

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Make Your Early Childhood Program a Resource

Children experiencing homelessness face an increased risk of experiencing developmental delays, physical health and social-emotional problems (McCoy-Roth, Mackintosh & Murphey, 2012). Early childhood, specifically infancy, is the stage of life correlated with the highest risk of residing in a homeless shelter (US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2012). High quality early education, including trusting relationships with early childhood professionals, can buffer children and families from the challenges associated with homelessness by supporting children's learning and development in secure, stable, and nurturing environments. Overwhelmed parents and caregivers can more easily focus on meeting their goals toward stable housing, employment/training, and other services if they know their child is safe and receiving quality care.

In 2019, almost 8,000 children <6 experienced homelessness in KS (USDE).

Kansas Resources

- You may receive assistance determining whether a child's circumstances meet the definition of homelessness or other related questions by contacting the National Center for Homeless Education Helpline at (800) 308-2145.
- Get connected locally with the Kansas Coordinator for Homeless Education and your local Homeless Education Liaison or contact the Kansas Department of Education at (800) 203-9462.
- Child Care Assistance is available to Kansas families who need help paying for child care costs. Families experiencing homelessness may receive extra time to provide required documentation such as immunization or a health assessment. Learn more at www.dcf.ks.gov, click on Child Care, or call (888) 369-4777.
- Head Start and Early Head Start provide services for low income pregnant women or families with children ages birth to 5, foster care children, and families with children who are experiencing any of the following; disabilities, homelessness, or receiving public assistance. [//www.ksheadstart.org/locations](http://www.ksheadstart.org/locations).

Identifying Families of Young Children Experiencing Homelessness

If you are wondering whether a family you know, who is struggling with housing, may be eligible to receive support for families experiencing homelessness, review the definition of homelessness established in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. It defines the term "homeless children and youths" as lacking "a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence..." and provides specific circumstances as examples such as, sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds "due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations," children living in emergency or transitional shelters, abandoned in hospitals, a primary nighttime residence that is not designed for use as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. Read the full text at [-https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/](https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/)



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References: McCoy-Roth, M., Mackintosh, B.B., & Murphey, D. (2012, February). *When the bough breaks: The effects of homelessness on young children*; *Child Trends: Early Childhood Highlights*; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2012, September). *The 2012 Homelessness Report (AHAR) to Congress*; United States Department of Education (USDE): *Early Childhood Homelessness, State Profiles* (2021).