



Bridging the Gap:

Early Education and Care
for Massachusetts
Young Homeless Children

December 2007

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HORIZONS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

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I. Executive Summary

The facts are simple, yet startling:

- Homelessness is impacting more families and children in Massachusetts each year. On any given day, there are more than 1,800 families with about 3,300 children temporarily housed in emergency shelters in the Bay State, including more than 1,700 children under the age of six. Each day, about 1,000 more homeless children in the Commonwealth - about half of whom are under the age of six - live in domestic violence shelters, residential programs for teen parents and their families, residential substance abuse programs, and HIV/AIDS residential programs.
- Thousands more Massachusetts families with children sleep on floors and sofas of friends and relatives, or live in other makeshift arrangements such as cars and campgrounds. According to a recent report by the Mass. Department of Education based on data collected and analyzed in cooperation with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, on any given day, at least 48,000 Massachusetts school-aged children are homeless.¹ Given that for each school-aged homeless child there is a pre-school aged homeless child, this means that on any given day there are also at least 48,000 homeless Massachusetts pre-school aged children – *a total of at least 96,000 homeless children and youth in Massachusetts on any given day, and many thousands more over the course of a year.*²
- Homelessness has grave impacts on child development. As a result, compared with both middle-class and poor housed peers, young homeless children experience more developmental delays, emotional problems such as anxiety and depression, and behavioral issues.³ Without the proper intervention, homelessness, whether of long or short duration, is a condition that impacts greatly on a child's school readiness as well as later in life.
- Scientific research shows that **quality early education and care makes a significant difference in the well-being and school-readiness of young homeless children, and helps the parents of those children begin to move towards self-sufficiency.**

¹ Massachusetts Department of Education, "A Snapshot of Homelessness in Massachusetts Public Schools: 2005 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey and Massachusetts Annual Homeless Enrollment Data" (2007), available at www.doe.mass.edu/mv.

² This estimate is consistent with the definition of "homelessness" that the Massachusetts Legislature directed the Massachusetts Commission to End Homelessness to use, which includes families living in "doubled-up" situations. See Mass. Resolves of 2006, c. 2, sec. 3. It is also consistent with the definition of "homeless children and youth" established by Congress in the Subtitle B of Title VII McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and reiterated by Congress in November of 2007 in the "Improving Head Start Act," H.R. 1429, which includes children and youth living in doubled-up situations due to loss of housing or economic hardship. As required by federal law, that definition has been officially adopted by the Mass. Department of Education, per DOE Advisory 2002-1. There are at least 96,000 children and youth on any given day who are either "homeless" or "at risk of homelessness," based on the definitions of these terms that have been adopted by the Commission. (Under the definitions adopted by the Commission, families living in doubled-up situations are considered to be "at risk of homelessness," not homeless.)

³ See Rog and Buckner, "Homelessness and Children" (draft, 2007), at 4; Rafferty and Shinn, "The Impact of Homelessness on Children" (*American Psychologist*, 1991); Kourgialis et al., "Improving the Nutrition Status of Homeless Children" (*Children's Health Fund*, 2000).

Horizons for Homeless Children (HHC) conducted a survey of shelters serving homeless families in the summer of 2007, a repeat of the survey done the previous three years. *The survey found that less than half (48%) of homeless young children aged birth to 5 years of age living in shelters are in some form of early care and education program, compared to 68%⁴ of all Massachusetts young children in the general population.* The 2006 survey yielded nearly the same “bottom line” result as the 2007 survey, with 47% of young homeless children participating in early education and care. The 2005 survey showed 58% of young homeless children were enrolled in early education and care, with 44% served at the time of the 2004 survey.

It is not clear whether the survey data reflect an actual increase in the proportion of homeless children living in shelters who received early education and care from 2004 to 2005 and a subsequent decrease from 2005 to 2006, or merely statistically insignificant variation from year to year due to data sampling issues. However, **it is fair to conclude that half or less of all young homeless children living in shelters in Massachusetts participate in formal early education and care, and b) young homeless children living in shelters lag considerably behind their non-homeless peers in terms of access to and participation in early education and care.**

It is important to note that the statistics cited above - 48% of homeless young children accessing early education and care vs. 68% of young children in the general population – actually understates the “early education and care gap” between homeless children and their housed peers. Of the 31% of the young children in the general population not participating in early education and care, a high proportion are in economically stable or affluent families with stay-at-home parents and nannies – arrangements that most people would view as positive for those children. In contrast, the 52% of homeless young children who live in shelters and do not participate in early education and care are in a very different situation, in arrangements that are generally not in the children’s best interests.

While there has been some regional fluctuation from year to year, some patterns have emerged over the four years that HHC has conducted the survey. Most notably, Western Mass. has lagged considerably behind the other regions in all four years (i.e., homeless children living in shelter in Western Mass. have a particularly low rate of access to early education and care), and Southeastern Mass. has lagged in three out of the four years, including the two most recent years.

The Commonwealth has recognized the critical importance of ensuring that homeless children living in shelters have access to high-quality early education and care. However, the survey results indicate that much more needs to be done to achieve this goal. As this report goes to press, **the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) are implementing a new policy that promises to dramatically expand access to early education and care on the part of homeless families living in shelter. Under the new policies, as of December of 2007, families referred by DTA to any type of homeless shelter are to have immediate access to subsidized childcare, in the form of a childcare voucher. Families are to have access to vouchers with minimal red**

⁴ As of 2000, the most recently-available data, among young Mass. children in the general population, 47% were in center-based care or Head Start, 12% were in a family child care program, and 9% were in a public school preschool program. “Securing Our Future: Planning What We Want for Our Youngest Children, Future Trends Report – Volume VI,” Mass. Department of Education, 2001.

tape, a major problem up until this point in time in spite of well-intentioned efforts in recent years to streamline the process for securing vouchers.⁵ **Horizons for Homeless Children** applauds EEC, DTA and the Administration of Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick for taking this bold step. It is our hope that as the policy is implemented, the number of homeless children living in shelter accessing early education and care will increase significantly. The 2008 survey will show whether this is the case.

To increase access to early education and child care for homeless young children, **this report offers the following recommendations:**

Voucher access

As with any new policy, it is reasonable to anticipate that implementation issues will arise as the new “immediate voucher for homeless families” policy⁶ is rolled out. **Horizons for Homeless Children** urges the Department of Early Education and Care and Department of Transitional Assistance to closely monitor implementation of the new policy, to ensure that the promise of the new policy is realized. We also urge EEC to implement the new policy for all homeless families living in shelter, whether or not they have been referred to the shelter by DTA. We encourage EEC and DTA to focus in particular on shelters in the Southeastern and Western parts of the state, as access to early education and care in those regions has consistently lagged for homeless families living in shelter.

Add-on rate for vouchers used by homeless families

To adequately meet the needs of homeless children and their families, early education and care providers who serve homeless children must provide a low child to teacher ratio, highly-qualified teachers, and support services for parents. Whereas the 85 contracted slots set aside for homeless children (see next item, “Homeless contracted slots”) include additional reimbursement (an “add-on rate”) to help meet the additional cost of serving homeless children and families, there is no additional reimbursement for homeless families who use vouchers. As a result, there is a large gap between the actual cost of providing services and the level of reimbursement for those providers offering enhanced services for homeless children and their families. **To address this problem we recommend that the Dept. of Early Education and Care establish a voucher add-on rate for early education and care providers offering enhanced services to homeless children and families to help pay for those services, to be determined on the basis of the level of services offered by a given provider to the homeless children and families they serve.**

Homeless contracted slots

Over a decade ago, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts first contracted with a handful of early education and care providers to set aside fully-subsidized “slots” in child care centers for homeless children. (Slots and vouchers constitute the primary forms of subsidized early education and care.) Today, there are still only 85 slots for homeless children for the entire state.

⁵ See Mass. Dept. of Early Education and Care Management Bulletin EMB FY 2008 – 01, Appendix 1 of this report. The red tape faced by many low-income parents seeking to obtain child care vouchers was documented in a recent report issued by the Bessie Tartt Wilson Children’s Foundation. Washington, et al., “Keeping the Promise: A Study of the Massachusetts Child Care Voucher System,” (2006).

