Appendix O: Research and Information on Homeless Education

As the field of homeless education continues to grow and develop, so does the information available on the educational challenges faced by students experiencing homelessness and the practices that support these students in overcoming these challenges. This appendix contains the NCHE Annotated Bibliography of Homeless Education Resources: 2006. This bibliography lists and describes a selection of publications released in 2006 that deal with issues related to the lives and education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Appendix O contains:

■ NCHE Annotated Bibliography of Homeless Education Resources: 2006

Additional Resources

■ NCHE Information by Topic: Research on Homeless Education webpage; visit http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/research.php: This webpage provides access to recent studies dedicated to exploring and improving the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

■ Homeless Education Bibliography of Resources (Revised Fall 2006); available for downloading at http://www.wm.edu/hope/infobrief/bibliography.pdf: This bibliography from Project HOPE-Virginia provides a listing of homeless education resources categorized by type of resource. Resources include articles and reports, books and chapters from child and young adult books, audiovisual materials, curricula and resource kits, and legal sources.

■ Students on the Move: Reaching and Teaching Highly Mobile Children and Youth; available for downloading at http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php: This handbook, a joint publication of the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, synthesizes research on the education of various subpopulations of students who tend to be highly mobile and explores commonalities and differences among these groups. Subpopulations explored include migratory children and youth, children and youth experiencing homelessness, children of military families, and
students experiencing mobility on a global scale.

- **Unaccompanied and Homeless Youth Review of Literature (1995-2005); available for downloading at [http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php](http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php):** This NCHE review is based on literature published between 1995 and 2005 on issues concerning unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. It provides an overview of the challenges these young people face and includes research about why they leave their homes, how they live after leaving, and what interventions are being used to assist them.
The following resources released in 2006 were compiled from a variety of sources related to issues affecting homeless children, youth, and families. These include scholarly books and periodicals, governmental publications, and national organizations. Although this is not an exhaustive list, the intention was to include information that would inform, educate, and empower those who serve homeless children, youth, and families.


The Annie E. Casey Foundation seeks to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that meet the needs of vulnerable children and families more effectively. Its 17th annual data book provides state-by-state statistics related to the educational, health, and economic conditions of children in America. The book’s focus is "Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care: Strengthening a Critical Resource to Help Young Children Succeed." It concentrates on improving early childhood development opportunities (especially child care issues) for young children living in low-income neighborhoods so more of them will start school healthy and prepared to learn and succeed.


This article from the Department of Justice’s Community Oriented Police Services is part of a Problem Specific Guide series designed to help police officers improve their investigation and handling of specific situations. It uses the results of research studies and interviews to explain the factors leading to runaway episodes such as why, when, and where runaways go, how long they’re gone, and the issues they face while they’re gone. Included in a guide to help understand the local runaway problem is a list of questions to ask, a review of strategies, and a guide to judge the effectiveness of current local responses.

Although written for police officers, many of the recommended strategies include collaboration with schools and social service agencies. The collaborative suggestions along with the background information on runaways make this a resource useful to anyone working with young people.


Dr. Necati Engec, Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership, at South Carolina State University, investigated the relationship between student mobility and student performance and behavior using criterion-referenced test (CRT) and norm-referenced test (NRT) data indexes from the 1998-1999 school year. Results showed that as the mobility of
students increased within the school year, their test performance on the CRT and the NRT decreased. Also, suspension rates were high for students who had changed schools within a school year. Engec concludes that students who experience single or multiple transfers within a school year should receive particular attention because they are likely to have discipline and performance problems.


Chester Hartman, Director of Research at the Poverty & Race Research Action Council in Washington, DC, focuses on the serious and negative consequences associated with students changing schools during the academic year. Although poor and minority students (including homeless, immigrant, and foster children) are particularly prone to higher mobility rates, there are also detrimental outcomes for stable students, as well as teachers, school administrators, and the entire educational system.

Hartman notes several best practices, including federal and local programs, and makes recommendations for state and local governments and school districts. In addition to reducing mobility, creating smoother transitions, and improving data collection, he concludes with suggestions that school districts collaborate with child welfare and housing personnel to serve highly mobile students.


