

Newsletter

With funding from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Fall 2007

Project HOPE-Virginia is Virginia's Program for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. The College of William and Mary administers the program for the Virginia Department of Education. Funding is authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, Title X, Part C of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (P.L. 107-110).

The purpose of Project HOPE-Virginia is to ensure the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school. The Project HOPE-Virginia Newsletter is an effort to increase awareness and identify resources regarding the issues of homeless education. For a listing of the other resources available from Project HOPE-Virginia, see pages 7 and 8.

From the Desk of the State Coordinator

Happy New Year! The start of a new school year should be a time for celebration with fresh starts for students and teachers, meeting new friends and reconnecting with familiar ones you have not seen over the summer months. And let's not forget the new notebooks, shiny pens, long pencils, and reams of white paper with lines that await the capture of new ideas! For children experiencing homelessness, the celebration can be far more subdued. Multiple moves may have prevented the student from reconnecting with peers, and limited resources may keep the child from having those new sparkling supplies that fill the store shelves. However, thanks to the work you do in shelters, community agencies, and in schools across Virginia, more and more students without stable housing CAN have a similar back-to-school celebration. Thank you for all you do to make sure these students are able to enroll immediately and get that first day of school experience. Thanks for all the work it takes to maintain students in their school of origin so that their educational experience can be as stable as possible. Thanks for making sure these children have the supplies they need so they can fully participate in their classes with their housed peers. Charlottesville and Fairfax shared examples of such efforts in our *In Your Neighborhood* section, and I encourage you to share your initiatives with us for future issues of this newsletter.

On the national front, preparation for reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act has begun and draft legislative language already is being reviewed. Updates related to information about the McKinney-Vento portion of this process can be found at the National Association for the Education of Children and Youth (NAEHCY) web site: www.naehcy.org.

Through the fall, Project HOPE-Virginia will continue to offer regional trainings for liaisons and other school division staff and community service providers. Check the HOPE web site (www.wm.edu/hope) for details. I would like to remind you that we will not have a statewide seminar in the spring since we are preparing to host the annual NAEHCY conference in Crystal City during the fall of 2008. Stay tuned for details!

This fall marks the thirteenth back-to-school event for Project HOPE-VA and our collaboration between the Virginia Department of Education and The College of William and Mary. We are fortunate to have many staff members who continue in the program and we welcome our new graduate assistants and interns who have already been put to work writing articles for this newsletter and helping us chart the course for a new year reaching our families and youth without homes and improving the educational outcomes for our students. We look forward to working with you to make this happen.

Patricia A. Popp, Ph.D.,
Virginia State Coordinator

NAEHCY

19th Annual Conference
November 10-13, 2007

Oregon Convention Center
Portland, OR

Conference details and registration information available at
www.naehcy.org

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Measuring Well-Being of Children and Youth

By Erin M. Ramsey

What is well-being? Merriam-Webster defines well-being as the state of being happy, healthy, and prosperous. A more challenging question is how to measure the well-being of America's children. Two recent, annual reports attempt to quantify well-being through the use of a variety of different statistical indicators. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2007*, is published by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics and uses 38 specific indicators of childhood well-being. Published annually by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, *KIDS COUNT 2007 Data Book Online* uses over 75 different indicators to measure well-being and provides a state-by-state ranking for overall well-being as well as for each specific indicator. Highlights of both reports follow.

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2007

*Published by: Federal Interagency Forum
on Child and Family Statistics*

The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics was formally established in April 1997 to foster collaboration with the collection and publication of Federal data on children and families. The Forum now consists of 22 participating government agencies as well as numerous partners in private research organizations. *America's Children* draws from such data sources as the American Community Survey, American Housing Survey, Decennial Census Data, Monitoring the Future, National Assessment of Educational Progress, and 17 others.

Family and Social Environment

- Sixty-one percent of children under six who were not yet in kindergarten received some type of child care on a regular basis in 2005, the same rate as 1995. Patterns indicated that lower-income children were more likely to be cared for by a family member or relative while children above the poverty level were more likely to be cared for by a non-relative or in a center-based program.
- The percentage of school-aged children who spoke a language other than English in 2005 was 20 percent. Five percent of school-age children had difficulties speaking English. Children with difficulties speaking English may face greater challenges progressing in school and in the job market.
- The rate of substantiated reports of child maltreatment remained at approximately 12 reports per 1,000 children since 2002. Child maltreatment has been linked to a number of negative outcomes for children such as juvenile delinquency, substance abuse and mental health

concerns.