⁶ Ibid.

While, as noted above, EEC and DTA are implementing a policy intended to give homeless families living in shelters immediate access to vouchers, we believe that these families should be served through a mix of vouchers and contracted slots, in order to support access, and to give providers of enhanced services for homeless families enough structure to anticipate and respond to the demand for services. **We recommend that the Legislature substantially increase the number of contracted slots designated for homeless children to at least 250 contracted slots, and provide the necessary funding.**

Definition of “homeless”

There are conflicting definitions of the term “homeless” at both the state and federal levels of government. Some definitions include the many “doubled-up” children and/or families sleeping on sofas and floors in another family’s home due to economic hardship, while other definitions do not. For example, here in Massachusetts, the state Legislature recently adopted a definition of “homelessness” that includes doubled-up families.⁷ However, soon thereafter, the Massachusetts Commission to End Homelessness adopted a definition of “homeless” that does not include doubled-up families, and instead included those families in its definition of “at risk of homelessness.” At the federal level, legislation that President Bush is expected to sign by the end of 2007 reauthorizing the Head Start program⁸ adopted a definition of “homeless child” that includes children living in doubled-up situations, reiterating a definition previously adopted by Congress in Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Legislation moving through Congress would bring the definition of “homeless” used by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development – which currently does not include doubled-up families – closer to the more comprehensive definition of “homeless” as appearing in McKinney-Vento and the recently-passed Head Start legislation, by adding some or all doubled-up families to the HUD definition. **We recommend that both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the federal government adopt a uniform definition of homelessness that includes children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, consistent with the education subtitle U.S. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and with the U.S. Head Start Act as reauthorized in late 2007 – i.e., children and youths living in so-called “doubled-up situations.”**

⁷ Mass. Resolves of 2006, c. 2, sec. 3.

⁸ The “Improving Head Start Act,” H.R. 1429.

II. Introduction

Homeless people often don't fit the stereotypes. However, the segment of the homeless population that is most rapidly increasing *does* conform to many of society's most offensive and simplistic conceptions about homelessness. These homeless people *do* drink a lot, but it's mostly milk and juice. They *do* exhibit strange behavior, but it is conduct most of us know as the "terrible two's."

These homeless people are children. In a development not seen even in the Great Depression, children have become the most rapidly growing segment of the homeless population both in Massachusetts and across the nation. In contrast to the visibility of adult street homelessness, the homelessness of children is typically unseen by the general public and missed by many elected officials and policymakers.

The following words are from a formerly homeless mother about the value of early care for her children:

In the fall of 2004, I was living with my 2 sons in a 2-bedroom apartment in Roxbury. I had a job at Partners MGH as a scheduling coordinator and we were making ends meet, but there was one very big problem. There was so much violence in our neighborhood that life was scary every day. There were incidents literally happening right on my street: fights, gunshots, and sirens.

I was constantly on edge. My children were afraid to go outside or even to be in the hallways. Still, we stayed because it was the only place we could afford. I tried to find subsidized housing in a better location, but we were far down on the waiting list.

Eventually moved to my mother's small, one-bedroom apartment, where my sons and I slept on the couch. We all knew it was temporary, and after one month, we moved to a homeless shelter in Waltham.

I had never been homeless before. I had read about it, but I wasn't prepared for my new life. Five families lived on our floor in the shelter and we shared one bathroom. I put our food in the common refrigerator and more often than not it was stolen. Our juice was always missing because someone else decided they needed it for their child. My sons would see others wearing their clothing - because it had been stolen as well.

After 6 months, we were moved, first to a motel in Cambridge and then to a transitional shelter in Boston. I wanted to go to work, but I couldn't pay for daycare for my younger son, Tariq, who was 2. I wanted to find a place to live, but I couldn't afford the rent without a job. At age 27, I was stuck and it felt hopeless.

Then I had a lucky day. My social worker at the shelter told me about an organization called Horizons for Homeless Children that provides free childcare and lots of support. I actually didn't believe it. It was going to be free? That was a miracle. I thought that there must be a catch. But there was no catch.

Tariq really loves his school. When he started, I was worried that he wasn't speaking much. Now he talks too much! He is potty-trained, he knows how to use his words, he knows his colors and a lot of songs, he has a best friend, and he is just really happy. In fact, he cried a lot on his first day of school, but now he sometimes cries when he has to leave! His teachers have been wonderful. He has bonded with many of them, they are extra patient and loving, and they understand how hard his life has been at times.

As for me, I am in a new phase in my life. I have a new job that I like a lot, as an admissions assistant at a facility that is part of Partners Health Care. I have found a subsidized apartment on the South Shore, and even though I have a long commute, I have a home and it's safe and quiet there.

I don't know where I'd be without childcare. If I had no childcare, I couldn't earn enough to find housing and pay rent. I work very hard to be a good mother, but if I didn't have childcare, I believe that I might still be homeless – and I don't know what it would have been like for Tariq.

Horizons for Homeless Children (HHC) conducts this annual survey of Massachusetts homeless young children to better understand their needs and to focus attention on how we, as a community, can improve their lives. HHC, a non-profit organization based in Boston and serving more than 2,000 homeless children and their families throughout Massachusetts each week, operates three Community Children's Centers, providing full-time, professional early education and childcare and family support services for 175 homeless children and their parents each weekday. In addition, HHC has established Playspace Programs in 140 family homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters and other shelter types in Massachusetts. HHC installs and maintains Playspaces in the shelters, and recruits, trains, places and supports 1,000 volunteers who each week engage about 2,000 children in, educational play, designed to minimize or prevent the life-long harm of homelessness.

Family and child homelessness is not only a Massachusetts phenomenon. The number of children experiencing homelessness in the United States is equally alarming and increasing. The Urban Institute estimates that 1.35 million children will experience homelessness over the course of a year (Urban Institute, 2000); and the number of children and youth (PreK-12) in homeless situations identified by local public school districts increased from approximately 841,700 in 1997 to 907,228 in 2006.⁹ (It is important to note that school districts are able to identify only a portion of the homeless children living in their communities, and that the data that they report does not include the vast majority of preschool-aged children.)

We hope that the findings and recommendations contained in this report can inform the efforts of our state and federal governments to better serve these vulnerable children.

⁹ National Center on Homeless Education, "Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program: Analysis of 2005-2006 Federal Data Collection," (2007).

III. Child and Family Homelessness in Massachusetts

A. Demographics

Child and family homelessness are at an all-time high in Massachusetts. As of September 2007, 1,857 homeless families were living in emergency family shelters funded by the Mass. Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA).¹⁰ A single mother headed most of these families. These 1,857 families contained 3,324 children between birth and 18 years of age. Of these children, 1,766 were under the age of six. **All of these numbers are at an all-time high.**

But the homeless families in DTA funded shelters are only part of the story of family homelessness. A 2000 UMass Boston report estimated that 10,500 families per year either live in homeless shelters in Massachusetts or sought shelter but were turned away due to lack of shelter capacity, including about 10,000 children under school age and another 10,000 school-aged children.¹¹ In addition to families living in DTA-funded shelters, each day, about 1,000 more Massachusetts families with children live in domestic violence and teen shelters, and about half of the children in those families are under the age of six. 3,205 children were served in Mass. domestic violence residential programs in FY 2004.¹² (Domestic violence shelters usually have 90-day lengths of stay because of their funding limitations. These families often end up in DTA-funded family shelter after their time in the DV shelter.)

Thousands more Massachusetts families with children sleep on floors and couches of friends and relatives, or live in other makeshift arrangements. No State agency counts the families who have no fixed residence and are on the move from couch to couch, or who live in cars and campgrounds.

The extent of this phenomenon is reflected in data collected and analyzed by the Mass. Department of Education in cooperation with the U.S. Centers on Disease Control for the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. This data shows that approximately 48,000 school-aged children and youth are homeless at any point in time (a conservative estimate, due to a variety of factors). Given that there are equal numbers of school-aged and younger-than-school-aged homeless children in Massachusetts,¹³ at least another 48,000 homeless children are younger than school age, for **a total of at least 96,000 homeless children and youth in the Bay State.**¹⁴

B. Causes of Child and Family Homelessness

While families in some cases make decisions that contribute to their homelessness, most of the underlying causes of family homelessness relate to how our society produces and allocates resources such as housing, jobs, education, child care, and health care.