Jozefowicz-Simbeni is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at Wayne State University. Israel is with the Department of Child and Family Studies, Florida Mental Health Institute, at the University of South Florida in Tampa. Their article examines the needs, strengths, and risk factors of homeless children and families. It summarizes key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act and cites barriers to the Act’s successful implementation. Highlighting the roles and functions of school social workers (who may also be their school district’s local homeless education liaison), the authors propose ways that social workers can have a significant impact on homeless children and youth through a more successful implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. They conclude with suggestions to expand the services that social workers provide followed by an evaluation of the effectiveness of those services.


The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) identifies and promotes strategies that prevent child poverty in the United States and that improve the lives of low-income children and families. Both authors of this NCCP brief have participated in many studies and projects dealing with low-income children.

This brief is based on a meeting of policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and advocates who explored the challenges and opportunities for focusing more attention on the most
vulnerable families while continuing to expand access to supportive programs for all families with very young children. It focuses on the special challenges of helping babies and toddlers whose earliest experiences, environments, and relationships expose them to such “toxic” stress that their growing brains cannot integrate their experiences in ways that promote growth and learning. The authors describe ten strategies that can be implemented to ensure these children and families are connected with sufficiently intensive supports to promote early school success despite facing multiple barriers.

Julie Landsman, a visiting professor and consultant at various schools, explores the qualities that enable teachers to work effectively with students who are homeless or living in extreme poverty. She advises creativity, flexibility, and compassionate advocacy and gives effective strategies, which include setting high expectations, believing in the students’ potential, and serving as the bridge to move students from one level to the next. She says successful teachers are flexible and find ways to connect school work to students’ life concerns. She then shares how teachers can find out about students’ home and personal lives in a sensitive manner.

Although written for teachers, this article has practical advice for anyone working directly with homeless children and families including simple strategies for working with economically struggling students.


The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funded a technical assistance project to assist multiple agency teams interested in enhancing their juvenile information sharing (JIS) and overcoming significant barriers such as concerns of confidentiality, privacy of information, and service fragmentation. This report is based on that project, which involved 107 multiple agency jurisdictional teams of youth service agencies from across the country.

Since achieving effective information sharing requires a significant shift in the practices of many agencies, JIS institutes new processes and procedures, requires the development and application of new knowledge and skills, and outlines steps necessary for the full collaborative effort of all agencies and personnel involved in information sharing.


The work of the National Alliance to End Homelessness is based on implementing a 10-year plan to prevent and end homelessness in the United States. This updated brief on homeless youth (defined as 16-24 year olds with no family support who are living in shelters or on the street – in contrast with the McKinney-Vento definition) examines the key issues surrounding youth homelessness, including causes and characteristics of homeless youth.
and their need for relationships and social networks. It focuses on housing issues and contains an introductory explanation of the youth housing continuum, a development model for stable and supportive housing for young adults and policy implications regarding youth homelessness. Also included is the Ten Essentials Your Community Needs to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness, designed by the National Partnership to End Youth Homelessness.


This handbook series explains how the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act applies to students displaced by disaster and how the Act can assist these students and their families. Each handbook in the series targets information to either parents of displaced children, educators, or relief agencies. The series includes:

- After the Storm: Information for Parents on How Schools Can Help After Disasters (A Handbook for Parents)
- Disaster Relief Agencies and Schools: Working Together to Ensure School Enrollment and Success (A Handbook for Local Liaisons and State Coordinators)
- From the School Office to the Classroom: Strategies for Enrolling and Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness (A Handbook for Local Liaisons, Enrollment Staff, and District Administrators)
- School as a Safety Net: Connecting Displaced Children With Educational and Support Services (A Handbook for Relief Agency Staff and Volunteers)


Part of NCHE's Best Practices in Homeless Education series, this brief provides a framework to help determine whether attending the school of origin or the local attendance area school is in the best interest of the student. It identifies the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act dealing with each option and includes a helpful checklist to use when approaching the school selection decision.


Another addition to NCHE’s Best Practices in Homeless Education series, this brief aims to inform housing agencies and school districts what they can expect from participating in a collaborative relationship. It examines three extremely successful but very diverse housing agency and school district collaborations in Minneapolis, MN; Victoria, TX; and Mesa County, CO; and explains how collaboration can help reduce the frequency of family moves and promote school stability. The brief gives a description of each program, explains the roles and relationships of the involved agencies, and discusses each program’s outcomes and lessons learned.

