

# Module 1: Overview of Family Homelessness Transcript

Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness  
An Interactive Learning Series for Early Childhood Professionals

## Welcome

This module is intended for professionals in Head Start, Early Head Start and child care, including early childhood and school-age child care providers, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff, and other key stakeholders.

## Module Features

Before you get started, take a moment to review the features of this module. Select the numbered buttons on this page to learn more about each feature. When you are finished, choose the "Next" button.

Select the **Menu** tab to:

- See a drop-down list of the module's contents
- Jump to a particular section by selecting its title
- Check your progress by selecting "Completion Status"
- Access your Certificate of Completion once you have completed all sections of this module

Select the **Transcript** tab to open a printable text version of this module.

Choose the **Resources** tab for a printable list of reference citations.

Select the **Federal Policies** tab for links to sections of federal legislation and regulations related to family homelessness.

The **page numbers** show how many pages you have completed in a specific section, and how many you have left to complete.

Select the **"Play"** button to play the narration on each slide.

Select the **"Pause"** button to pause the narration on each slide.

Choose **"Previous"** to return to the previous slide.

Choose **"Next"** to go to the next slide.

## Module Instructions

- Each module takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. You can spend as much or as little time as you like on a module, depending on your level of experience.
- If you are using your own computer, you can stop a module and come back to it later; the program will remember where you left off. However, if you are using a computer that others will also use to access the learning series, plan to finish the module in one sitting.
- Select the Transcript tab to download or print the text version of the module.
- Select the Federal Policies tab for direct links to the federal legislation and regulations referenced in this module. You can bookmark these links for future reference.
- Select the Resources tab to view the full list of reference citations. A number at the end of a sentence indicates a reference citation.
- When you select a link within the module or through one of the tabs, the page will open in a new tab. To return to the module, select the module tab.
- When you finish all sections of this module, you can download a Certificate of Completion.

## Overview of Family Homelessness

Homelessness is a circumstance that families may experience when they are faced with such challenges as extreme poverty and lack of affordable housing. It can also occur when a family's current living situation becomes unsafe or unstable.

Homelessness is also a state of vulnerability for children and families. It exposes families to physical, mental, and developmental risks. Families experiencing homelessness often keep their situation and circumstances hidden from friends, professionals, and others because they feel ashamed or embarrassed.

For this reason, it is important for professionals to understand the definition of "homeless children and youth." It is included in Section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act [42 U.S.C. § 11435a(2)], and is hereinafter referred to as the "McKinney-Vento Act's definition." Staff also must determine in a sensitive manner whether a family's situation meets that definition.

Early childhood and school-age child care professionals can provide needed support to children and families. They help reduce the impact of homelessness by building close, positive, and trusting relationships with families.

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

## What We Know

Here is what we know about young children and families who experience homelessness:

- The number of young children experiencing homelessness has reached a historic high.<sup>1</sup> According to recent federal data, more than a million children under the age of 6 were identified as experiencing homelessness.<sup>2</sup>
- Children who are experiencing homelessness have more developmental, health, emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges than their peers.<sup>3</sup>
- Homelessness can create barriers to participating in early childhood and school-age child care programs. Such programs can help lessen the negative effects of homelessness on children and assist families to succeed.<sup>4</sup> Moving frequently is an example of a barrier

## Quality Programs Make a Difference

Quality early childhood and school-age child care programs offer children and their families services and opportunities to grow and thrive. These services are especially important for children and families experiencing homelessness.

Head Start, Early Head Start, early childhood, and school-age child care programs that receive funding through Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidies are guided by federal regulations to identify and prioritize children and families experiencing homelessness.

The goal of these federal regulations is to ensure that more children are enrolled in quality programs. This ensures that children and their families receive the services that support their success.

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

## Language Matters

"Homeless" describes a situation; it does not define the people in that situation. We show families respect by speaking of "children and families experiencing homelessness" rather than "homeless children and families." People-first language acknowledges the individual before the situation they may be experiencing.

However, you will note that the phrase "homeless children and youth" is used in the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless.

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

## Family Homelessness Knowledge Check

Find out what you already know with the Family Homelessness Knowledge Check. Choose the version that most closely aligns with your interests.

- Head Start and Early Head Start
- Child Care and Development Fund

### Family Homelessness Knowledge Check: Head Start and Early Head Start

There are seven questions in this Knowledge Check for Head Start and Early Head Start. Answer true or false.