¹⁰ ¹⁰ Data is updated monthly at the following website:

http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Researcher&L2=Basic+Needs&L3=Housing+and+Shelter&sid=Eeohhs2&b=terminalcontent&f=dta_r_finassist_homeless&csid=Eeohhs2

¹¹ UMASS Boston, McCormack Institute, Situation Critical, Report 2000, Meeting the Housing Needs of Lower Income Massachusetts Residents (2000), pp. 8, 9.

¹² Jane Doe Inc. (2005). *Statewide Domestic Violence Service Delivery Data: FY04*, Boston, MA.

¹³ UMASS Boston, McCormack Institute, p. 9.

¹⁴ See footnote 2, above.

Housing

The high cost of housing and lack of sufficient affordable housing in Massachusetts is a major cause of family homelessness. In a 2004 study prepared for Citizen's Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) "Winners and Losers in the Massachusetts Housing Market: Recent Changes in Housing Demand, Supply, and Affordability," researchers from the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute report that:

in 1980, Massachusetts was a relatively affordable place in which to buy or rent a house for most families, ranking twenty-sixth out of the fifty states in the affordability of owner-occupied housing. But this situation changed significantly during the 1980s, so by 1990 Massachusetts had become the third most expensive state to buy a house, a position it retained in 2000.¹⁵ According to the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, between 1980 and 2003, the nation's largest overall percentage increase in housing prices occurred in Massachusetts.¹⁶ The cost of rental housing has grown similarly. In a 2003 study, Massachusetts was rated the least affordable state in which to rent an apartment.¹⁷

The recent slowdown in the real estate market has not changed this basic reality: the cost of housing is out of reach for many thousands of families in Massachusetts, resulting in an epidemic of family homelessness.

In the past, state and federal governments sought to fill the gap between low incomes and the cost of housing, by producing public housing and issuing housing vouchers. However, in the past 25 years, both the state and federal governments have slashed funding for affordable housing. From 1976 through 1981, a period of six years, more than 735,000 new units of public housing were built using funding through the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, an average of more than 120,000 new units per year. Beginning in 1982, federal funding came to a near halt. From 1982 through 2002, new construction of HUD-funded public housing slowed to about 13,000 per year. A similar trend has developed for construction of rural affordable housing through a program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. From 1976 through 1985, the federal government funded the construction of over 30,000 units of rural affordable housing each year. Production of rural affordable housing slowed dramatically from 1986 through 1995; since then, an average of just 1,700 units of rural affordable housing have been built each year with federal funds.¹⁸

During the same time period, the Section 8 housing voucher program has become the dominant form of federal housing assistance. However, due to limited federal funding, only one in four eligible families receive them.¹⁹ The state counterpart to the Section 8 program, the Mass.

¹⁵ Andrew Sum, Ishwar Khatiwada, and Mykhaylo Trub'skyy, *Home Ownership in Massachusetts: A New Assessment* (Boston: MassINC, 2000), [www.massinc.org/publications/reports/Policy Brief3/policy_brief3.html](http://www.massinc.org/publications/reports/Policy%20Brief3/policy_brief3.html).

¹⁶ Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, State index data, Second Quarter 2003.

¹⁷ National Low Income Housing Coalition, *Out of Reach 2003: America's Growing Wage-Rent Disparity* (Washington, D.C.: National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2003).

¹⁸ Western Regional Advocacy Project, "Without Housing: Decades of Federal Housing Cutbacks, Massive Homelessness and Policy Failures."

¹⁹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Introduction to the Housing Voucher Program" (2007).

Rental Voucher Program, has also been cut in recent years. As a result, the number of families with MRVP vouchers declined by almost one third from 2001 to 2005.²⁰

Poverty

According to the U.S. Census 2000, Massachusetts ranks 12th in the United States in the percentage of children who are poor, with 12% of children under 18 living in poverty.

According to a 2002 MassINC study, “poverty has proven to be a more serious structural problem in our state than in the nation during the 1990s. Since 1993, poverty rates declined sharply in the U.S. but remained essentially unchanged in Massachusetts.”²¹ In August of 2007, the Mass. Budget and Policy Center reiterated that there has been no decline in poverty in Massachusetts over the past several years, notwithstanding an economic recovery that has reached the five year mark.²²

While the federal poverty standard is useful for comparing poverty levels across time or geography, it is an outdated standard that grossly underestimates the income one must reach in order to escape poverty.²³ A far more realistic standard is the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard, developed by Crittenton Women's Union. For example, in 2006, in order to be self-sufficient, a family of three living in Boston (e.g., a mother with two children) needed to earn \$58,133 – more than three and one-half times the Federal Poverty Level of \$16,600, and much more than the income of the typical homeless family. While the cost of living is somewhat lower in other parts of the state, self-sufficiency is still a huge “reach” for homeless families. For example, in Lowell, the income needed to reach self-sufficiency was \$57,384. In New Bedford, it was \$46,220; in Worcester, it was \$48,513; and in Springfield, it was \$46,573. Given this data, it comes as no surprise that thousands of families in Massachusetts cannot afford a home of their own.²⁴

C. Challenges in Accessing Family Shelter

In spite of the upward trend in the family shelter population, often the state’s shelter system is not an option. Many families are screened out of shelter for various reasons including:

- being ‘over-income,’ for example, a family of three (mom and two children) is deemed ‘over-income’ if their monthly gross income is more than \$1,860 (\$22,321 annually)
- having used shelter already within the past 12 months; or
- having been evicted from subsidized housing for non-payment of rent.

Regardless of the reason for denying a family state-subsidized shelter, the family is nonetheless homeless, and the denial of shelter further marginalizes their already tenuous existence.

²⁰ Mass. Budget and Policy Center, “Kids, Cuts, and Consequences: How Cuts to Effective Programs Hurt Our Children,” (2005).

²¹ The State of the American Dream in Massachusetts, 2002, May 2002, p. 148

²² “Census Data Show Little Progress on Poverty and Incomes,” Mass. Budget and Policy Center (2007).

²³ For example, as of 2007, the poverty line for a family of three is 17,170. Few would argue that a family of three earning \$18,000, \$19,000 or \$20,000 is not also “poor.”

²⁴ Crittenton Women’s Union, www.liveworkthrive.org/reports.php.

The Mass. Coalition for the Homeless website has an overview of regulations for family shelter eligibility at www.mahomeless.org/facts/factseligibility.html.

D. The Family Shelter System

Congregate Family Shelters account for the majority of family shelters in Massachusetts, and are primarily funded by the Department of Transitional Assistance. There are approximately 80 congregate shelters in the Commonwealth. In a congregate shelter, members of a family typically have one bedroom to themselves and share kitchen, bath, and common space with other families. As in any shared living environment, congregate shelters are operated by formal rules and regulations and most are staffed 24 hours per day. The family's income must remain under 130% of the poverty line in order to stay in shelter; otherwise, they must move out within six months of crossing that income threshold. Shelter lengths of stay vary based on family circumstances, but stays of over a year are not uncommon.

Scattered Site Family Shelters are residential shelter programs in which a non-profit rents an apartment unit from a landlord and then places the family into the unit with the understanding that the placement is temporary shelter, not permanent housing. Each family therefore has more privacy, although program staff are regularly checking in and assisting the family. For the state's approximately twelve scattered site shelter programs in Massachusetts, funding is primarily from DTA.

Domestic Violence (DV) Shelters tend to be structured like congregate family shelters with an overarching emphasis on safety-planning for families who have been victims of violence. Funded primarily by the Department of Social Services, DV shelters are in confidential locations and time limits of 90 days are typical. Unlike the DTA-funded system with its eligibility screens which include income, access to DV shelters is through a hotline with safety and capacity being the primary determinants of placement. Some DV programs are more transitional in nature, meaning that they provide more services, support, and longer term stays. There are approximately twenty-five DV shelters in the Commonwealth.

