

# **Everything you Need to Know: Enrolling Children who are Homeless in Early Head Start and Head Start**

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# NYS Head Start Collaboration Project Priorities

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## ECAC

NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council  
Data Report (KWIC) [www.nyskwic.org](http://www.nyskwic.org)

## Early Childhood Education

- Pyramid Model State Rollout
- Early Learning Alignment in NYS
- Transitions to Kindergarten
- Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships
- UPK & Head Start MOU
- Disabilities: CPSE MOU
- EC Professional Development

## Child Welfare

- QUALITYstarsNY
- Serving Homeless Children
- NYS Parenting Education Partnership (NYSPEP)

## Health Care

- Healthy Active Living
- Oral health
- Mental Health
- Breastfeeding Friendly

# NYS-TEACHS

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## ▶ What is NYS-TEACHS?

- ▶ Funded by the State Education Department and housed at Advocates for Children of New York
- ▶ Provides technical assistance on homeless education issues to school districts, social service providers, parents, youth, and other professionals.
- ▶ Services include:
  - ▶ Hotline (800-388-2014),
  - ▶ Website: [www.nysteachs.org](http://www.nysteachs.org)
  - ▶ Webinars
  - ▶ Annual Workshops
  - ▶ On-site trainings



## True (A) or False (B)?

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1. McKinney-Vento liaison must identify preschool-age children who are homeless and ensure that receive pre-k, Head Start, and other public preschool services for which they are eligible.
2. Children who are homeless must show proof of immunization before enrolling in a Head Start program.
3. Children in temporary housing must meet the income criteria to be eligible to participate in a Head Start program.
4. Head Start programs must prioritize children who are homeless for enrollment

# A note about semantics...

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- ▶ Temporary housing = homeless
- ▶ People first language:
  - ▶ Children in temporary housing
  - ▶ Children in transitional housing
  - ▶ Children who are homeless
  - ▶ Children experiencing homelessness
- ▶ NOT “homeless children”

# Today's Training

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Did You Know?

Defining Homelessness

Rights and Protections

Recruitment and Prioritization

Determining and Verifying Eligibility

Enrollment without Records

Other early care & education programs

Resources

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# Key Takeaways

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- ▶ Approximately 1 in 10 children under 6 experiences homelessness in NYS
- ▶ Children who are homeless are categorically eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start
- ▶ Early Head Start and Head Start Programs must give children who are homeless:
  - ▶ Priority enrollment
  - ▶ Enrollment without records
- ▶ Early Head Start and Head Start Programs must:
  - ▶ Collect information about housing status of all children seeking enrollment
  - ▶ Verify homeless status
  - ▶ Report homeless status data



