

2009 Audio Cast Series

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

Objectives

During this audio cast, panelists will:

1. Discuss the federal definition of homelessness;
2. Offer clarity on some common questions about working with families experiencing homelessness under the *Head Start Program Performance Standards*; and
3. Share approaches and strategies to building community partnerships that work in providing services to families experiencing homelessness.

Introduction

Content Level: Basic

The materials below were developed for the audio cast that originally aired on May 13, 2009. Use this information to supplement your learning and to evaluate the experience.

To make the most of this training experience:

- **Read the Faculty Biographies and the Applying the Information handouts before the audio cast begins.** These handouts are designed to help you prepare for the program and consider how the information faculty share can be applied where you are.
- **Schedule some time for reflection after the audio cast.** An individual staff member can use the **Applying the Information** handout to practice new skills. However, discussing information as a team is the best way to get a collective sense of what is in place at your program and how team members can enhance their services to grandparents.

Use the handouts to discuss **new information and to plan for the future.**



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Moderator

Amanda Perez



Senior Training Specialist
Early Head Start National Resource Center

Faculty

Kiersten Beigel



Family and Community Partnerships Specialist
Office of Head Start
Administration for Children and Families

Kiersten Beigel is a Family and Community Partnership Specialist with the Office of Head Start.

She began working in the Administration for Children, Youth and Families in 2003 as a Presidential Management Fellow. While there, she worked in a management office that oversaw operations for four Bureaus which managed Child Welfare, Head Start, Child Care, Family Violence, Abstinence Education, Mentoring Children of Prisoners, and Homeless and Runaway Youth programs. Prior to her work in the federal government, Kiersten worked with children of all ages and their families in medical, child welfare, non profit and educational settings providing mental health services, parent support services as well as conducting casework and program development activities in various capacities. Kiersten holds a Masters in Social Work and a certificate in Urban Leadership from Simmons College in Boston and a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Syracuse University.



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Faculty (cont'd.)

Ellen Farrar



**Deputy Director/Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs
Westchester Community Opportunity Programs (WestCOP), Inc.
Westchester, NY**

Ellen Farrar has served as Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs for WestCOP, a multipurpose social service agency in Westchester, NY, for over 35 years. She oversees over 25 Head Start and Early Head Start centers, including two shelter-based sites and one community site targeting families experiencing homelessness. From the beginning, Ellen has seen her program as part of the fabric of community services offered in Westchester, and prioritizes bringing different organizations and entities together in support of the families she serves. Before coming to WestCOP, Ellen was an early childhood educator. She has a Masters in Child Development and Family Relationships from Cornell University.

Anne Giordano



**Early Childhood Consultant
EDUCATION CONNECTION
Litchfield, CT**

Anne Giordano has been working with infants & toddlers at EDUCATION CONNECTION for 16 years. She served as program manager of both Part C Birth-3 and Early Head Start (EHS) before moving into the role of Early Childhood Consultant. In her tenure as EHS manager, Anne led her program's efforts to build partnerships with local shelters and community organizations in support of families experiencing homelessness. She has particular experience in working with young children with special needs and serves as an Ambassador through the SpecialQuest program. She currently works in partnership with a local hospital, conducting assessments of young children experiencing homelessness and foster care. She holds an MA in Psychology from Southern Connecticut State University.