This brief gives an overview of issues pertaining to immigrants, including an explanation of how refugees enter this country and receive initial services funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It goes on to discuss challenges many immigrant and refugee families encounter in adjusting to life in the United States, including integrating into the public school system. Also discussed are methods to determine homelessness among these families and collaborative strategies to reduce barriers and support student integration into schools.


Many immigrant children experiencing high mobility and poverty may be eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This brief lists some of the educational barriers facing immigrant students. It gives specific advice about how Title III and community agency personnel can collaborate with local homeless education liaisons in order to assist students who are eligible for McKinney-Vento services.


Many homeless students lack documents normally required for enrollment, which often results in classroom/curriculum placements that promote frustration and result in failure. This document offers teachers, school counselors, and other school personnel valuable tools and information to assist in making sound educational decisions for immediate placement of homeless children and youth in appropriate classroom settings.


The Standards and Indicators of Quality were developed collaboratively by homeless education program representatives from around the country that participated in NCHE’s 2001 Standards and Indicators Work Group. The standards express general characteristics of high quality homeless education programs; the indicators are specific concrete evidences that can be counted or measured in order to assess the degree to which the standard is being met. This 2006 revision was developed by NCHE in collaboration with Work Group members.

This updated brief identifies the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act dealing with the provision of services to homeless children and youth under Title I, Part A. Although homeless students are included in Part A’s target population of disadvantaged students, the high mobility, trauma, and deep poverty associated with homelessness create unique educational barriers and challenges. This brief explains how the McKinney-Vento Act intersects with Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and offers strategies for effective collaboration and implementation.


School may be the only safe and stable environment available for unaccompanied youth. Yet, without a parent or guardian to advocate for them, they often face unique barriers to enrolling and succeeding in school. This updated issue brief identifies the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act that deal with unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness and offers strategies for identifying these youth and implementing the Act to serve them most effectively.


This NCHE brief is designed to assist with the enrollment of unaccompanied youth. It includes an explanation of the McKinney-Vento Act enrollment requirements and gives some best practice suggestions from school districts such as developing a caregiver form to replace traditional proof of guardianship, developing collaborative relationships with others serving youth, and ensuring that enrollment staff understand the rights of unaccompanied youth and procedures for their immediate enrollment. The brief concludes with a sample Caregiver’s Authorization Form to request contact information from caregivers and establish their responsibilities.


The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, supports the implementation of the early childhood provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This annotated mini-bibliography from NECTAC’s Clearinghouse on Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education provides resources that address the needs and educational rights of young children experiencing homelessness, as well as strategies for working with homeless children and their families in early childhood care and education programs.

The Law Center seeks to prevent and end homelessness by pressing for solutions that address the causes of homelessness and not just its symptoms. This NLCHP manual is designed for a broad range of advocates and families who want to address the educational needs of children and youth displaced from their homes due to a disaster. It includes information about topics such as which students are considered homeless under federal law, methods of advocating for individual students, methods of advocating for system-wide change, securing immediate school enrollments, ensuring stable school placements, and accessing necessary and beneficial services such as transportation and academic assistance.


Each of these Baltimore authors is either from the University of Maryland School of Medicine or the Kennedy Krieger Institute, a facility that offers patient care to children and adolescents with pediatric developmental disabilities and provides special education and research focused on issues related to those youth.

This article describes a study of 99 mothers and their young homeless children conducted by PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs, the University of Maryland Center for Infant Studies, and the Kennedy Krieger Institute. The research, which was conducted at PACT's Therapeutic Nursery for homeless infants and toddlers, looked at the effects of homelessness on young children's communication and play skills. It also examined difficulties in parent-child attachment, which are prevalent among many of the families with children enrolled at the Nursery. The study found that Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training (NCAST) scores in each of the main areas measured improved significantly over the course of time spent in the therapeutic nursery.


This technical report documents the short-term effects of Louisiana student movements after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in order to help guide educators and policymakers in their continued response to this disaster as well as in their planning and preparations for future events. The focus is on the students’ experiences during the following academic year, the effects of the displacement on schools and their students, and the policies adopted in response to serving displaced students.

