Supporting Students’ Educational Opportunities

Homes Within Reach Conference
December 4-6, 2017
Hilton Harrisburg
Pennsylvania’s Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (ECYEH)
McKinney-Vento Federal Act:

A law to protect children experiencing homelessness through educational stability.
The average age of a PERSON experiencing homelessness in the United States is between 9 years and 12 years old.
Did you know…?

Program funds and guidance are provided by the McKinney-Vento Act, originally passed in 1987.

Each of the school districts/LEAs in the state has a Homeless Liaison to serve their homeless students.
Eligibility – Who is Homeless?

Children who lack a **fixed, regular and adequate** nighttime residence –

- Sharing housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (“doubled up”)

- Living in motels, hotels, trailers, camping grounds, tents, barns, cars, abandoned buildings, etc. due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
Living in emergency or transitional shelters

Abandoned, throw-away, runaway children not living with a parent or legal guardian

Migratory children living in above circumstances
How Schools Determine Homelessness:

Was there an event?

- Flood
- Fire
- Mold
- Domestic Violence
- Thrown Out
- Eviction
- Runaway
Legal Definition:

“fixed, regular, adequate” nighttime residence
Determining Eligibility:

Case-by-case determination – all situations are different!
Get as much information as possible… without intimidating the parent or youth.
The Effects of Substandard Housing on Children:

1 out of every 3 people living in severely substandard housing is a CHILD.
The longer people live in poor housing, the more it negatively affects their mental and physical health!
The transportation mandate is for students experiencing homelessness.

This may continue once a student becomes permanently housed and chooses to remain in their school of origin.
Food & Nutrition:

All children identified as homeless by the District Liaison are immediately eligible for free lunch/meals.
Students Experiencing Homelessness:

In PA in 2015-2016…

29,171 children or youth were reported as experiencing homelessness and were ‘served,’ of which

27,724 were ‘enrolled’
Changes to McKinney-Vento

- Preschool is now included in school of origin

- Liaisons must ensure access to Head Start, early intervention (IDEA Part C), and other preschool programs administered by the LEA

- Shelters are to be informed of the local Preschool and Early Intervention Programs and Coordinators
Importance of Cross-System Collaboration

- LEAs are now required to coordinate with community resources, including shelters

- ECYEH regional office staff are members of local housing coalitions, LICCs, LHOTs, CoCs

- Regional office available to provide training to CoCs
Importance of Cross-System Collaboration

- ECYEH regional offices are making arrangements to secure HMIS data, which is especially helpful in identifying younger children in shelters.

- ECYEH regional offices sometimes offer computer equipment to shelters, or facilitate tutoring services onsite, to support academic achievement.
Research on School Mobility…

Students suffer psychologically, socially, and academically from mobility… mobile students are less likely to participate in extracurricular activities and more likely to act out or get into trouble.
Mobility during high school greatly diminishes the likelihood of graduation; study found students who changed high schools even once were less than half as likely as stable students to graduate, even controlling for other factors.
It takes children an average of 4-6 months to recover academically after changing schools.
Supports for Success:

Students who experience homelessness must have access to educational services for which they are eligible:

- special education
- programs for English learners
- gifted and talented programs
- career tech programs
- school nutrition programs
The ECYEH Program Can Help...

Assist with school enrollment and placement.

Provide referrals for clothing, food, shelter, rent, medical services, preschool, housing, advocacy, counseling, etc...
Provide technical assistance to districts.

Implement tutoring and enrichment services in shelters.
Distribute literature related to homelessness.

Provide training/in-service related to the McKinney-Vento Federal Act.
Assist students with obtaining clothing, school supplies, fees, etc.
ECYEH Outreach, Funding and Special Programs

- ECYEH homeless awareness week
- Facebook
- Regional offices and websites (wiki page, moodle training)
- Community service opportunities (for students and/or by students!)
- Community support to fund special needs (items not covered by M-V or Title I)
State and National Resources…

Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (ECYEH) -
http://homeless.center-school.org

Pennsylvania Department of Education –
www.education.pa.gov/homeless

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth -
www.naehcy.org

National Center on Homeless Education -
https://nche.ed.gov/

SchoolHouse Connection –
www.schoolhouseconnection.org
Early Childhood Resources

  (Guidance, tip sheets, and more from US HHS)

- http://naehcy.org/educational-resources/early-childhood
  (Fact sheets, policy briefs, and more from NAEHCY)

  (Resources from NCHE)

- www.schoolhouseconnection.org/learn/early-childhood/
  (Resources from SchoolHouse Connection)
For Assistance Contact:

**Lynda Becker**, Youth Development Coordinator  
Center for Schools and Communities  
Camp Hill, PA  
lbecker@csc.csiu.org  
717-763-1661 X 156

**Sonia Pitzi**, Region 3 ECYEH Coordinator  
Lincoln Intermediate Unit 12  
York, PA  
slpitzi@iu12.org  
717-718-5294