Teen Living Programs (TLPs) provide residential shelter and services for pregnant and parenting homeless adolescent mothers. Highly structured, these DTA-funded programs offer many services for their clientele. The typical stay for a teen parent and her child(ren) is about two years.

Transitional Shelter Programs may offer longer-term stays for families with additional service needs. Supports may include substance abuse treatment and support or assistance with mental health needs. Families often enter transitional programs directly from homelessness or may be referred from a congregate or DV shelter.

E. Impacts of Homelessness on Children

While all young children develop in different ways and at different paces, the period from birth to five years of age typically is a time of enormous growth and learning. At no other time in life are children's brains developing as much or as rapidly.²⁵

²⁵ Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, Editors. From Neurons Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. Board on

All children require stability and consistency, individual attention, appropriate stimulation, protection from harm, structure and routine in order to grow and develop normally. These conditions allow a child to develop resiliency and are necessary to ensure that a child is developing appropriate skills for later success.

All of these foundations of child development are compromised by homelessness. As a result, compared with both middle-class and poor housed peers, young homeless children experience more developmental delays, emotional problems such as anxiety and depression, and behavioral issues.²⁶ Homelessness, whether of long or short duration, is a condition that impacts greatly on a child's school readiness.

Like any parent, homeless parents are responsible for taking care of their children and securing income and housing. Homeless parents face many barriers as they fulfill these basic parental responsibilities, including lack of employment opportunities, lack of education and training to do the jobs that are available, and few affordable housing opportunities. Given the stressed nature of their parent's lives, young homeless children often don't receive enough interaction, a situation that will limit their development. Because of multiple residential transitions, homeless children may have difficulty developing the ability to focus and pay attention. They also may be slower to develop language skills; frustration at their inability to come up with words can result in negative behaviors. Many of these children will suffer from a lack of routine. Children may not be able to count on their primary caregiver, which could create the foundation for later emotional problems.

Homelessness impacts school readiness. Homeless children are 8 times more likely to be asked to repeat a grade, 3 times as likely to be placed in special education classes, and twice as likely to score lower on standardized tests.²⁷

Because of resource limitations, family shelters are typically geared toward serving the adult in the family. A common misunderstanding is that if the shelter "fixes" the adult's issues then children's success will follow. While clearly the well-being and potential of the parent plays a huge role in the child's own prospects, the needs of both parent and child must be addressed simultaneously in order to make a difference in the child's life.

While public school enrollment is open to all school-age children, including homeless school-age children, services for preschool age children are not universal. Without a formal or informal care arrangement, the homeless parent often will need to bring the young child on all appointments and interviews. This makes it difficult for the parent to work, to find housing, and to attend school or training, all of which are important steps towards family self-sufficiency.

Children, Youth, and Families National Research Council and Institute of Medicine NATIONAL ACADEMY PRESS Washington, D.C. 2000

²⁶ See Rog and Buckner, "Homelessness and Children" (draft, 2007), at 4; Rafferty and Shinn, "The Impact of Homelessness on Children" (*American Psychologist*, 1991); Kourgielis et al., "Improving the Nutrition Status of Homeless Children" (*Children's Health Fund*, 2000).

²⁷ America's New Outcasts: Homeless Children, National Center on Family Homelessness, 1999.

F. Supports for Homeless Families and Children in Shelter

The needs of homeless families vary depending on their individual circumstances. Most residential programs provide some degree of housing search services, either by on-site shelter staff or an outside agency. Support for employment (including job search, education, and training) is offered by a variety of state-funded and non-profit programs. However, the typical homeless shelter does not have sufficient resources to focus on the needs of the children, a major gap given that the overwhelming majority of residents of family homeless shelters are in fact children and youth.

Federal law addresses the educational rights of homeless children including those homeless children who live in a shelter. The education subtitle of the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act guarantees access to public school education for school age homeless children. Reauthorized in January 2002 as part of the No Child Left Behind Act, McKinney-Vento ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. For younger children, the McKinney-Vento Act specifically states that “each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as other children and youth.” However, while access to public school is compulsory, open, and universal, access to preschool education is not, a fact which complicates the implementation of McKinney-Vento for preschool homeless children.

The Mass. Department of Education issued a series of Advisories in 2002 and 2003 providing guidance to school districts on implementation of the McKinney-Vento act, including one focusing on young homeless children. The Advisories are posted at www.doe.mass.edu/my/. See Appendix 2 of this report for DOE’s 2003 Advisory on serving homeless preschool children.

G. The Early Education and Care System in Massachusetts and New Policies on Homeless Families Living in Shelter

Early education and care for homeless young children is generally provided through the same system which is used by all Massachusetts young children. Strategies for Children (the organizer of the “Early Education For All” campaign in Massachusetts) provides the following overview of the current early education and care system in Massachusetts:

Education and care for young children goes by many names: child care, day care, nursery school, preschool, pre-kindergarten, and early education. It is delivered in many settings: center-based, home-based or at the local public school, in urban, suburban and rural communities. Some programs are part-time, part-year, while others offer full-day, full-year services. They can be privately run, either non-profit or for profit, or they can be operated by the local school system or by a federally funded program such as Head Start.²⁸

Massachusetts early education and care is funded through three primary sources: public (federal, state and local), private (mostly foundation) and parent fees. Many programs also rely on significant in-kind contributions such as free space, utilities, materials and volunteers.

²⁸ Early Education and Care in Massachusetts today, Early Education for All.

The quality of early education and care programs varies widely. The “gold standard” is accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. As described by The Boston Foundation, “Accreditation requires that minimum standards be met for quality of curriculum, facilities, nutrition, staffing, administration, teaching practices and relationship of teachers with parents.” As of 2001, 31.6% of all early education and care programs in Massachusetts were NAEYC-accredited. While this may seem low, nationally, a mere 10.4% of early education and care programs were accredited as of 2001.²⁹

As all parents with children enrolled in childcare or preschool are aware, early education and care programs are not inexpensive. Without publicly-funded subsidies, low-income families would not be able to access early education and care. About 89,000 young children (birth through age five) participate in some form of publicly-subsidized early education and care in Massachusetts.³⁰ Families at or below 50% of the state median income qualify for subsidized care, but often must sit on a waitlist for a voucher or other form of subsidy. Approximately 39,000 additional young children are eligible for but do not receive subsidized early education and care³¹, of whom about 23,000³² are on the formal waitlist.

Most families who receive public subsidies are required to contribute a co-payment, which ranges from \$520 to \$10,660 per child per year. (Extremely poor families – families of two earning \$11,652 or less a year, families of three earning \$14,160 or less a year, and families of four earning \$17,052 or less a year – do not pay a co-payment. Virtually all homeless families fall into this category; as a result, the policy being issued by the Mass. Dept. of Early Education and Care regarding immediate access to childcare vouchers for families living in shelter explicitly states that families referred to shelter by DTA do not pay a co-payment.³³)

The new Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), established in 2004 under the Fiscal Year 2005 Budget, consolidated the previous roles of the Department of Education and the Office for Child Care Services with respect to early education and care, and is now the lead agency for all public and private early education and care programs and services. Under the leadership of Commissioner Ann Reale and a Board of Directors, the new department officially began operations on July 1, 2005.

EEC’s ultimate goal is the establishment of a universally-accessible early education and care system. In the interim, EEC seeks to expand access to early education and care for low-income children and families in general, and families living in shelter in particular. Under a policy issued by EEC, as of July 1, 2006, homeless children living in shelters are intended to have priority access to early education and care vouchers.³⁴ However, the results of this year’s survey

²⁹ The Boston Foundation, “Boston Indicators Report 2002,” (2002).

³⁰ According to an October 2006 Dept. of Early Education and Care Board presentation, approximately 78,000 young children participate in some form of publicly-subsidized early education and care in Massachusetts, not including children enrolled in Head Start. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research, as of the 2005-2006 school year, 10,839 Massachusetts children were enrolled in Head Start programs. National Institute for Early Education Research, “State Preschool Yearbook,” (2006).

³¹ This estimate was derived by starting with the approximately 117,000 Mass. children aged birth through 5 whose families, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, are at or below 50% of the state median income, and deducting the approximately 78,000 currently receiving subsidized care.