# Statistics on Family Homelessness

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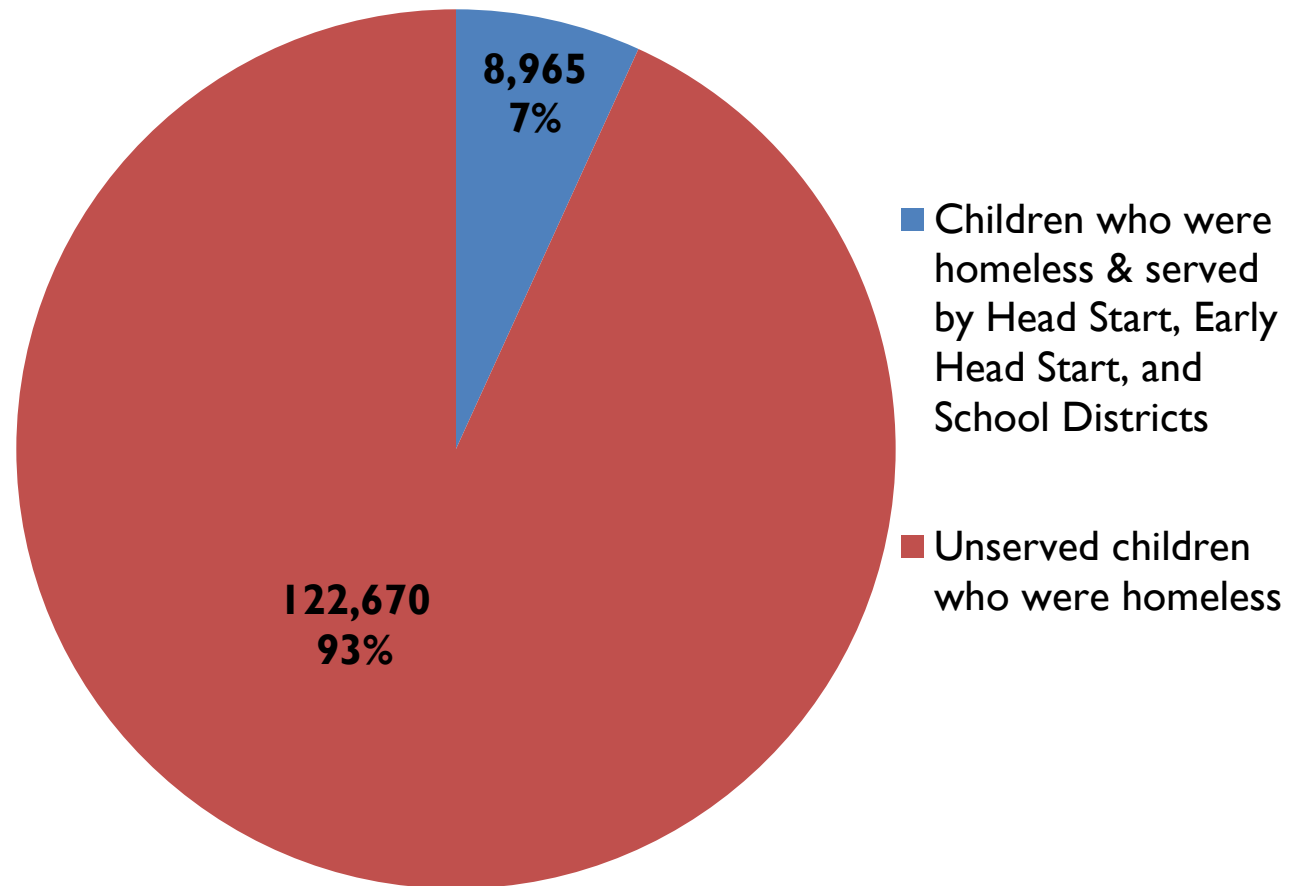
- ▶ In NYS, estimated:
  - ▶ **131,635 children under 6 were homeless**
  - ▶ **1 in 10 children under 6 experienced homelessness**
- ▶ But only,
  - ▶ 3,388 were served by Head Start and Early Head Start
  - ▶ 5,577 were served by school districts (pre-k, preschool special ed)





# Children in Early Learning Programs

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# Poll

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What percentage of children in temporary housing experience a developmental delay?

- A. 25%
- B. 45%
- C. 75%
- D. 95%



# Let's Look at the Numbers...

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**One study found that 75% of children in shelters experience at least ONE developmental delay**

# Barriers to participation

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- ▶ **No seats:** Early childhood education programs are often full and can have long waitlists, which create barriers for children moving to different locations throughout the school year.
- ▶ **No subsidy:** Many programs have dual sources of funding and the family may not have a child care subsidy
- ▶ **Lack of awareness:** Parents may be unaware of the benefits of quality early childhood education or how to register their children
- ▶ **Lack of transportation**
- ▶ **Lack of outreach to families experiencing homelessness**
- ▶ **What else?**



# Head Start & Early Head Start Eligibility

## By Income

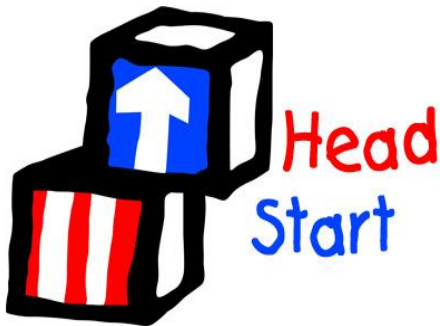
Family size living below 100% poverty

## Categorically Eligible

1. Children in foster care

2. Children who are homeless

3. Children in families receiving public assistance (**TANF or SSI**) are categorically eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services **regardless of income.**



*Once determined eligible an EHS child remains eligible until they transition into their next placement at age three (or 4 if in family child care).*