Economic Circumstances

- In 2005, 17 percent of children lived in households that were classified as food insecure. Food security status is assessed based on difficulty obtaining food, reduced food intake, reduced diet quality, and anxiety over food supply. Food security is important for providing adequate nutrition for child development and functioning.

Health Care

- The percentage of children who had no health insurance at any time during 2005 increased to 11 percent from 10 percent in 2004. Health insurance coverage is associated with increased accessibility to medical care.
- In 2005, 81 percent of children ages 19-35 months had received the combined five vaccine series. The gap in immunizations between children living *at* the poverty level and children living *below* the poverty level has remained stable; though, overall immunization coverage has been increasing since 2001. Vaccinations are a good measure of the number of children receiving adequate preventative medical care.

Physical Environment and Safety

- Roughly 40 percent of US households with children had one or more of three housing problems in 2005: physically inadequate housing, crowded housing, or cost burden from housing that costs more than 30 percent of the household income. This percentage has increased substantially from 30 percent in 1978.
- From 2003 to 2005 the percentage of households with children with severe housing problems increased from 11 to 14 percent. Severe housing problems are defined as severe cost burdens and physical problems with no rental assistance. Among very low-income renters, the percentage of severe housing problems has risen from 29 to 36 between 2003 and 2005. Housing cost burdens are associated with such negative outcomes for children as homelessness, overcrowding, frequent moves, and poor nutrition.

Behavior

- The rate of illicit drug use in the past 30 days remained stable from 2005 to 2006 among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders. Twenty-two percent of 12th graders, 17 percent of 10th graders, and 8 percent of 8th graders reported illicit drug use in the past 30 days in 2006. Adolescent drug use can have both immediate and long-term negative consequences and is associated with other high risk behaviors.
- In 2006, 11 percent of 8th graders, 22 percent of 10th

Measuring Well-Being, continued

graders, and 25 percent of 12th graders reported heavy drinking, defined as five or more alcoholic beverages in a row in the past two weeks. Adolescent alcohol abuse increases the risk of automobile accidents, injuries, problems in schools, fighting, and crime.

Education

- The rate of children ages three to five being read to daily by a family member increased from 53 percent in 1993 to 60 percent in 2005. Reading to young children is highly correlated with later reading comprehension achievement and overall academic success.
- The percentage of high school graduates immediately enrolled in college increased from 49 percent in 1980 to 69 percent in 2005. Immediate college enrollment measures the accessibility and importance of higher education for high school graduates.

Health

- Academic achievement, adequate social relationships, and an enhanced sense of well-being are all outcomes of good behavioral and emotional health. Nearly five percent of children ages 4-17 were reported by a parent to have serious emotional, concentration, social, or behavioral difficulties.
- The percentage of children who are overweight has risen dramatically since the 1980s. Overweight children are at risk for future health problems such as diabetes, stroke, and heart disease as well as social, emotional, and other cardiovascular health problems during childhood. In the time period 1976-1980 only six percent of children ages 6-17 were classified as overweight, compared to 18 percent during 2003-2004.
- About 13 percent of children had been diagnosed with asthma at some point in their lives in 2005. Asthma can vary greatly in its severity and is one of the most common chronic diseases in childhood.

The entire report is available online at <http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/index.asp>.

KIDS COUNT 2007 Data Book Online

Published by: The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Using many of the same resources as the Forum on Child and Family Statistics, The Annie E. Casey Foundation uses a different structure to organize their summary of child well-being. *KIDS COUNT 2007 Data Book Online* contains 75 indicators that can be viewed at a national, state, or local level. Additionally, trend data is available at the national and state level for each indicator over a number of years.

Ten key indicators have been chosen to be a summary

measure of childhood well-being. These ten indicators were chosen for three reasons: they reflect a wide range of factors that affect a child's everyday life, they capture the full range of development from birth through young adulthood, and they permit comparisons to be made across states and time. Research has shown these key indicators capture most of the yearly variation in child well-being. Highlights of the national and Virginia state averages of the KIDS COUNT Data Book key indicators follow.

• **Low-birthweight babies**

Low-birthweight infants weigh less than 5lb. 8oz. at birth and have a higher risk of disability or death than infants at normal birthweights. The national average for low-birthweight babies is 8.1 percent. Virginia is ranked 30th in the nation with an average of 8.3 percent of babies born with low birthweight. The percent of low-birthweight babies worsened between 2000 and 2004 in 49 states.

• **Infant mortality**

Infant mortality is defined as the death of an infant before his or her first birthday and is associated with the overall health of the mother and access to appropriate medical care. The national average for infant mortality is 6.8 deaths per 1,000 live births. Virginia's average is slightly higher at 7.5 deaths per 1,000 live births, which ranks 31st in the nation for infant mortality. The US average for infant mortality continues to be one of the highest rates among industrialized countries.