- Use the numbered buttons to go through the questions in any order.
- A checkmark will appear under each number once you have answered the question.
- Once you have completed all seven questions, select the "Next" button to continue.

<b>Question 1: Most families with children who are experiencing homelessness live in shelters.</b>	
<p><b>Correct! The answer is false.</b></p> <p>Most families with children who are experiencing homelessness do not live in shelters. In fact, the majority of children who are identified by early childhood and school-age child care programs as experiencing homelessness temporarily stay in motels or with others because they have nowhere else to go.<sup>5</sup></p>	<p><b>That is not correct; the answer is false.</b></p> <p>Most families with children who are experiencing homelessness do not live in shelters. In fact, the majority of children who are identified by early childhood and school-age child care programs as experiencing homelessness temporarily stay in motels or with others because they have nowhere else to go.<sup>5</sup></p>
See Appendix C for reference citations.	

<b>Question 2: There is a time limit on how long a child may be considered homeless and eligible for services.</b>	
<p><b>Correct! The answer is false.</b></p> <p>As long as the family’s circumstances meets the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youth," the child is eligible for services.</p>	<p><b>That is not correct; the answer is false.</b></p> <p>As long as the family’s circumstances meets the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youth," the child is eligible for services.</p>
See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.	

**Question 3: A family with two very young children who are staying with other people because they have lost their housing would not be considered homeless.**

**Correct! The answer is false.**

Families who stay temporarily with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason are considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youth" used by Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

**That is not correct; the answer is false.**

Families who stay temporarily with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason are considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youth" used by Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

**Question 4: It helps children's learning and development when they move frequently and experience many different programs.**

**Correct! The answer is false.**

Moving frequently between programs may disrupt the continuity of relationships and learning experiences that young children need for optimal development.<sup>6</sup>

**That is not correct; the answer is false.**

Moving frequently between programs may disrupt the continuity of relationships and learning experiences that young children need for optimal development.<sup>6</sup>

See Appendix C for reference citations.

**Question 5: Families who are experiencing homelessness do not need to provide proof of income for their children to be determined eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services.**

**Correct! The answer is true.**

Children are eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services when they meet the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youth." Families do not need to provide proof of income.

**That is not correct; the answer is true.**

Children are eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start services when they meet the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youth." Families do not need to provide proof of income.

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

**Question 6: A child experiencing homelessness must be prioritized for Head Start and Early Head Start services.**

**Correct! The answer is true.**

The Head Start Program Performance Standards require programs to identify children experiencing homelessness and prioritize them for enrollment.

**That is not correct; the answer is true.**

The Head Start Program Performance Standards require programs to identify children experiencing homelessness and prioritize them for enrollment.

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

**Question 7: Head Start and Early Head Start programs must conduct outreach activities to identify young children experiencing homelessness.**

**Correct! The answer is true.**

Head Start and Early Head Start programs must make specific efforts to seek out children experiencing homelessness.

**That is not correct; the answer is true.**

Head Start and Early Head Start programs must make specific efforts to seek out children experiencing homelessness.

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

## **Family Homelessness Knowledge Check: Child Care and Development Fund**

There are eight questions in this Knowledge Check for CCDF-subsidized programs. Answer true or false.

- Use the numbered buttons to go through the questions in any order.
- A checkmark will appear under each number once you have answered the question.
- Once you have completed all seven questions, select the "Next" button to continue.

**Question 1: Most families with children who are experiencing homelessness live in shelters.**

**That is not correct; the answer is false.**

Most families with children who are experiencing homelessness do not live in shelters. In fact, the majority of children who are identified by early childhood and school-age child care programs as experiencing homelessness temporarily stay in motels or with others because they have nowhere else to go.<sup>7</sup>

**Correct! The answer is false.**

Most families with children who are experiencing homelessness do not live in shelters. In fact, the majority of children who are identified by early childhood and school-age child care programs as experiencing homelessness temporarily stay in motels or with others because they have nowhere else to go.<sup>7</sup>

See Appendix C for reference citations.

**Question 2: There is a time limit on how long a child may be considered homeless.**

**Correct! The answer is false.**

A child is considered homeless for as long as his or her family's circumstances meet the federal definition of homeless that is used to determine eligibility. Federal regulations require CCDF Lead Agencies to adopt the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youth."