# Early Head Start and Head Start: **Key Protections** for Children who are **Homeless**

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## ▶ Eligibility

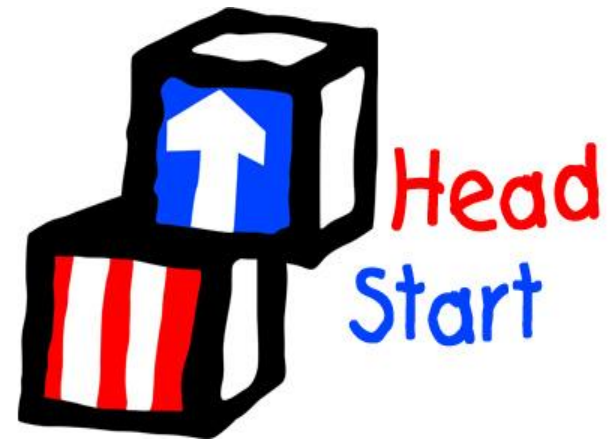
- ▶ Children who meet the definition of **homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act** are **categorically eligible** and
- ▶ get **priority for enrollment**

## ▶ Enrollment without records

- ▶ Must be given **reasonable time** to get necessary records
- ▶ Can participate in the meantime

## ▶ Transportation

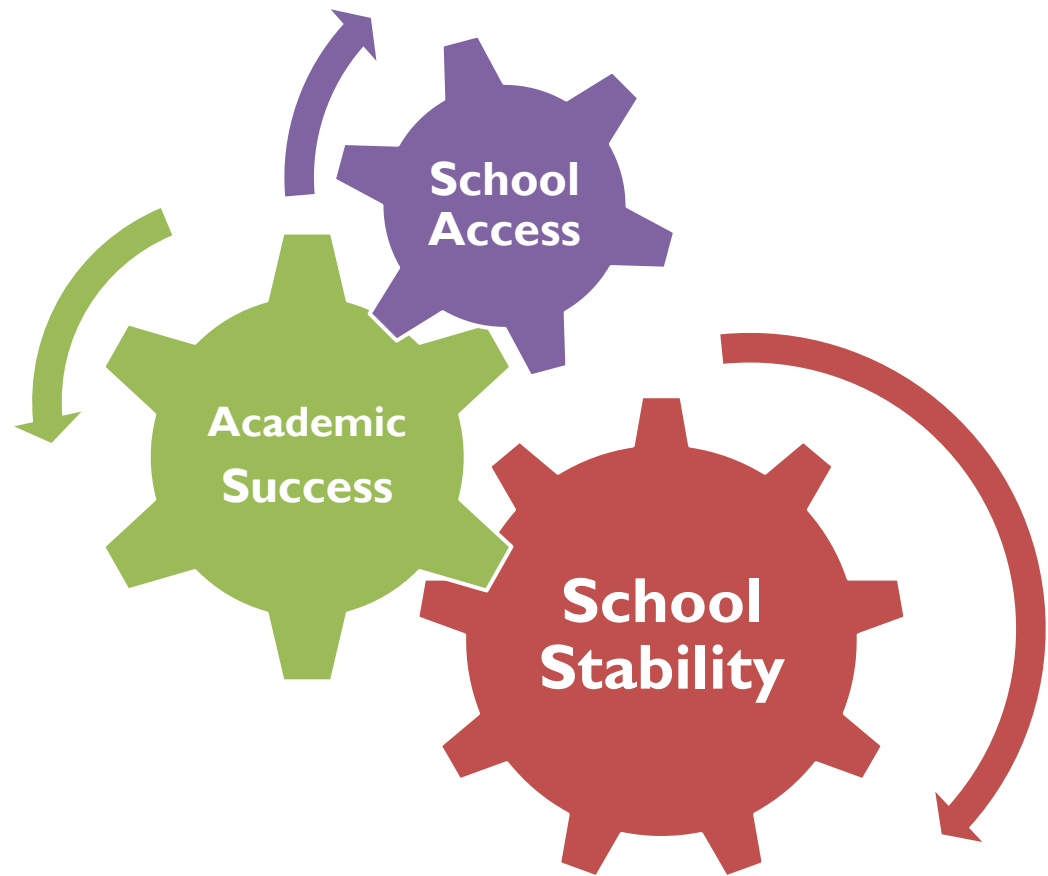
- ▶ NYC: may get MetroCard from Dep't of Ed
- ▶ Outside of NYC: may get transportation from school district if child is in pre-k



# The McKinney-Vento Act: Background

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- ▶ Federal law
- ▶ Enacted in 1987
- ▶ Reauthorized in 2015 as part of Every Child Succeeds Act
- ▶ McKinney-Vento Liaison in every school district