• **Child deaths**

The child death rate is the rate of deaths of children ages 1-14. Most likely due to advances in healthcare and motor vehicle safety, this rate has fallen for the past few years. The US child death rate is 20 deaths per 100,000 children. Virginia's average is 12th in the nation with 18 deaths per 100,000 children.

• **Teen deaths from all causes**

The teen death rate is indicative all deaths of youth ages 15-19. Motor vehicle accidents is the most common cause of teen death followed by other accidents, homicides, and suicides. The teen death rate in Virginia was 59 deaths per 100,000, which ranks 16th in the nation. The national average is 66 deaths per 100,000, which equals roughly 37 teen deaths per day in 2004.

• **Teen births ages 15-19**

Giving birth as a teen is associated with a number of negative outcomes for both the teen mother and the infant, including a much higher risk of poverty. The teen birth

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In Your Neighborhood

TRICKS OF THE TRADE: School-Community Collaborations

Charlottesville City Schools

By James H. Miller II, Homeless Education Coordinator, Charlottesville City Schools

Several years ago Charlottesville City Schools created a partnership with representatives from three area shelters and school division representatives, consisting of educators, social workers and counselors. Our purpose was to create a new program to train parents of homeless children. We saw a need to assist parents in making the most of their child's school experience by educating parents about services the school can provide. The division's liaison and coordinator met six times a year with our shelter representatives, The Project HOPE-Charlottesville Partnership Team, to plan in-service trainings for parents. We communicated informally with the staff of these agencies on a weekly basis about the families' changing needs as they moved between help agencies.

The Partnership Team worked with school staff to provide *In-Service Meetings* for parents one night each month. The event was offered as a parents' night out, with child care, round trip transportation, and a meal provided. Camaraderie developed among the parents as they grappled with similar problems.

In-Service Entertainment, the education session for the night, was provided by a professional trained to provide a lecture and open forum discussion on selected topics. Topics often focused on parenting skills and were offered as a means to give parents the tools to advocate for their child's education in the school system, promote effective at-home tutoring and studying, and develop an understanding of how to communicate with their children through adolescence. Additionally this training taught parents ways to organize home life and reinforce good behavior

at home and in school while improving their children's academic and social skills. Presentations by teams of school staff were offered on topics such as:

- Preparing Your Child for School
- Coping Strategies in Stressful Times
- Preparing for Parent Conferences
- Understanding Report Cards
- School Supports for All Children
- How to Cope With Change/Transition
- The Secret Lives of Teens
- Teen Sexuality: Myths and Realities
- Infectious Diseases
- AIDS Virus and Family Support
- Talking to Adolescents About Sex

Topics were unlimited and the interest was too. Discussions were lively and could have gone on for many hours, but the talks were limited to one hour. This time frame kept parents interested and eager to come again.

Charlottesville's Project HOPE's Parent In-Service program has been a success and has afforded our parents myriad opportunities to improve themselves, their parenting skills, and relationships between them, their children, the school system and related help agencies. It has been extremely helpful in creating understanding among parents about the school system, its specialists, and programs engaged in helping educate our children.

Fairfax County Public Schools

By Kathi Sheffel, Homeless Education Liaison, Fairfax County Public Schools

In Fairfax County, the school system integrates with existing community involvement to assist families in homeless situations through the homeless education liaison. Through collaborative intervention, we are able to allocate resources efficiently and effectively to solve problems, plan, develop timelines for services/action plans, assign responsibility to appropriate service providers, follow-up, and re-evaluate. In general, the liaison ensures services are provided to all homeless students. Below is a summary of how that intervention is accomplished and the major agencies involved in the collaboration.

Shelters: Our primary contact is with the area's shelters. The liaison has ongoing meetings and frequent e-mail communica-

tion with shelter directors and case management staff. Shelter staff provide student lists to the liaison who verifies identification and recording in the student record system. In order to streamline services for new families in shelters, communication between schools and shelter staff must begin when the family checks into the shelter. At that time, parents are informed of their options regarding school choice and given the opportunity to participate in other support services provided by the schools. Due to the frequent constraints of transportation and communication resources, shelter staff is key in coordinating efforts to maintain school stability for those children residing in the shelter. Shelter staff is most likely to observe any im-

continued next page



In Your Neighborhood

Fairfax County Public Schools, continued

mediate needs that the children have, and they are integral in communication with the liaison so that those needs can be met quickly.

Division of Family Services: The county DFS office is responsible for coordinating many services for homeless families. The liaison attends monthly meetings for shelter providers and serves on a variety of committees with representatives from other agencies that interface with homeless children, youth, and families. With the liaison at the table, service providers are reminded constantly about the importance of school stability for children in homeless situations and can consider procedures that take those needs into account.