³² Mass. Department of Early Education and Care.

³³ See footnote 3, above.

³⁴ Mass. Department of Early Education and Care, EEC Management Bulletin FY 2007-01, June 27, 2006, sec. 2.2.1.

of homeless shelters, as reported in this document, give little indication that this policy has achieved the goal of expanding access to early education and care for families living in homeless shelters. (For a discussion of vouchers and other forms of subsidized care, see section V-G below, “Subsidized child care.”)

As this report goes to press, **the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is implementing a new policy that promises to dramatically expand access to early education and care on the part of homeless families living in shelter. Under the new policy, as of December of 2007, families referred by DTA to any type of homeless shelter are to have immediate access to subsidized childcare, in the form of a childcare voucher. Families are to have access to vouchers with minimal red tape, a major problem up until this point in time, in spite of well-intentioned efforts in recent years to streamline the process for securing vouchers.³⁵ Horizons for Homeless Children applauds EEC, DTA and the Administration of Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick for taking this bold step. It is our hope that as the policy is implemented, the number of homeless children living in shelter accessing early education and care will increase significantly.** The 2008 survey will show whether this is the case.

The need to ensure homeless children’s access to early education and care has also been recognized by policymakers and advocates representing a broad range of state agencies and organizations.³⁶

H. Early Education and Care Makes a Difference: The Impact of Quality Early Education and Care on Homeless Children and Their Families

A study issued in February of 2006 by the National Center on Family Homelessness documented the positive impact of quality early education and care on young homeless children and their parents. (“Evaluation of Horizons for Homeless Children’s Community Children’s Centers: Final Report.”)

NCFL tracked young homeless children receiving center-based care provided by Horizons for Homeless Children, over a period of five years. The study found that:

- Children enrolled at Horizons for Homeless Children exhibited greater improvements than the comparison group on the academic composite score, and also showed greater improvements in vocabulary and receptive language skills.
- Children enrolled at HHC were less likely to experience disruption in childcare than their comparison group peers.
- The majority of mothers of children enrolled at HHC said that HHC’s program helped their child become more confident in social situations (88.9%), get ready for school academically (77.8%), and feel better about him/herself (83.3%).
- Mothers of children enrolled at HHC were far more likely to be employed at follow-up than their comparison counterparts (HHC, 58.3%; Comparison, 31.0%).

³⁵ See footnote 3, above.

³⁶ See “Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Plan to End Family Homelessness: A Report of the Policy Academy on Family Homelessness,” which explicitly calls for meeting homeless children’s need for early education and care – Action steps 2.2(a), 3.3(a).

- The incomes of families of children enrolled at HHC increased more than that of Comparison families.

Clearly, access to quality early education and care can make a huge difference in the lives of homeless children, and can help their families move towards self-sufficiency. For further discussion of this topic, see Appendix 1 to this report, “The Value of High-Quality Preschool Services.”

IV. Survey Purpose and Methodology

Because very little data is available about homeless young children in Massachusetts, Horizons for Homeless Children (HHC), in consultation with colleagues from the service provider community and state government, decided to conduct its first survey in 2003 (reported in 2004) to determine the extent to which young homeless children living in shelters are enrolled in child care, early education, and other types of programs while the parent is searching for housing, working, or going to school. The survey was repeated in 2004 (reported in 2005), 2006 and in 2007. The 2007 survey was sent under the auspices of Horizons for Homeless Children and its advocacy partner, Homes for Families.

Because of the generally decentralized nature of services for homeless families, it is often difficult to identify programs. This year 166 family sheltering programs were identified by HHC with information from our own outreach and from lists obtained in previous years from the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless and the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). These sheltering programs included congregate shelters, scattered site programs, transitional programs, teen living programs and domestic violence programs for families and their children in Massachusetts.

Programs were asked to fill out the requested information for each child in the program aged from **birth through 5 years of age (under age 6)**. Shelters were told that their responses would be confidential and that only aggregate data would be made public. To protect confidentiality and avoid duplication, each child was listed by first name/last initial (Jane D, Tommy S, etc.) or by number (Child #1, Child #2, etc.).

An initial mailing of surveys to the 167 family sheltering programs was done in June 2007 with follow up in July and August 2007 to shelters that had not responded. The total shelter response rate was 60.5% with 101 out of 167 programs responding, compared to a response rate in 2006 of 55.6% (94 out of 169 responding), 58.9% in 2005 (89 of 151 programs responding), and 59.8 in 2004%, (76 out of 127 programs responding).

V. Survey Results and Findings

Data was reported on 1,066 children in shelters from birth through 5 years of age. In the tables below, N may vary with each question based on number of complete responses or as otherwise noted. Comparison data from prior surveys are included below.

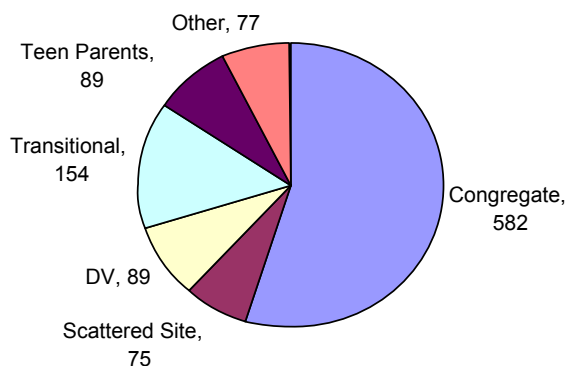
A. Shelter Type and Region

The 1,066 children in the responses are distributed by shelter type and region as shown below in Tables 1 and 1A and the corresponding pie charts. (For a description of each shelter type, see section III-D, "Shelter System," above.)

Children by Shelter Type (Table 1)

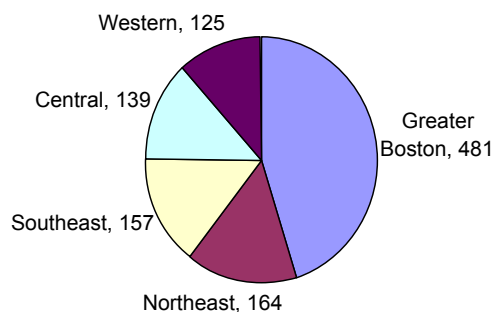
Shelter Type	2007 Survey		2006 Survey		2005 Survey	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Congregate	582	54.60%	548	55.10%	431	51.70%
Scattered site	75	7.04%	94	9.50%	121	14.50%
DV	89	8.35%	106	10.70%	102	12.20%
Transitional	154	14.45%	130	13.10%	100	12%
Teen parents	89	8.35%	78	7.80%	80	9.60%
Other/not spec.	77	7.22%	38	3.80%	0	0%
Total	1066	100%	994	100%	834	100%

Children by Shelter Type 2007



Children by Region (Table 1A)

Region	2007 Survey		2006 Survey		2005 Survey	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Greater Boston	481	45.12%	398	40.00%	443	53.10%
Northeast	164	15.38%	214	21.50%	110	13.20%
Southeast	157	14.73%	98	9.90%	115	13.80%
Central	139	13.04%	197	19.80%	97	11.6
Western	125	11.73%	87	8.80%	69	8.3
Total	1066	100%	994	100%	834	100%

Children by Region 2007**B. Ages of Children****Ages of Children (Table 2)**

Age	2007 Survey		2006 Survey		2005 Survey	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Under 1 y.o.	247	23.17%	220	22.10%	184	22.10%
1 y.o.	172	16.14%	194	19.50%	170	20.40%
2 y.o.	202	18.95%	188	18.90%	160	19.20%
3 y.o.	156	14.63%	125	12.60%	147	17.60%
4 y.o.	103	9.66%	132	13.30%	124	14.90%
5 y.o.	92	8.63%	109	11.00%	41	4.90%
Not specified	94	8.82%	26	2.60%	8	1%
Total	1066	100%	994	100%	834	100%

Another way to look at the age data is to break it down by Infant/Toddler and Preschool, categories that are typically used in the early education and child care field.