The authors found that policies and resources to help teachers manage their own hurricane-related problems and mental health needs may improve the services those teachers can provide to students. They also conclude that a national system to coordinate sharing of student information across state boundaries would benefit state and local education officials by providing better access to complete and accurate student records.

The authors of this study, from a variety of universities and child advocacy organizations, evaluated the intermediate and long-term effects of family foster care on adult functioning. The study, using a sample of 659 young adults from public and private child welfare agencies, showed that foster care alumni completed high school at a rate comparable to the general population, but a disproportionately high number of them received a GED; and their completion rates for postsecondary education were low. Consequently, many were in fragile economic situations, with more than one in five experiencing homelessness after leaving foster care. Positive placement history, e.g., very stable placement(s), was one factor cited that reduces significantly the number of undesirable outcomes in education. In accordance with the placement instability, nearly one-third of the alumni reported 10 or more school changes from elementary through high school.


The authors of this study (from Casey Family Programs, three universities, and an education foundation) present case records and interviews concerning educational achievements of 1087 foster care alumni in 23 communities across the country between 1966 and 1998. Because the alumni were older than most foster care follow-up studies, a more extensive picture of educational achievement was possible. High school graduation and college enrollment rates were comparable to or even greater than those of the general population, but the high number of alumni completing high school with a GED and the college dropout rates were a concern. Predictors of high school completion while in foster care, such as fewer placement changes, extracurricular activities, and independent living training, are presented, along with recommendations for improving educational and vocational preparation.


The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute is a think tank dedicated to research, policy analysis, and strategy development to advance greater understanding and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Based on the task force’s review of research, this 192-page report examines the causes of homelessness among lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth; summarizes research on critical problems affecting them; includes profiles of LGBT homeless youth; and analyzes the federal government’s response to youth homelessness. It includes five sections contributed by social service agencies that detail some model programs they have developed to improve service delivery to LGBT homeless youth.

In this chapter, the author describes overall family homelessness with specifics about the consequences of homelessness for children and youth. Then, based on a case study, she offers some solutions for ending homelessness that can be addressed at individual, family, school, and societal levels. She encourages communities to design and implement interventions to ensure homeless children and youth receive a quality education. Following are intervention strategies for parents, counselors, teachers, and others, and a discussion of possible intervention adaptations for subpopulations, such as those with academic and emotional problems, single mothers, and those of different cultures. The article concludes with a discussion of research concerning youths living on the streets and some best practices in dealing with those young people.


Although various risk factors have been linked to runaway behavior, no systematic investigation of the impact of size of community on runaway behavior had been done. So, these authors from sociology departments of three U.S. universities designed this study to compare runaways from smaller cities and rural areas to their urban counterparts. Their findings indicate that adolescents exposed to neglect and sexual abuse ran away earlier and were more likely to be victimized on the street. Rural adolescents who experienced higher levels of physical abuse relied more heavily on deviant subsistence strategies and remained in abusive homes longer than their urban counterparts. The study concluded that rural youth subjected to elevated levels of familial abuse are at greater risk of deviant subsistence strategies, which increase the likelihood of street victimization.


This report, submitted to Congress by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), provides information on programs supported under the McKinney-Vento Act and describes activities that ED has undertaken to address the educational needs of homeless children and youth. It incorporates information received from states about their homeless education programs and the children and youth they serve. The report includes a summary of data received from states, information on barriers to the education of homeless children and youth, strategies used by school districts to remove these educational barriers, and a nationwide status report on homeless education.


Chapin Hall is a policy research center whose work centers on issues affecting children. This report details the findings from the first phase of a multi-year study examining the prevalence, nature, and predictors of placement instability in substitute care and is one of the most comprehensive efforts made thus far to examine the issue of placement instability.
The findings reveal that the average number of placements children experience could be reduced by placing them with relatives, giving them initial stability without the need for a subsequent change in placement. The authors use findings concerning workers' assessments of the causes of placement moves, recommendations for services needed to stabilize placements, and positive results of treatment foster homes to argue that foster-family-centered services may mitigate placement instability.