Domestic Violence Programs: DV is a frequent cause of homelessness, and it is challenging not only for the survivors but for the school system. Understanding the dynamics of DV, as well as the need for safety and stability, and working closely with the DV programs and families can be quite difficult. The liaison serves on community DV committees to ensure a good working relationship between the school system and the various agencies providing services.

Agencies providing motel shelter: The liaison communicates frequently with the agency that provides emergency motel placement to homeless families. Children are often moved quickly into these motels for short stays, and the transportation to school of origin must immediately be arranged in order for those children to have continuity of school.

Child Protective Services: CPS proves to be an invaluable resource in our work with homeless families. They are available for consultation on difficult cases where it is unclear if abuse or neglect is a factor. In addition, CPS is able to provide services to families in crisis in order to prevent the removal of children from the parent.

Business Community: The business community supports the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program by stepping in when school funds cannot be used. FCPS students were provided winter coats, other clothing, gift cards to purchase personal necessities, and holiday gifts. These funds were also used to assist with materials that children needed in order to participate fully in extracurricular activities.

Foster Care: Children in foster care may or may not be McKinney-Vento eligible, depending on the permanency of their placement. The liaison has on-going meetings with foster care coordinators to discuss the definitions of homelessness and how to determine eligibility. In addition to this, the

homeless office arranges for transportation to school of origin for foster care children who are not considered homeless in accordance with SB1006. We work with our local foster care office to determine best interest placements for children in care, and decide which agency will provide the transportation to school origin. This often involves regional collaboration with other school divisions and foster care offices.

Title I: The liaison works in collaboration with the school Title I office to ensure that support services are available and appropriate for children in homeless situations. To determine set aside funds, a formula based on the numbers of identified homeless children was used. This year, set aside funds will be used to support the homeless tutoring program and to fund a half time social work/academic support position.

Transportation: The liaison works closely with the school division transportation department to arrange transportation to school of origin for students experiencing homelessness. Due to the large size of our county, it takes tremendous coordination and funding to achieve this. The transportation department, in collaboration with the liaison and community partners, has developed an efficient system to ensure timely services to students.

Tutoring: Our tutoring program serves our family shelters and one large transitional living program. It has been well staffed and well received. This year we are happy to extend the tutoring program to children living in motels, placed there by an agency providing emergency assistance. These children are in great need of academic support. The challenges in serving children in motels in the past have been logistic in nature, primarily involving space restrictions and transportation. As a solution, the tutors will accompany case management staff to the motels for a *meet and greet* with clients. Tutoring will take place three nights a week at the agency office with transportation provided by agency volunteers.

We are very fortunate to be able to provide an array of services to our homeless families, children and youth. I attribute the success of this outreach to the commitment of multiple agencies willing to work on problems and find solutions in order to meet the needs of the children, youth, and families. The benefits of our collaboration are many. For the agencies involved, it increases efficiency because there is no duplication of services, and all service providers are aware of the families' circumstances. For the families, the team provides a streamlined support system with family and staff in constant contact to reassess needs and make adjustments.

Well-Being, conclusion

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rate has been falling steadily and was a record low of 41 births per 1,000 in 2004. Virginia's teen birth rate was 35 births per 1,000.

- **Teens who are high school dropouts**

A high school diploma or its equivalent represents basic reading, writing, and math skills that are necessary for a young adult to be competitive in the modern job market. The national average for high school dropouts has fallen from 11 percent in 2000 to 7 percent in 2004. Virginia ranks ninth in the nation with a high school dropout rate of six percent.

- **Teens not attending school and not working**

The national average for teens, ages 16-19, not working or attending school is eight percent. Virginia's average is slightly lower at seven percent which ranks ninth among the states' averages. Youth who are not working or attending school are at a higher risk for lower earnings and less employment stability than their employed peers.

- **Children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment**

In the US, 34 percent of children were living in families that lacked secure parental employment. These children have an increased risk of poverty, inadequate health care, and decreased psychological well-being due to the stress of

unemployment on the family. Virginia had a lower percentage, 28 percent, which was sixth in the nation.

- **Children in poverty**

The percentage of children in poverty is one of the most significant and widely used indicators of childhood well-being. Poverty is perhaps the most pervasive indicator as it is associated with a number of negative outcomes in all areas of the child's life. The national percent of children in poverty, 19 percent, is one of the highest percentages among developed countries despite the United States' immense wealth. Virginia, ranked eighth in the nation, has 13 percent of children living in poverty.