# The McKinney-Vento Act: Services for K-12 (and pre-k starting in SY 2016-17)

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**Transport  
to School  
of Origin**



**Immediate  
Enrollment**



**Free Meals**

**Title I  
Services**





# The McKinney-Vento Act:

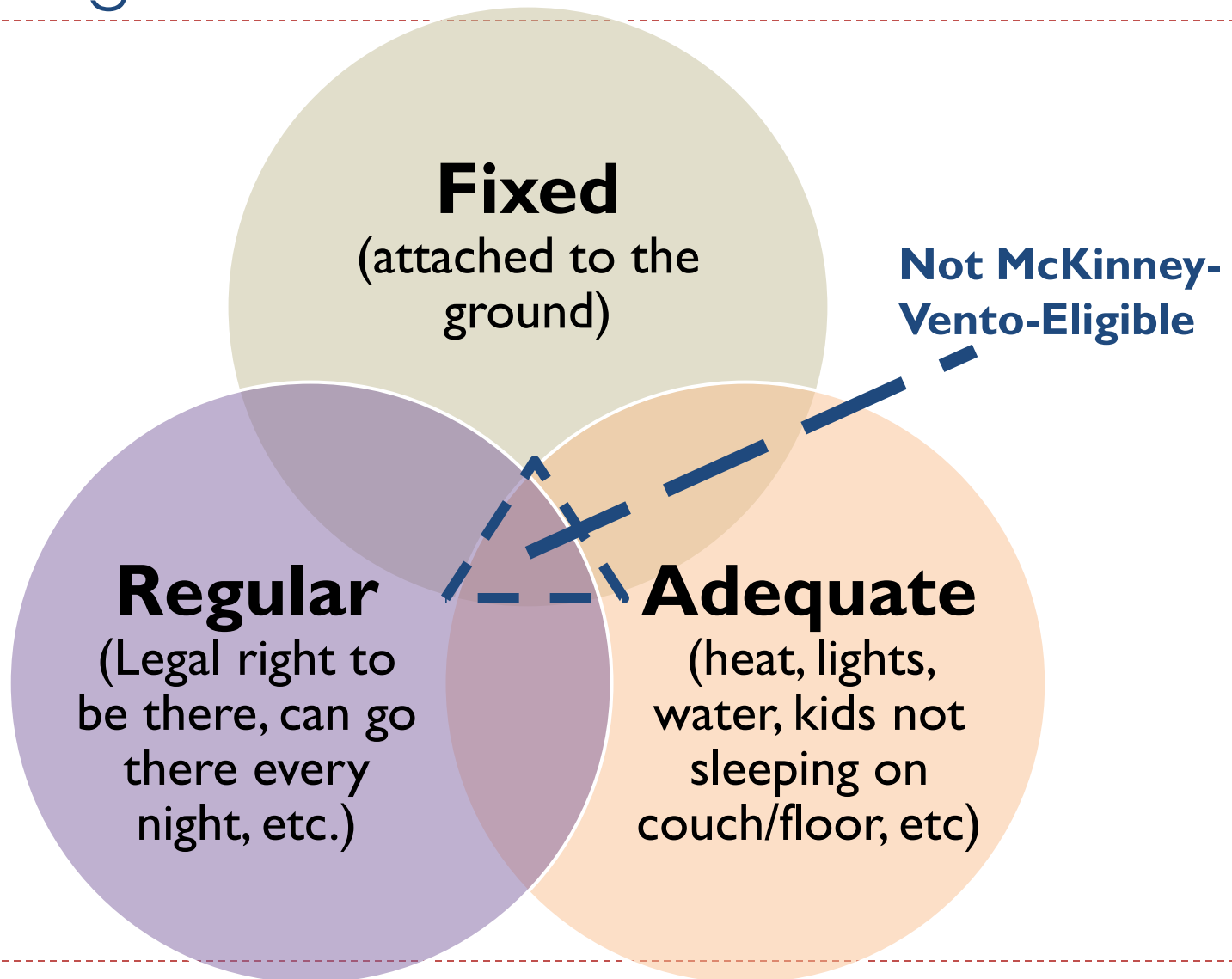
## Definition of homeless:

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- ▶ **Sharing the housing of others** due to loss of housing, economic hardship or other similar reason
- ▶ Living in **motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds** due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- ▶ Living in **emergency or transitional shelters**
- ▶ Abandoned in hospitals
- ▶ Awaiting foster care placement
- ▶ Living in a public or private place not designed for sleeping
- ▶ Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, etc.
- ▶ Migratory living in circumstances described above

# The McKinney-Vento Act: Who's eligible

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# Activity: Case Scenario

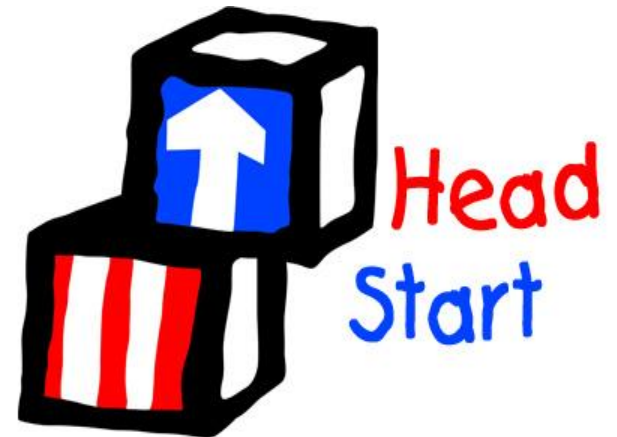
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# Early Head Start and Head Start: Protections for Children who are Homeless

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## ▶ Eligibility

- ▶ children who meet the definition of **homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act** are **categorically eligible** and
- ▶ get **priority for enrollment**



# Recruitment: Outreach

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- ▶ To recruit children in temporary housing, Early Head Start and Head Start programs should collaborate with:
  - ▶ school district **McKinney-Vento liaisons**
    - MV Liaison must ensure children who are homeless receive Pre-K, Head Start, and other public preschool for which they services are eligible
    - Liaison information can be found at: [www.nysteachs.org](http://www.nysteachs.org)



# Recruitment: Outreach

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- ▶ **Cont'd: other potential collaborators**

- ▶ Directors of Temporary Assistance at the local department of social services for information about local shelters:

<https://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.asp>

- ▶ Local domestic violence shelters:  
<http://www.nyscadv.org/statewide-dv-services-listings-by-county/>



# Recruitment: Strategies

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- ▶ Use local data to identify areas where children may be experiencing homelessness
  - ▶ Data about student homelessness available here: [http://nysteachs.org/media/SED\\_SIRS2014\\_15x.xlsx](http://nysteachs.org/media/SED_SIRS2014_15x.xlsx)
  - ▶ Child poverty data available here: [http://nysteachs.org/media/PovertyData\\_StudentCounts.xlsx](http://nysteachs.org/media/PovertyData_StudentCounts.xlsx)
- ▶ Visible outreach to parents
  - ▶ Place in areas frequented by the community – laundromats, libraries, food pantries, grocery stores, office of MV liaison, etc.
- ▶ Community outreach and partnership with community agencies
  - ▶ Work with McKinney-Vento liaisons, Departments of Social Services, shelter sites, religious organizations, community councils, etc.
  - ▶ Encourage parents to participate in open-house events at Head Start programs
- ▶ When engaging parents:
  - ▶ Don't assume they know the benefits of Head Start. Share information about how quality early childhood education programs can help prepare children for kindergarten and beyond!
  - ▶ Many parents in temporary housing are reluctant to be separated from their young children. Share information about the safe and engaging environment your program offers and encourage the parent to visit.
- ▶ **What other strategies would you use?**



# Priority Enrollment

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- ▶ Review your program's **Selection Criteria** to award more points to children in temporary housing
  - ▶ Involve your **Policy Council** (or Delegate Agency Policy Committee)
- ▶ Ensure children in temporary housing are placed at the top of any waiting list



# Poll

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Head Start programs must guarantee spots to children who are homeless.

- A. True
- B. False



# Determining Housing Status: Housing Questionnaire

- ▶ Use a **Housing Questionnaire** for all children who apply to determine who might be temporarily housed.

- ▶ Get **sample questions** to ask parents from the **Determining Eligibility Issue Brief** ([http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det\\_elig.pdf](http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf))

[INSERT NAME AND ADDRESS OF HEAD START PROGRAM/SITE or PROGRAM LETTERHEAD]

## HOUSING QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Gender:  Male  Female Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTE TO PARENTS:

Children who are living in temporary housing can enroll in and begin attending Head Start programs right away, **even if they don't have the documents normally needed** for enrollment (such as proof of address/residency, immunization records, or birth certificate). Parents of children in temporary housing must be given reasonable time to hand in these documents. In the meantime, the children can enroll and participate. Children who are living in temporary housing also get **priority for enrollment**.