Age of Children by Category (Table 2A)

Age group	2007 Survey		2006 Survey		2005 Survey		2004 Survey	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Infant & Toddler (Birth through 2 y.o.)	621	58.26%	602	60.60%	514	61.60%	481	62.10%
Preschool (3-5 y.o.)	351	32.93%	366	36.80%	312	37.40%	292	37.70%
UNK	94	8.82%	26	2.60%	8	1.00%	2	0.30%
Total	1066	100%	994	100%	834	100%	775	100%

C. Family Composition

Data on head of household is consistent with previous studies of Massachusetts homeless families.³⁷ The data below reflect numbers of children in each type of family, rather than families of each type.

Family Composition (Table 3)

Head of household	2007 Survey		2006 Survey		2005 Survey	2004 Survey
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
Two parent	130	12.20%	91	9.10%	13.30%	13.60%
Single mother	876	82.18%	872	87.60%	83.30%	85.10%
Single father	10	0.94%	8	0.80%	1.20%	1.20%
Grandparent	3	0.28%	8	0.80%	1.30%	0.10%
Not specified	47	4.41%	17	1.70%	0.80%	0.00%
Total	1066	100%	996	100%	100%	100%

D. Work Status of Parents

Data regarding parental work status was collected for the parents of 1,013 children in the 2007 survey. The 2007 data confirms previous findings indicating that a significant proportion of parents living in homeless shelters in Massachusetts work. The fact that most do not is not surprising, given the fact that in order to be eligible for the largest subset of family shelters, DTA funded Emergency Assistance shelter, homeless families must be at or below 130% of the poverty line. (For a family of three, this translates to \$22,321 as of 2007.) It is important to note that many “non-working” parents are taking active steps to move into the job market, as documented in the next section of the report.

Parents and Work Status (Table 4)

Status	2007 Survey		2006 Survey		2005 Survey	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Children with working parents	206	20.34%	173	19.50%	139	18.80%
Children with non-working parents	807	79.67%	716	80.50%	602	81.20%
Total	1013	100%	889	100%	741	100%

³⁷ “Characteristics of Homeless Families Accessing Massachusetts Emergency Shelters 1999-2001” McCormack Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston, April 2003.

E. Job Training Status of Parents

The 2007 survey included a new question regarding the job training status of parents, and data was collected on the parental job training status of the parents of 903 children. As shown in table 4A below, a significant minority of the parents are attempting to move towards self-sufficiency by preparing for the job market.

Parents and Job Training Status – 2007 Survey (Table 4A)

Status	Number	Percentage
Parent in Job Training	195	21.59%
Parent Not in Job Training	708	78.41%
Total	903	100%

Based on the data reported in tables 4 and 4A above, it would appear that roughly 40% of the children have parents who were either working or in job training as of the date of this survey. Therefore, we can infer that about 60% of the children living in shelter had parents who were either attending school, looking for work, or had barriers precluding work or work-related activity.

F. TAFDC Status of Parents

“Welfare” or Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) is a government program that gives time-limited cash and medical assistance to low-income families with dependent children, including pregnant women, to help them meet the basic needs of their children. For example, a single parent not exempt from the TAFDC work requirement with two children would get a cash benefit of \$618 per month, or \$7,416 per year. Data regarding parental TAFDC status was collected for 987 children in the 2007 survey. The 2007 data confirms previous findings indicating that the vast majority of family shelter residents in Massachusetts are on TAFDC.

Parents and TAFDC (Table 4B)

Status	2007 Survey		2006 Survey		2005 Survey	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Children with parents on TAFDC	879	89.06%	786	89.50%	624	83.90%
Children with parents not on TAFDC	108	10.13%	92	10.50%	120	16.10%
Total	987	100%	878	100%	744	100%

G. Access to Early Education and Care

The following categories were included in each year’s survey questionnaire.

Stays with Parent means that the child spends most of her or his time during the day with the parent. This option is a desirable one for some middle-class and affluent families with one parent earning enough to support the family. However, for homeless families it means that the child must accompany the parent(s) on all appointments as they search for permanent housing or

attend shelter meetings. This arrangement also makes it difficult if not impossible to work or participate in job training, hindering the family's ability to move towards self-sufficiency. Moreover, the child misses out on critical opportunities for healthy brain development offered by quality early education and care, and consequently remains very vulnerable to the life-long harmful impacts of homelessness.

Stays with Relative/Friend indicates an informal arrangement whereby the child is staying with someone outside the immediate family. While this arrangement may help facilitate parental efforts to move towards self-sufficiency, the child still misses out on critical opportunities for healthy brain development offered by quality early education and care.

Head Start is a comprehensive program for 3 and 4 year old children in families with income at or below the official poverty line (\$17,170 for a family of three), or who receive public assistance. Head Start also serves children with disabilities. Early Head Start serves children birth to 3 years. With 31 grantees in Massachusetts, Head Start is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start Bureau. Because of funding limitations and other barriers, Head Start is not able to serve all children who are eligible. According to the National Institute of Early Education Research, less than 60 percent of eligible children were served by Head Start programs.³⁸

Homeless children have even less access to Head Start than poor children with housing. Only 26,235 homeless children were enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start during the 2006-2007 school year nationally, including 872 in Massachusetts.³⁹ Given that there are at least 567,000 U.S. infants, toddlers and preschoolers who experience homelessness each year,⁴⁰ a mere 4% of homeless young children are served by Head Start and Early Head Start, in spite of the fact that 100% are eligible⁴¹.

Center-based Child Care for the purposes of this survey refers to child care and/or early education services provided by a center or a public school. Low-income families may access center-based child care through a public subsidy such as a voucher or contracted slot.

Home-based or Family Child Care is licensed care given in a provider's home for up to six children including the provider's own children.

Kindergarten was offered as a possible response, since shelter staff completing the survey were asked to provide information regarding every child under the age of six living in the shelter, and many five year-old children attend kindergarten. However kindergarten is not considered to fall under the rubric of early education and care. Among other things, kindergarten is not full day. To focus on access to child care and early education, children attending kindergarten were

³⁸ National Institute for Early Education Research, "State Preschool Yearbook," (2004).

³⁹ Data is from the Head Start Program Information Report for the 2006-2007 program year, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start.

⁴⁰ This estimate derived by computing 42% of the oft-cited figure of 1.35 million homeless children each year. 42% of homeless children are under the age of six. National Center on Family Homelessness, "America's Homeless Children." According to a 2000 study by the Urban Institute, 1.35 million children experience homelessness in America over the course of a year. Burt et al., "America's Homeless II: Populations and Services," (The Urban Institute, 2000).

⁴¹ Virtually all homeless families meet the income criteria for Head Start. Moreover, under the Head Start reauthorization bill enacted in late 2007, homeless children automatically qualify for enrollment.

omitted from certain tables showing data from the 2006 and 2007 surveys, as noted below. Children attending kindergarten were excluded from all data from the 2005 and 2004 surveys.

Other was offered as an answer to cover any arrangement not mentioned as a possible response.

Table 5 below presents the following data sets for comparison:

- Data on what all Massachusetts children under the age of six (both housed and homeless) do during the weekday; and
- Data on what all homeless children under the age of six living in shelter do during the weekday, based on responses to HHC’s shelter surveys.

Comparison of Child Status (Table 5)

Category	All MA Children Birth-5 years ⁴²	2007 HHC Survey	2006 HHC survey	2005 HHC survey	2004 HHC survey
N =	320,722	1,043 ⁴³	967 ⁴⁴	834	724
Stays with Parent	24.00%	47.56%	45.60%	40.10%	51.90%
Stays with Relative or Friend	8.00%	3.84%	3.80%	2.40%	3.90%
Head Start, Early Head Start, center-based child care/early ed. program/preschool, or public preschool[3]	56.00%	32.98%	35.70%	47.00%	38.40%
Home-based/Family Child Care	12.00%	13.81%	11.70%	9.10%	5.70%
Other/not specified	0.00%	1.82%	3.20%	1.40%	0.10%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Another way to look at this data is to combine the responses into children with some formal care/education arrangement vs. children with no formal early care arrangement. A formal care arrangement includes children in Head Start, a center-based program, or a home-based (or family) child care. In nine instances, forms of care listed above under “other/not specified” were deemed by the authors to constitute a formal care arrangement, and therefore included in the “Yes Early Care” category below. “No Early Care” includes those children staying with parent or staying with a relative or friend, not specified, as well as seven responses under “other” not deemed by the authors to constitute a formal care arrangement.