- **Children in single-parent families**

In the US, 32 percent of children live in a single-parent home. Children growing up in a single-parent home have less economic and human resources compared to children living in a two-parent household. Children in single-parent families are more likely than their counterparts to be living below the poverty line and are at greater risk for poor academic achievement. Virginia has 29 percent of children living in single-parent families.

Based on the statistics listed above, Virginia had an overall ranking of 14th. To view the rankings of other states, view local data, and peruse the other 65 indicators of childhood well-being visit www.kidscount.org/sld/index.jsp.

Early Childhood Resources from the Virginia Alignment Project

By Erin M. Ramsey

The Virginia Department of Social Services has spearheaded the work of Virginia's Alignment Project, a multi-agency initiative that serves to align early childhood (0-5) learning best practices with existing preschool and kindergarten standards. The following two publications were recently released.

Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals is designed to be a comprehensive resource to guide adults who provide early care and education for children from birth to kindergarten. It outlines standards for competent practice and identifies what early childhood professionals must know, care about, and be able to do to provide optimal growth experiences for young children.

Milestones of Child Development is an inclusive set of child

development indicators and strategies designed to support the development of young children (0-5). The developmental indicators are organized based on domain area and then arranged into a general age progression. For each benchmark, indicators are listed with examples of ways in which the child may display the skill and guidelines for how an adult may support the acquisition of the skill. This guide is designed to be used by parents, grandparents, early child care providers, teachers, and any other adult wanting to learn more about developmental milestones and ways to support growth in early childhood.

Access to these guides is available online at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/publications.cgi>. Hard copies may be obtained by visiting the same site and requesting a copy.

Materials Order Form

All publications are available on our web site www.wm.edu/hope

They are not copyrighted and can be copied with appropriate reference to Project HOPE-Virginia.

Project HOPE Publications	Maximum Order*	Quantity
Family Brochure "What Every Family Should Know"	250	
Family Brochure (Spanish Translation) "Todo Lo Que Las Familias Deben Saber"	150	
McKinney-Vento Poster 8.5 x 14	25	
McKinney-Vento Poster (Spanish Translation) 8.5 x 14	25	
Bibliography of Homeless Education Resources	1	
Information Briefs	***	***
<i>When School Is Home & Family: Supporting the Attendance and Success of Youth on Their Own</i> NEW FALL 2007	25	
<i>Enrolling Homeless Students: First Step to the Schoolhouse Door</i>	25	
<i>Unlocking Potential: What Educators Need to Know About Special Education and Homelessness</i>	25	
<i>Unlocking Potential: What Families and Shelters Need to Know About Special Education and Homelessness</i>	25	
<i>Helping Young Children Grow and Learn: A Guide for Families and Shelters</i>	25	
<i>Using the Best That We Know: Supporting Young Children Experiencing Homelessness</i>	25	
<i>Questions and Answers on Homeless Education</i> REVISED FALL 2007	25	
<i>School Nurses: It's Not Just Bandages Anymore</i>	25	
<i>Supporting Resilience of Children and Youth</i>	25	
<i>Tips for Supporting Highly Mobile Students</i>	25	
<i>What Educators Can Do</i>	25	
Standards of Learning Support for Virginia Schools	***	***
<i>Standards of Learning At-A-Glance K-5</i>	---	
<i>Standards of Learning At-A-Glance Middle School</i>	---	
<i>Standards of Learning At-A-Glance High School</i> REVISED WINTER 2007	---	

*For larger quantities, contact Project HOPE-Virginia

Name _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Fax this form to: 757-221-5300

Or mail to: Project HOPE-Virginia
The College of William & Mary
P O Box 8795
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795

Project HOPE Materials Descriptions

Awareness

Family Brochure & Poster: Provides a summary of the rights to an appropriate education for students experiencing homelessness. The brochure includes suggestions for successful transitions and a listing of state agencies that may be accessed for additional support.

REVISED FALL 2006

Bibliography of Homeless Education Resources: Offers a comprehensive listing of articles and reports, books and chapters, audiovisual materials, curricula and resource kits, legal sources, and newsletters related to the education of students experiencing homelessness.

REVISED SPRING 2006

Information Briefs

When School Is Home & Family: Supporting the Attendance and Success of Youth on Their Own This brief is designed to help your school support the attendance and success of youth on their own – whether they have run away or are independent for other reasons – by providing background information about unaccompanied youth, sharing some of the challenges they face, and suggesting positive policies and programs for school divisions.

NEW FALL 2007

Enrolling Homeless Students: First Step to the Schoolhouse Door Provides enrollment personnel with tips on identifying and serving families experiencing homelessness during the enrollment process.

