training, and to volunteer in the classroom. In addition, as Norwalk/LaMirada expands, they put their programs into the areas of the community where they don't have service now. In the last 10 years, they've grown from three sites to nine. They are putting service into areas that are underserved and it reduces the need to put children on a bus to go to the main site.

- **A rural program in Alabama has centers in public housing and also has inexpensive bus service**

Cheaha has two of their centers in the middle of public housing so there are no transportation problems. Families can just walk with their children to the apartment. In addition, they have a city bus for \$1 and passengers can ride it anywhere. Some people use it to take their children to and from Head Start.

**Attendance:**

- **A suburban program in Los Angeles continues providing services even if the family experiencing homelessness moves**

Norwalk/LaMirada works with families to make sure they know that as long as they were living in the area when they started, then even if they have to shift their residence quickly because of their homelessness issue, their children can continue where they are if it works out for them. One time Norwalk/LaMirada had a family where there was a

## Voices from the Field (continued)

domestic violence issue and the mother left but she brought her children every single day. Finally after two months, she came back to the area. Norwalk/LaMirada doesn't want to make the situation more precarious so they reassure families not to worry, that the child can stay there, if it works for the family. But they do encourage the family to go locally. Norwalk/LaMirada tells the family, "If it works for you to have your child here, we'll continue to serve your child."

- **An urban program in Indiana applies the Reggio Emilia concept to its classrooms**

Indianapolis, Indiana uses the Reggio Emilia approach in their classrooms to give a sense of a home environment. Although it was originally implemented in the classrooms in general, it was found to work particularly well with children in homeless situations. It allows the children to have stability within the classroom, to work with objects and equipment and supplies that are typically found in a home, and to experience what a home is like.

### Transitions:

- **A rural program in Michigan works closely with the School Success Worker in the public school**

NEMCSA works collaboratively with a School Success Worker who is located in elementary school buildings in the districts that participate in the School Success program. The two programs work closely with the families of Head Start children who are transitioning into Kindergarten and may have some challenges. It's a perfect opportunity for Head Start staff to make the School Success Worker aware of a family that is already eligible for McKinney-Vento services. This allows for a smooth transition into the "regular" school system.

The School Success Worker position was developed several years ago out of a need for support workers to be in the elementary schools when funding was not available for traditional counselors in the buildings. This is a way to have some early intervention in the elementary schools. The program is supported by joint funding that comes from different sources, including the schools, and the School Success Worker works collaboratively with NEMCSA programming.

- **A suburban program in Los Angeles has a strong partnership with the district McKinney-Vento office**

Norwalk/LaMirada has a strong partnership with the district McKinney-Vento office and the McKinney-Vento Intervention Liaison. With permission of the family, they provide the family's name to that office. If their child transitions to kindergarten and beyond, they will automatically be able to access those services that are already set up at the kindergarten level and beyond. The services can include everything from additional tutoring to backpacks full of school supplies at the beginning of the year.

## Voices from the Field (continued)

- **An urban program in Ohio addresses difficult transition and turnover issues of families experiencing homelessness**

One of the biggest problems for the Child Development Council of Franklin County (CDCFC) Head Start in Columbus Ohio is the transition and turnover. Some of the children at the YWCA, which is a homeless shelter in a state-of-the-art building, are only there a handful of days. Children can stay there for 90 days but last year only one child was there longer than 45 days. A lot of transition means families are getting employment and homes, but it's a challenge as far as screenings and things like that. The case manager tries to follow the children and if they are in the vicinity of one of the other centers they try, if there's a space, to enroll the child in that center so they can continue. If a family moves to an area that's within one of their other centers, in the service area that they serve, then they try to hook the family up with one of their other centers – a partnership center or an in-house center.

Once children leave the YWCA, they go to Tier 2 housing. CDCFC has a partnership with the Homeless Families Foundation and CDCFC provides the families with a bus so they can continue Head Start services. The bus service is provided only for full day services, so families on ½ day services can get help from Project Connect. Project Connect also houses a homeless liaison who helps the children transition to the public school system.

### Enrollment process:

- **An urban program in Ohio describes its enrollment process for families in a homeless situation**

The Child Development Council of Franklin County (CDCFC) Head Start in Columbus Ohio has a one-stop enrollment process. First the families experiencing homelessness enroll at the YWCA, which is a homeless shelter for all of Franklin County. At the building, they initiate services for any family that's homeless. It's a state-of-the-art building. It has some quads in it where families can stay for a certain amount of time. If the quads are full, they never turn a family away as long as there's a child involved. They have agreements with a couple of hotels. They have a Safe and Sound preschool in the program. CDCFC contracts with the YWCA for ten slots so ten of the homeless children are identified as Head Start children. There are also four additional slots for Early Head Start. If the ten slots are full, there are still ten additional slots there for preschool children. There are actually 20 children in the classroom and CDCFC contracts for half of the slots. If the ten slots are full, they could still be in the preschool program there and because they're in the same classroom with the same teachers all the children will still get development screenings and the nurse even tries to do the vision and hearing with the children as well. In addition to all the services that are provided to the family and the child in the center, they also receive the full array of Head Start services. They have a case manager, an education specialist, and a health associate assigned to work with them. The facility itself and the staff provide meals, a place to stay, library and computers, and transportation. The goal is to help the families find employment and a place to live.

## Voices from the Field (continued)

If they don't get housing there, then they go to Tier 2 housing. If there is a spot available at the Safe and Sound at the YWCA, then they enroll there. This is how the CDCFC Head Start case manager liaison for homelessness describes the process after they leave the YWCA:

*Once they transfer, then the case manager at the YWCA, notifies me or another case manager that they're transitioning out of the YWCA. If they're coming to one of the centers that we partner with, then we'll continue the services. So, for example, if they're going to the Homeless Family Foundation, once they get to the Homeless Family Foundation, I meet with their case manager because they have to sign a Coordination of Services Release form, so that their case manager at the homeless shelter and I can coordinate services. Once we sign that agreement, we transfer the child out of the YWCA into the center that partners with the Homeless Family Foundation. Once they get here, we help them with their immediate goals which are food, clothing, and shelter. We meet with the case manager at the Homeless Family Foundation once a month to discuss the family's progress. Also, we offer transportation to families from the Homeless Family Foundation. They pick them up there and they drop them off there.*

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You are encouraged to explore all that this dynamic resource has to offer.

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