**That is not correct; the answer is false.**

A child is considered homeless for as long as his or her family's circumstances meet the federal definition of homeless that is used to determine eligibility. Federal regulations require CCDF Lead Agencies to adopt the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youth."

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

**Question 3: A family with two very young children who are staying with other people because they have lost their housing would not be considered homeless.**

**Correct! The answer is false.**

Families who stay temporarily with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason are considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youth" used by early childhood and school-age child care programs that receive funding through CCDF subsidies.

**That is not correct; the answer is false.**

Families who stay temporarily with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason are considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youth" used by early childhood and school-age child care programs that receive funding through CCDF subsidies.

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

**Question 4: It helps children's learning and development when they move frequently and experience many different programs.**

**Correct! The answer is false.**

Moving frequently between programs may disrupt the continuity of relationships and learning experiences that young children need for optimal development.<sup>8</sup>

**That is not correct; the answer is false.**

Moving frequently between programs may disrupt the continuity of relationships and learning experiences that young children need for optimal development.<sup>8</sup>

See Appendix C for reference citations.

**Question 5: CCDF Lead Agencies must prioritize children experiencing homelessness for child care services.**

**Correct! The answer is true.**

CCDF regulations require that Lead Agencies give priority for services to children who are experiencing homelessness. It is up to Lead Agencies to determine how to prioritize these services to children. Some states have placed children experiencing homelessness higher on waiting lists for services, waived co-payments for families, or provided such financial supports as exempting the housing assistance for these families from their income determination.

**That is not correct; the answer is true.**

CCDF regulations require that Lead Agencies give priority for services to children who are experiencing homelessness. It is up to Lead Agencies to determine how to prioritize these services to children. Some states have placed children experiencing homelessness higher on waiting lists for services, waived co-payments for families, or provided such financial supports as exempting the housing assistance for these families from their income determination.

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.



**Question 6: Families experiencing homelessness must provide immunization and other required health and safety documents before enrolling their child.**

**Correct! The answer is false.**

CCDF Lead Agencies—in consultation with the state, territory, or tribal health agency—are required to establish a grace period for families experiencing homelessness to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements. After an initial eligibility determination, programs that receive CCDF funding must honor the grace period and allow the children to receive services while families are obtaining required documents.

**That is not correct; the answer is false.**

CCDF Lead Agencies—in consultation with the state, territory, or tribal health agency—are required to establish a grace period for families experiencing homelessness to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements. After an initial eligibility determination, programs that receive CCDF funding must honor the grace period and allow the children to receive services while families are obtaining required documents.

**Question 7: Specific outreach to families and children experiencing homelessness is outside the scope of responsibility for CCDF Lead Agencies.**

**Correct! The answer is false.**

CCDF Lead Agencies must use funds for specific outreach to families experiencing homelessness. Outreach may include activities such as assigning staff to take applications and distribute information at homeless shelters.

**That is not correct; the answer is false.**

CCDF Lead Agencies must use funds for specific outreach to families experiencing homelessness. Outreach may include activities such as assigning staff to take applications and distribute information at homeless shelters.

**Question 8: The CCDF Lead Agency must make provisions for training and technical assistance (T/TA) related to children experiencing homelessness and their families.**

**Correct! The answer is true.**

CCDF regulations require Lead Agencies to provide T/TA for providers and appropriate Lead Agency staff about identifying and serving children experiencing homelessness and their families. Staff should check with their CCDF Lead Agency for T/TA opportunities.

**That is not correct; the answer is true.**

CCDF regulations require Lead Agencies to provide T/TA for providers and appropriate Lead Agency staff about identifying and serving children experiencing homelessness and their families. Staff should check with their CCDF Lead Agency for T/TA opportunities.

See Appendix A for more information on Federal Policies or Appendix B to view the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless.

## Completion Status

To complete Module 1, review all sections listed below. If a section is not checked, use the Menu tab to return to that section.

- ✓ Family Homelessness Overview
- ✓ Knowledge Check: Head Start and Early Head Start or Child Care and Development Fund

Once all sections are checked, select the "Next" button to continue to your Certificate of Completion.

## Certificate of Completion

Congratulations! You have completed Module 1: Overview of Family Homelessness.

To access your certificate, select the "Open Your Certificate" button. A PDF document will open in a separate tab. Enter your name and the date on the certificate. Print or save the certificate to your computer.