Unlocking Potential: What Educators Need to Know About Special Education and Homelessness Provides educators with tips on supporting families experiencing homelessness through the special education process.

Unlocking Potential: What Families and Shelters Need to Know About Special Education and Homelessness Provides families experiencing homelessness and service providers who work with these families with an overview of the special education process and tips for working through the process.

Helping Young Children Grow and Learn: A Guide for Families and Shelters Emphasizes ways that families and shelter providers can encourage the development of young children and become aware of potential concerns. It provides resources and strategies to assist when delays are observed.

Using the Best That We Know: Supporting Young Children Experiencing Homelessness Provides educators with information, resources, and strategies for supporting families with young children who are experiencing homelessness and may have special needs.

Questions and Answers on Homeless Education Answers basic questions regarding the educational needs of children and youth

experiencing homelessness. It is a useful resource for school administrators. **REVISED FALL 2007**

School Nurses: It's Not Just Bandages Anymore Combines research statistics and checklist-style practical suggestions to provide health care to students experiencing homelessness.

Supporting Resilience of Children and Youth Explores resiliency with suggestions for ways to nurture this protective factor.

Tips for Supporting Highly Mobile Students Provides suggestions for meeting the needs of highly mobile students at the division level, school level, and classroom level.

What Educators Can Do Introduces teachers to the topic of homeless education with practical suggestions to welcome and support homeless students in the classroom.

Standards of Learning Support for Virginia Schools

Standards of Learning K-5 Children's Literature Correlation Available online as a searchable database at www.fcps.edu/cpsapps/connections/. Extends through 8th grade in most subject areas.

Standards of Learning At-A-Glance Kindergarten Through Grade 5 Summarizes the standards for grades K through 5 in easy-to-understand terms. This document was prepared to offer parents and non-educators a quick reference to the content students must master at each grade level. Includes parent and student resources.

Standards of Learning At-A-Glance Middle School Summarizes the standards for grades 6 through 8 in easy-to-understand terms. This document was prepared to offer parents and non-educators a quick reference to the content students must master at each grade level. Includes parent and student resources.

Standards of Learning At-A-Glance High School Summarizes the standards for grades 9 through 12 in easy-to-understand terms. This document was prepared to offer parents and non-educators a quick reference to the content students must master at each grade level. Includes parent and student resources. **REVISED WINTER 2007**

These publications are not copyrighted. They can be downloaded from our web site and copied with appropriate reference to Project HOPE-Virginia.

The Project HOPE-Virginia web site contains additional resources for supporting students and families experiencing homelessness, as well as news updates regarding resources and policy. Check it out!

Resource Pool

Minimum Wage Increase

By Jessica L. Murray, M.Ed.

As of July 24, 2007, the federal minimum wage increased from \$5.15 to \$5.85 per hour, making the first step toward the intended minimum of \$7.25 per hour by 2009. According to the Economic Policy Institute, 5.6 million¹ workers will be directly affected by the wage increase to \$7.25 per hour, while an additional 7.4 million workers will benefit due to *spillover effects* — employers currently paying slightly more than the proposed minimum wage will likely increase the wages for their employees in order to maintain internal wage structures. As a result, 13 million workers, or 10 percent of America's workforce, will be affected by the minimum wage increase. In Virginia, the impact is even greater, as 12.6 percent, or 449,000, of the state's workers will be affected by a wage increase to \$7.25 an hour.

The wage increase will greatly impact working families. Forty-six percent of all families with workers earning minimum wage or slightly more rely solely on the wages of those workers. Single parents will benefit disproportionately from the wage increase and approximately 6.4 million children under 18 will benefit as their parents' wages are increased to \$7.25 an hour. Women compose 59 percent of the workers who would benefit from an increased minimum while African Americans comprise 16 percent and Latinos represent 19 percent.

This minimum wage increase, along with the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), are proposed to reduce poverty. A full-time worker earning \$5.15 an hour would earn \$10,712 a year while the 2007 poverty line for a family

of three is \$17,170. Adding the benefit of the EITC increases the earnings to \$14,997, still below the poverty threshold. With the minimum wage at \$7.25, the same worker can earn \$15,080. Assuming the same EITC that is in place in 2007, this worker would earn \$19,796 after the tax credit, raising the income to a level above the federal poverty level.

Many people fear they will lose their jobs as the minimum wage increases, due to a belief that employers will need to compensate for the increase in wages by employing fewer people. However, a 1999 Economic Policy Institute Issue Brief, *Wages gain ground*, contradicts that belief. Reviewing labor and wage data for the previous nine years, EPI found that the 1996-1997 minimum wage increase helped the low-wage labor market perform better than it had in decades—with lower unemployment rates, increased hourly wages, increased family income, and decreased poverty rates. Employers absorb some of the costs of a wage increase through higher productivity, decreased employee turnover, and increased worker morale.