⁴² Data is for all Mass. children aged birth through 4 years, 11 months old, as of the 2000 U.S. Census, and is derived from: “Securing Our Future: Planning What We Want for Our Youngest Children, Future Trends – Volume VI,” Mass. Dept. of Education, 2001.

⁴³ N does not include the 23 children from the 2007 survey sample attending kindergarten.

⁴⁴ N does not include the 27 children from the 2006 survey sample attending kindergarten.

Comparing young Massachusetts children in shelter to all young Massachusetts children, as shown in Table 5A below, 48% of homeless young children in 2007 are in some type of formal early education and care, compared to 68%⁴⁵ of all young children in Mass.

Table 5A shows a modest increase in homeless families' access since the first survey was conducted in 2004, with a brief "spike" in 2005 that has not recurred since then. It is not clear whether the survey data reflect an actual increase in the proportion of homeless children living in shelters who received early education and care from 2004 to 2005 and a subsequent decrease from 2005 to 2006, vs. statistically insignificant variation from year to year due to data sampling issues. However, **it is fair to conclude that a) roughly half of all young homeless children living in shelters in Massachusetts participate in formal early education and care, and b) young homeless children living in shelters lag considerably behind their non-homeless peers in terms of access to and participation in early education and care.**

This gap between homeless and housed children matters. Without formal care for their children, it is impossible for homeless parents to move towards self-sufficiency by working, participating in job training or GED programs, or pursuing higher education. Equally – if not more – importantly, homeless children not enrolled in early education and care are missing out on the opportunity to keep up or catch up developmentally, intellectually and emotionally with their non-homeless peers.

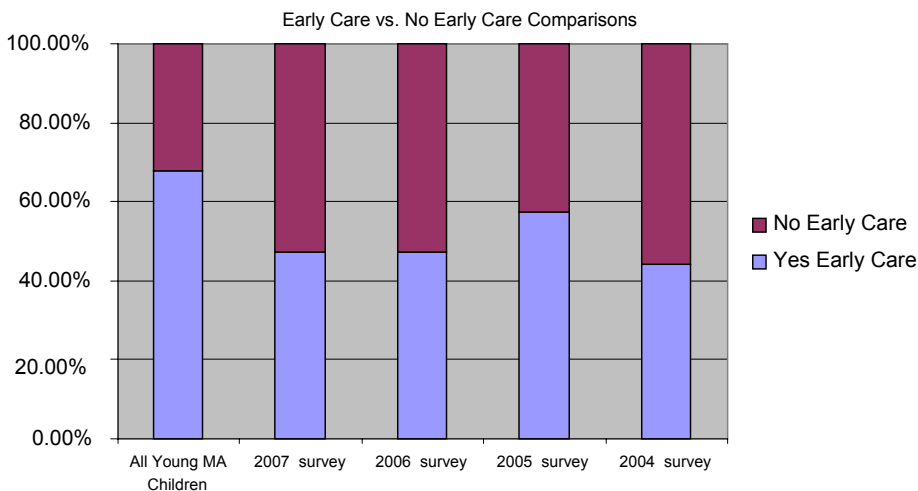
It is important to note that the statistics cited above - 48% of homeless young children accessing early education and care vs. 68% of young children in the general population – actually understates the "early education and care gap" between homeless children and their housed peers. Of the 31% of the young children in the general population not participating in early education and care, a high proportion are in economically stable or affluent families with stay-at-home parents and nannies – arrangements that most people would view as positive for those children. In contrast, the 52% of homeless young children who live in shelters and do not participate in early education and care are in a very different situation, in arrangements that are generally not in the children's best interests.

(For a discussion of the documented benefits of quality early education and care on homeless children and their families, see section III-H above, "Early Education and Care Makes a Difference: The Impact of Quality Care and Early Education on Homeless Children and Their Families." See also Appendix 2 to this report, "The Value of High-Quality Preschool Services.")

⁴⁵ As of 2000, the most recently-available data, 47% were in center-based care or Head Start, 12% were in a family child care program, and 9% were in a public school preschool program. "Securing Our Future: Planning What We Want for Our Youngest Children, Future Trends – Volume VI," Mass. Department of Education, 2001.

Early Care vs. No Child Care Comparison (Table 5A)

Category	All MA Children 0-5 yrs[1]	2007 HHC shelter survey	2006 HHC shelter survey	2005 HHC shelter survey	2004 HHC shelter survey
N=	320,722	1,033[1]	967	834	724
Yes Early Care	68.00%	48.12%	47.40%	57.55%	44.20%
No Early Care	32.00%	51.88%	52.60%	42.45%	55.80%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%



The following table shows the percentage of young children in each category of care, by shelter type. (For a description of each shelter type, see section III-D, “Shelter System,” above.)

2007 Child Care Status by Shelter Type (Table 6-2007)

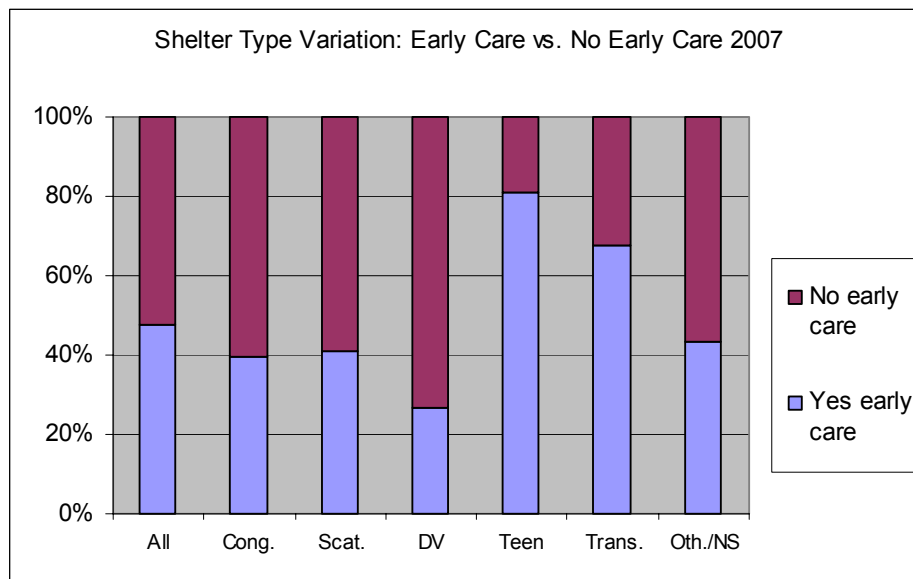
Category	All	Cong.	Scat.	DV	Teen	Trans.	Oth./NS
Stays w/ parent	46.97%	55.00%	45.33%	66.29%	16.85%	24.03%	34.78%
Stays w/ rel./friend	3.79%	3.45%	10.67%	0.00%	1.12%	5.84%	2.90%
Head Start/Early Head Start	8.14%	6.55%	12.00%	7.87%	1.12%	16.88%	7.25%
Center-based	24.43%	18.45%	22.67%	15.73%	57.30%	27.27%	34.78%
Home-based/Family child care	13.64%	13.10%	5.33%	2.23%	22.47%	20.78%	14.49%
Kindergarten	2.18%	2.24%	2.67%	3.37%	0.00%	3.90%	0.00%
Other/not spec.	0.85%	1.21%	1.33%	4.49%	1.12%	1.30%	5.80%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

For prior year data, please refer to Appendix 2, below.

The following table shows children with some kind of formal care arrangement vs. children without any formal care arrangement, by shelter type:

2007 Early Care vs. No Early Care by Shelter Type (Table 7-2007)

Category	All %	Cong. %	Scat. %	DV %	Teen %	Trans. %	Oth./NS %
Yes early care	48.12%	39.46%	41.10%	26.74%	80.90%	67.57%	43.48%
No early care	51.88 %	60.54%	58.90%	73.26%	19.10%	32.43%	56.52%
Total	100%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%



For prior year data, please refer to Appendix 2, below.