The answer you give below will help the Head Start program determine whether your child is in temporary housing and eligible for these benefits.

### Where is your child currently living? (Please check **one** box.)

- With another family or other person because of a loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (also called temporarily living "doubled-up")
- In a shelter
- In a hotel or motel
- In a car, park, bus or train station, or campsite
- Other temporary living situation (Please describe): \_\_\_\_\_
- In permanent housing

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### NOTE TO HEAD START PROGRAM:

If you have determined that the child is living in temporary housing (homeless), complete the Head Start Eligibility Verification form, available here: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/pi/2010/hs-eligibility-verification-form.pdf>.

# Determining Housing Status: Housing Questionnaire

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Does the student's housing fit into one of the listed examples?



Is it fixed, regular AND adequate?



Have questions? Call NYS-TEACHS  
at 800-388-2014 or email Patty  
Persell



# Determining Housing Status: Common Challenges and Solutions

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- ▶ Parents hide their homelessness because of embarrassment or fear.
  - ▶ Do not use the word “homeless;” use “students in temporary housing” or similar language.
- ▶ Parents do not know that their living situation may entitle their child to certain protections.
  - ▶ Be transparent about questions and explain the protections and services available to children who are homeless (e.g., categorical eligibility, priority enrollment).
  - ▶ Use language to describe homelessness that reflects the living arrangement, i.e. “doubled-up” or “staying at a shelter.”
- ▶ Parents don’t want everybody in the site to know about their circumstances and are worried that that information might be used to negatively stereotype their child.
  - ▶ Discuss living situation with parents in an office where other parents and staff can’t overhear.
  - ▶ Share with the parent how the information will be used (e.g., it will only be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis; program is required to report data on temporary housing).
  - ▶ Provide internal trainings to staff in increase awareness and sensitivity around these issues.
- ▶ **What other challenges might there be and how would you address them?**

# Participation Without Records

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- ▶ Early Head Start and Head Start programs must allow children who are homeless to participate even if they don't have the all of the documents normally needed at the time of enrollment
- ▶ Early Head Start Head Start programs must give parents who are homeless a **reasonable amount of time** to get the documents and in the meantime the child must be allowed to participate



# Verification of Homeless Status

Programs must verify the child's temporary housing.  
Examples of documents:

- ▶ Written documentation from a homeless service provider, school personnel, or other service agency that indicates a child is experiencing homelessness,
- ▶ Information from an enrollment or application forms (e.g., Housing Questionnaire),
- ▶ Notes from an interview conducted by program staff, or
- ▶ Statement signed by the parent that his/her child is in temporary housing/homeless (e.g., Housing Questionnaire)

## Head Start Eligibility Verification



1. Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Child's date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
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"/> Homeless <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Care <input type="checkbox"/> Public assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Income ( <i>check box that applies</i> ): <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Below federal poverty guidelines</i> <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"/> 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"/> W-2 <input type="checkbox"/> TANF documentation <input type="checkbox"/> Pay stub or pay envelopes <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment	<input type="checkbox"/> Written statements from employers <input type="checkbox"/> Foster care reimbursement <input type="checkbox"/> SSI documentation <input type="checkbox"/> Other If Other, please explain: _____
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Documentation of no income: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Staff signature:  
6. Staff name:

Date of eligibility verification:  
Title:

# Activity: Recruitment

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# Serving Children who are Homeless

	Pre-K	Early Head Start and Head Start	Child Care (CCDF)
<b>Eligibility</b>	Must meet same criteria as permanently housed children	Categorically eligible	Eligible under “protective services” category (draft State Plan)
<b>Priority for Enrollment</b>	None. But districts get class-size waiver to accommodate 21 <sup>st</sup> child in the class if the child is homeless	Must prioritize children who are categorically eligible	Must prioritize children who are homeless (NPRM)
<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Immediate enrollment</b> even if the parent doesn’t have the records normally needed	Give parents <b>reasonable time</b> to get needed documents and allow children to participate in the mean time	Give parents of children who are homeless <b>grace period</b> to get needed documents and allow children to receive services in the mean time
<b>Record keeping and reporting</b>	Must use <b>Questionnaire</b> and report on housing status and type of temporary housing for every child identified as homeless	Must <b>verify that child is homeless</b> and <b>report</b> on number of children enrolled who are homeless	Must <b>report</b> on whether children receiving services are homeless