¹ All statistics in this article from: EPI issue guide: Minimum wage. (2007). Retrieved August 29, 2007 from http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/issueguides_minwage

² Bernstein, J. & Mishel, L. (1999). Wages gain ground: Workforce benefits in 1998 from tighter labor market, higher minimum wage. *Economic Policy Institute Issue Brief*, 129 February 2, 1999. Retrieved August 29, 2007 from <http://www.epinet.org/issuebriefs/ib129.pdf>

Back to School with NCHE

Jan Moore, National Center for Homeless Education

As you are making your back to school preparations, don't forget to check out the new publications listed below published by the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE).

A Look at Child Welfare from a Homeless Education Perspective attempts to help educators and child welfare workers establish better working relationships and enable them to provide more appropriate services for children and youth. Also included are best practices and additional resources.

Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Services: Dos and Don'ts for Liaisons offers a checklist to conduct eligibility determination for McKinney-Vento services in a positive and supportive manner. Included are recommended awareness activities and procedures as well as suggestions for talking with parents and youth.

Immediate Enrollment under McKinney-Vento: How Schools Can Keep Students Safe offers suggestions and procedures that schools can use to protect confidential information, communicate with sensitivity, and build collaborative relationships in order to protect the safety of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Since survivors of domestic violence and unaccompanied youth are particularly vulnerable, the brief gives specific information about working with these two populations.

All the documents above are available on the NCHE web site at www.serve.org/nche.

Questions? Want to be added to the Homeless Education Listserv? Call the Helpline at 800-308-2145 or email homeless@serve.org.

Five Ways to Start the School Year off Right

By Erin M. Ramsey

The new school year starts with high hopes and expectations for teachers, students, and staff. Common school year goals often focus on increasing achievement, closing the achievement gap, reducing student and staff dropouts, ensuring school safety, and more. The School Mental Health Project (SMHP)/Center for Mental Health in the Schools at UCLA has released a set of five suggestions for reaching those school goals through interventions and planning:

1. Create a Welcoming and Supportive School Atmosphere

Provide new (and returning) students with a warm and supportive welcome, to establish a school-wide atmosphere of acceptance and support. Effort and planning also should be focused on creating an ongoing social support system for students, families, teachers, and staff. Special resources and training may target members of the office staff, as they are often the first point of contact for new students and families.

2. Quickly Address School Adjustment Problems

In the first few days and weeks of school, teachers become aware of students who are experiencing difficulties transitioning to the classroom. If problems are not addressed as they arise, the potential for student behavior problems increase and student motivation decreases. Consequently, the beginning of the school year is a pivotal time to focus on interventions to respond to adjustment problems quickly and effectively, before adjustment problems become more severe and pervasive.

3. Respond Proactively to Problems

Some students experience problems early in the school year that stem from emotional, learning, and/or behavioral problems and are not solely related to school adjustment. Intervention at the onset of a problem is necessary for effective resolution. Three initiatives provide guidance on ways to solve problems at onset: Response to Intervention, Early Intervening Services (as emphasized in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), and the movement to develop comprehensive, school-wide systems that address barriers to learning.

4. Plan for Common Concerns

Schools have a yearly rhythm that changes with the demands of the monthly school calendar. Schools commonly start with a sense of hope that may progress to discontent when concerns about homework, policies, grading, testing, burnout, and more arise. Schools may plan ahead to address these challenges by seeking out strategies and monthly support from the Center for Mental Health in the Schools and other resources.

5. Establish a Working Group to Reduce Barriers to Learning

A focus on reducing barriers to learning is essential for engaging students in classroom instruction and learning. In schools where a high proportion of students encounter major barriers to learning, test scores are unlikely to increase until the barriers are removed. Schools should establish a working group to focus on designing a comprehensive system for addressing barriers to learning in order to facilitate student engagement in instruction.

More resources and information about implementing these five suggestions are available on the Center's web site at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>.

This article has been adapted from, *Is the School Year Off to a Good Start?*, published by the Center for Mental Health in the Schools at UCLA and is available online in its original form at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/goodstart.pdf>.

