



“Deeper Dives” for Schools

Practical Strategies to Serve Young Children Experiencing Homelessness

3. Streamlining enrollment and participation

Cross-train staff so every program is able to begin the enrollment and/or screening process for other programs, providing a single point of entry for early care and education.

- Early intervention and early childhood special education programs can provide training(s) on their screening tools to other early childhood providers, shelters and agencies serving families. Those programs can have the screening tools available on site. With training and supportive relationships with providers, those programs can assist the family to get the screening and referrals completed.
 - Early intervention and early childhood special education programs can give other programs a direct phone line to someone who can help them if they get stuck in the process somewhere or need help.
- McKinney-Vento liaisons can provide housing questionnaires and school enrollment forms to early childhood programs and shelters, and train them to provide pre-enrollment for families with school-age children and to connect parents to the liaison immediately.
- Child Care Resource and Referral programs can train other early childhood providers and McKinney-Vento liaisons about how to help families access child care subsidies, including triggering the prioritization for families experiencing homelessness.
- Head Start and preschool programs can share their applications and contact McKinney-Vento liaisons and shelters immediately when they have an opening.

Make information and applications as accessible as possible.

- Make applications and screening tools available both online (including mobile-accessible) and in hard copy.
- Create a single source of contact information for all programs. Use our [Pathways to Partnership tool](#) as a guide.
 - Include McKinney-Vento liaisons, child care resources, Head Start and Early Head Start, preschool, early intervention, and early childhood special education programs contacts.
 - Post the information online, in schools, and in public locations, such as shelters, motels, libraries, health clinics, campgrounds, laundromats, and soup kitchens.
 - Be sure the contact information will connect parents to a person who can answer questions and provide immediate assistance.
 - Use person first language (families experiencing homelessness vs. homeless family), and be sure the information provided represents families respectfully. Be mindful of photos and images used on information sheets.

Share information appropriately to expedite services.

- Obtain releases of information at the point of intake or referral so you can talk with schools, providers, early care and education programs, and other agencies and stay connected with the family.
- With families’ permission, collect information that will streamline their enrollment in other programs and share it with programs for which children are eligible.
- Establish a system where shelters provide information daily about current residents and whether they have young children or school-age children.