# A Word about Transportation

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- ▶ In NYC, parents may get a MetroCard to accompany their children to Head Start. Parents should contact the NYC Students in Temporary Housing Content Expert:



<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/6C02DF12-F56D-4024-BE84->

[EA5B6A51A7B9/0/STHContactInformationFORDISTRIBUTION\\_RCedits.pdf](http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/6C02DF12-F56D-4024-BE84-EA5B6A51A7B9/0/STHContactInformationFORDISTRIBUTION_RCedits.pdf)

- ▶ Under MV, all school districts must provide transportation for children in temporary housing to attend the school of origin
- ▶ **Starting in SY 2016-17, this will include pre-k.**



# Key Takeaways

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- ▶ Approximately 1 in 10 children under 6 experience homelessness in NYS
- ▶ Children who are homeless are categorically eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start
- ▶ Early Head Start and Head Start Programs must give children who are homeless:
  - ▶ Priority enrollment
  - ▶ Enrollment without records
- ▶ Early Head Start and Head Start Programs must:
  - ▶ Collect information about housing status of all children seeking enrollment
  - ▶ Verify homeless status
  - ▶ Report homeless status data



# Resources

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## **MV Liaisons**

- ▶ **NYS McKinney-Vento Liaison Contact Information:** <http://nysteachs.org/liaisons/>
- ▶ **NYC Liaisons/Content Experts:** <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/6C02DF12-F56D-4024-BE84-EA5B6A51A7B9/0/CopyofSTHContactInformationFORDISTRIBUTION.pdf>

## **Forms**

- ▶ **Housing Questionnaire:**  
[http://nysteachs.org/media/Housing Questionnaire for HeadStart%20Programs 1 12 16.docx](http://nysteachs.org/media/Housing%20Questionnaire%20for%20HeadStart%20Programs%201%2012%2016.docx)
- ▶ **Tip Sheet:**
  - ▶ **Electronic version:**  
[http://nysteachs.org/media/Tip Sheet for HeadStartPrograms 1 13 16 electronicversion .pdf](http://nysteachs.org/media/Tip%20Sheet%20for%20HeadStartPrograms%201%2013%2016%20electronicversion.pdf)
  - ▶ **Print version:**  
[http://nysteachs.org/media/Tip Sheet for HeadStartPrograms 1 13 16 print version.pdf](http://nysteachs.org/media/Tip%20Sheet%20for%20HeadStartPrograms%201%2013%2016%20print%20version.pdf)
- ▶ **Head Start Verification Form:** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/family/Homelessness/hmls/enrollment/docs/10-Head-Start-Eligibility-Verification-form.pdf>

# Resources

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## **Other Resources**

- ▶ ***The Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters*** from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
  - ▶ Helps shelter staff create shelters that are safe and developmentally appropriate for young children
  - ▶ <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ecd/interagency-projects/ece-services-for-homeless-children/self-assessment-tool-family-shelters>
- ▶ ***Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile from the U.S. Department of***
  - ▶ Includes NYS Profile on young children experiencing homelessness
  - ▶ [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/homelessness\\_profile\\_package\\_with\\_blanks\\_for\\_printing\\_508.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/homelessness_profile_package_with_blanks_for_printing_508.pdf)

# Resources

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- ▶ **Head Start 15-minute In-service Suites:**  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/practice/iss-library.html>
- ▶ **Engaging Interactions and Environments: Social and Emotion Support**
  - ▶ [Fostering Connections](#)
  - ▶ [Being Aware of Children's Needs](#)
  - ▶ [Giving Children Responsibilities](#)
- ▶ **Well-Organized Classrooms**
  - ▶ [Classroom Transitions](#)
  - ▶ [Schedules and Routines](#)
- ▶ **Behavior Guidance**
  - ▶ [Stating Behavioral Expectations](#)
  - ▶ [Creating Classroom Rules](#)
  - ▶ [Redirecting Behavior](#)
  - ▶ [Problem Solving in the Moment](#)
- ▶ **Head Start-Trauma Smart video:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXzKVpiSzH8&feature=youtu.be>

# Thank You!

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