New Day Shelter to Open in Charlottesville

Community groups have gathered their energy and resources to open a day shelter for people experiencing homelessness in the Charlottesville area in early 2008. Tom Shadyac, director of the film *Evan Almighty*, purchased a church on West Market Street, which is currently being renovated to include the day shelter, social service offices, a community kitchen, and a venue for concerts and other public performances. Shadyac, a 1981 graduate of the University of Virginia, did much of the filming for *Evan Almighty* in Crozet, Virginia, near Charlottesville. In the summer of 2006, Shadyac attended a Living Wage Rally at the University of Virginia and met with leaders of the Virginia Organizing Project, increasing his awareness about homelessness in the area. He discovered that members of the community were interested in developing a day shelter for people experiencing homelessness—but they lacked a building. In order to have a lasting impact in the community after the film was completed, Shadyac purchased the First Christian Church on West Market Street to provide the space needed for the day shelter and other related programs. Some start-up funding has been provided by the City of Charlottesville and ongoing donations have been pledged by individuals and local businesses.

DV Awareness

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month when advocates, survivors, and communities promote events to raise the national conscience about violence that happens at home. Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors by one person in an intimate relationship who seeks to establish power and control over the other. Domestic violence affects every facet of the lives of those who experience it. Abusers often control all of the family's funds and can withhold support or access to services, creating a web of insecurity for survivors that may affect their judgment of their own worth and abilities.

Children and youth who witness violence in the home suffer the trauma in various ways depending on their age, the level of violence, and protective resources they have in their lives. As teens and adults, they might repeat the dynamics they experienced at home by being abusers or by accepting abuse as a normal part of life. To understand more about trauma and children, see the Spring 2007 issue of this Newsletter and the resources listed below.

Families experiencing violence need a place to feel safe. For children, that place is often school, where they spend most of their days. Schools can enhance safety for children and abused parents by ensuring that school personnel are trained to understand the dynamics and patterns of violent relationships and examining policies and procedures that might give an abuser access to sensitive information, such as addresses and schedules. For more information on ways that schools and communities can work together to make families safer, see the NCHE brief *Domestic Violence, Homelessness, and Children's Education*. This can be downloaded at www.serve.org/nche.

Upcoming Events

LeTendre Education Fund for Homeless Students Scholarship Deadline
September 21
www.naehcy.org

Casey Family Foundation Programs "It's My Life" Conference
September 30-October 2 Atlanta, GA

Virginia Association of Federal Education Program Administrators
October 17-19 Roanoke, VA

NASDSE 70th Annual Conference and Business Meeting
October 20-23 Scottsdale, AZ

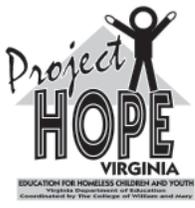
Training and Technical Assistance Center Annual Symposium on Professional Collaboration and Inclusive Education
October 29-30 Williamsburg, VA
<http://www.wm.edu/ttac/>

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
November 10-13 Portland, OR
www.naehcy.org

Your Relationship is Healthy . . . If

- You trust your partner.
- Your partner likes your friends, encourages you to spend time with them, and wants to include them in his/her life as well as yours.
- You make important decisions together.
- Your partner understands when you spend time away from him or her.
- You don't have to protect your partner's reputation or cover for his/her mistakes.
- Your partner encourages you to enjoy different activities (like joining the volleyball team or football team, running for student government, or being in a play) and helps you reach your goals.
- Your partner likes you for who you are – not just for what you look like.
- You are not afraid to say what you think and why you think that way. You like to hear how your partner thinks, and don't always have to agree.
- You have both a friendship and a physical attraction.
- You don't have to be with your partner 24/7

From The Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. For more information, visit their web site at vadv.org. To help someone in need, call the Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline at 800.838.8238 (V/TTY).



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After reading, please distribute
 among your colleagues. Pass it on!



Fall 2007
 Newsletter

**DEFINITION OF
 HOMELESSNESS**

Anyone who, *due to a lack of housing*, lives:

- In emergency or transitional shelters;
- In motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds, abandoned in hospitals, awaiting foster care placement;
- In cars, parks, public places, bus or train stations, abandoned buildings;
- Doubled up with relatives or friends,
- In these conditions and is a child or youth not in the physical custody of an adult (unaccompanied youth*),
- In these conditions and is a migratory child or youth.

To determine homelessness, consider the *permanence and adequacy* of the living situation.

* Unaccompanied youth - a youth without fixed, regular, and adequate housing who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This would include runaways living in homeless situations and those denied housing by their families (sometimes referred to throwaway children and youth).

**WHERE CAN I GO
 FOR ASSISTANCE AND RESOURCES?**

Project HOPE-Virginia

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, have questions related to the education of homeless children and youth, or would like additional information, brochures, posters, or resource materials, please contact:

Toll free (in VA):
 (877) 455-3412
 Phone: (757) 221-4002
 TDD: (757) 221-2302
 Fax: (757) 221-2988
 E-Mail: homlss@wm.edu

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