## Appendix A: Federal Legislation and Regulations Related to Family Homelessness

<b>Federal Legislation and Regulations Related to Family Homelessness</b>	
<b>McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act</b>	<a href="https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/">https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/</a>
<b>Child Care and Development Fund Reauthorization</b>	<a href="https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/ccdf-reauthorization">https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/ccdf-reauthorization</a>
<b>McKinney-Vento Law Into Practice Brief Series Supporting Homeless Children and Youth with Disabilities: Legislative Provisions in the McKinney-Vento Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</b>	<a href="https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/idea.pdf">https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/idea.pdf</a>
<b>Head Start Program Performance Standards</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii</a>
<b>Program Operations, 45 CFR § 1302</b>	
<b>Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance, 45 CFR § 1302(A)</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-subpart-eligibility-recruitment-selection-enrollment-attendance">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-subpart-eligibility-recruitment-selection-enrollment-attendance</a>
<b>Determining community strengths, needs, and resources, 45 CFR § 1302.11</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-11-determining-community-strengths-needs-resources">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-11-determining-community-strengths-needs-resources</a>
<b>Determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility, 45 CFR § 1302.12</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-12-determining-verifying-documenting-eligibility">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-12-determining-verifying-documenting-eligibility</a>
<b>Recruitment of children, 45 CFR § 1302.13</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-13-recruitment-children">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-13-recruitment-children</a>
<b>Selection process, 45 CFR § 1302.14</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-14-selection-process">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-14-selection-process</a>
<b>Enrollment, 45 CFR § 1302.15</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-15-enrollment">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-15-enrollment</a>
<b>Attendance, 45 CFR § 1302.16</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-16-attendance">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-16-attendance</a>
<b>Family and Community Engagement Program Services, 45 CFR § 1302(E)</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-subpart-e-family-community-engagement-program-services">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-subpart-e-family-community-engagement-program-services</a>
<b>Community partnerships and coordination with other early childhood and education programs, 45 CFR § 1302.53</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-53-community-partnerships-coordination-other-early-childhood-education">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-53-community-partnerships-coordination-other-early-childhood-education</a>
<b>Transition Services, 45 CFR § 1302 (G)</b>	
<b>Transitions between programs, 45 CFR § 1302.72 (a)</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-subpart-g-transition-services">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-subpart-g-transition-services</a>
<b>Definitions, 45 CFR § 1305</b>	
<b>Terms, 45 CFR § 1305.2</b>	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1305-2-terms">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1305-2-terms</a>

## Appendix B: The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless

### The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (per Title IX, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act) defines homeless as follows:

The term "homeless children and youths"--

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); 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 adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;\* (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 (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C)); (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 (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

\*Per Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, "awaiting foster care placement" was removed from the definition of homeless on December 10, 2016; the only exception to his removal is that "covered states" have until December 10, 2017 to remove "awaiting foster care placement" from their definition of homeless.

View the full text of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act:

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title42/chapter119/subchapter6/partB&edition=prelim>

## Appendix C: Module 1 Reference Citations

Module 1 Reference Citations
<p><sup>1</sup> Bassuk, E. L., DeCandia, C. J., Beach, C. A., &amp; Berman, F. (2014). <i>America's youngest outcasts: A report card on child homelessness</i>. Waltham, MA: The National Center on Family Homelessness at American Institutes for Research.</p>
<p><sup>2</sup> Administration for Children and Families. (2016, January). <i>Early childhood homelessness in the United States: 50-state profile</i>.</p>
<p><sup>3</sup> McCoy-Roth, M., Mackintosh, B. B., &amp; Murphey, D. (2012, February). When the bough breaks: The effects of homelessness on young children. <i>Child Trends: Early Childhood Highlights</i>, 3(1).</p>
<p><sup>4</sup> National Center for Homeless Education &amp; National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. (2013, Fall). <i>Early care and education for children experiencing homelessness</i>.</p>
<p><sup>5</sup> Child Trends Data Bank. (2015, October). <i>Homeless children and youth: Indicators on children and youth</i>.</p>
<p><sup>6</sup> National Center for Homeless Education and National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. (2013, Fall). <i>Early care and education for children experiencing homelessness</i>.</p>
<p><sup>7</sup> Child Trends Data Bank. (2015, October). Homeless children and youth: Indicators on children and youth.</p>
<p><sup>8</sup> National Center for Homeless Education and National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. (2013, Fall). <i>Early care and education for children experiencing homelessness</i>.</p>