The data was also broken down by region, as shown in the following table:

2007 Child Status by Region (Table 8-2007)

Category	All	SE MA	Gr. Bos.	NE MA	Cent. MA	W MA
Stays w/ parent	48.00%	59.21%	40.65%	46.20%	51.47%	60.66%
Stays w/ rel./friend	3.87%	3.95%	3.44%	3.79%	2.21%	7.38%
Head Start/Early Head Start	8.33%	5.92%	12.26%	3.79%	2.21%	9.02%
Center-based	24.98%	20.39%	29.46%	27.85%	24.26%	10.66%
Home-based/Family child care	13.94%	9.21%	13.33%	18.35%	19.85%	9.84%
Other/not spec.	0.87%	1.32%	0.86%	0.00%	0.00%	2.46%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

For prior year data, please refer to Appendix 2, below.

The next table shows children with some kind of formal care arrangement vs. children without any formal care arrangement, by region. According to our 2007 survey, as shown in table 9-2007 below, about half of the homeless children living in shelters in Greater Boston, Northeastern Mass., and Central Mass. participate in formal early education and care. In

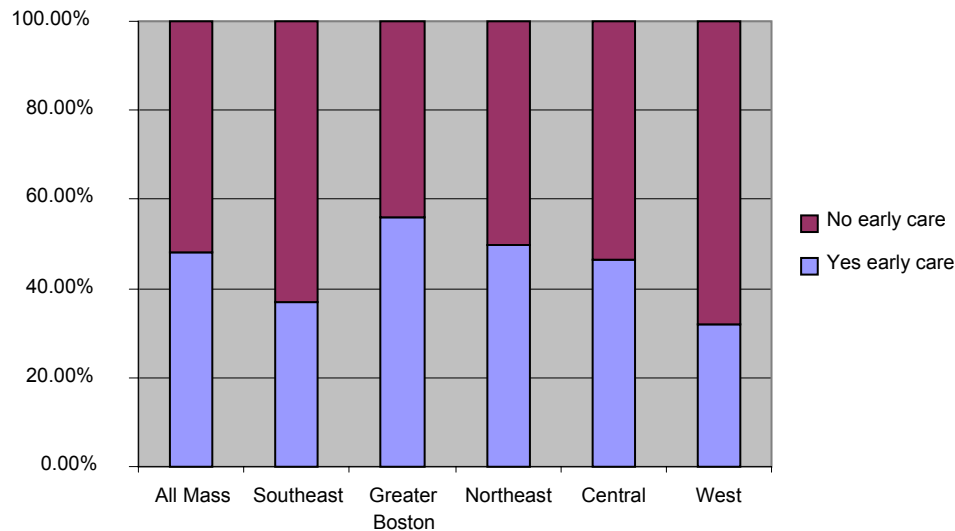
contrast, the great majority of homeless children living in shelters in Southeastern and Western Mass. do not participate in early education and care.

While there has been some regional fluctuation from year to year, some patterns have emerged over the four years that HHC has conducted the survey. Most notably, Western Mass. has lagged considerably behind the other regions in all four years (i.e., children in Western Mass. have a particularly low rate of access to early education and care), and Southeastern Mass. has lagged in three out of the four years, including the two most recent years.

Child Care vs. No Child Care by Region 2007 (Table 9-2007)

Category	All Mass	Southeast	Greater Boston	Northeast	Central	West
Yes early care	48.12%	36.84%	55.91%	49.99%	46.32%	31.98%
No early care	51.88%	63.16%	44.09%	49.99%	53.68%	68.04%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Regional Variation: Early Care vs. No Early Care 2007



For prior year data, please refer to Appendix 2, below.

H. Subsidized child care

Subsidized child care is available to low-income families in the form of vouchers, contracted slots, Head Start/Early Head Start, and Community Partnership for Children.

The state provides two types of child care vouchers:

- TANF⁴⁶ vouchers are for families on TAFDC, or who received TAFDC cash benefits within the past twelve months. While theoretically TANF vouchers are available immediately, parents often face substantial delays in obtaining TANF vouchers due to red tape, **in spite of well-intentioned efforts in recent years to streamline the process for**

⁴⁶ TANF = Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, the federal program under which Massachusetts operates TAFDC (Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children).

securing TANF vouchers. It is hoped that the new policy regarding immediate access to vouchers for families living in shelter will address this problem for this population.⁴⁷

- “Income-eligible” vouchers are for families with a demonstrated service need with income below 50% of state median income. If a family is eligible for an income-eligible voucher, they usually will be put on a waiting list. Currently, about 23,000 children in Massachusetts are on the waiting list for subsidized care, up substantially from recent years. Theoretically, even before implementation of the new policy regarding immediate access to vouchers for families living in shelter, those families should have been able to routinely access income-eligible vouchers. However, **in spite of well-intentioned efforts in recent years to streamline the process for securing income-eligible vouchers**, homeless families often encounter considerable red tape when applying for income-eligible vouchers, similar to TANF vouchers.

Given the low income of shelter residents, it is safe to assume that virtually all children reported by survey respondents to be participating in early education and care do so through some form of subsidized care. In the 2007 survey, for those children not participating in early education and care, the survey respondents were asked to indicate whether or not the parent(s) had “tried to get a child care voucher or any other form of subsidized childcare/early ed.” Respondents indicated that parents attempted to secure some form of subsidy for 114 or 10.9% of the children. However, of those children, 29 were in fact participating in some form of early education and care, suggesting respondent error in completing this part of the survey, and resulting in an adjusted result of 85 or 8.1%. This indicates that a significant proportion of homeless parents attempted to secure some form of subsidized early education and care, but were unsuccessful. This data is consistent with both anecdotal reports and other evidence⁴⁸.

In spite of the questions raised by data collected on subsidies, it seems clear that a significant number of homeless families were frustrated in their efforts to obtain subsidized care for their children, a conclusion documented by the Bessie Tartt Wilson Children’s Foundation report cited in footnote 3 above, and supported by the experience of numerous parents of children enrolled at Horizons for Homeless Children’s Community Children’s Centers, as well as that of HHC professionals and others involved in helping parents navigate the voucher application process.

⁴⁷ See footnote 3, above.

⁴⁸ The red tape faced by many low-income parents seeking to obtain child care vouchers was documented in a recent report issued by the Bessie Tartt Wilson Children’s Foundation. Washington, et al., “Keeping the Promise: A Study of the Massachusetts Child Care Voucher System,” (2006).

VI. Analysis

In three out of the four years in which the survey was conducted, less than half of children living in homeless shelters participated in early education and care. (As noted above, it is not clear whether the survey data reflect an actual increase in the proportion of homeless children living in shelters who participate in early education and care from 2004 to 2005 and a subsequent decrease from 2005 to 2006, or merely statistically insignificant variation from year to year due to data sampling issues.) The fact that the 2007 survey shows little change from the prior year is particularly disappointing, given that the Mass. Dept. of Early Education and Care (EEC) began prioritizing homeless families living in shelter for access to childcare vouchers as of July 2006. These results suggest that that policy did not have a significant impact on homeless families' access to early education and care. As noted above, as this report goes to press, EEC and DTA are in the process of implementing an even more aggressive policy, under which all families living in shelters are to have immediate access to childcare vouchers. **It is our hope that as this promising policy is implemented, the number of homeless children living in shelter accessing early education and care will increase significantly.**

A. Accessing Child Care and Early Education

The following are reasons why homeless young children should be able to access early education and care:

- Virtually all homeless young children living in shelter meet income eligibility criteria for subsidies. Because the family sheltered population is defined by state eligibility policy, the income of any sheltered family is at or below 130% of the federal poverty line. (For a family of three, 130% of the poverty line is \$22,321 as of 2007.)
- As noted above, under a policy implemented by EEC on July 1, 2006, homeless children living in shelters were intended to have priority access to “income eligible” early education and care vouchers.⁴⁹ (As described above, the new policy being rolled out as of December of 2007 should afford even greater access.⁵⁰ This is particularly so given concurrent efforts by the Dept. of Early Education and Care and the Dept. of Transitional Assistance to train shelter staff, DTA staff and Child Care Resource and Referral agency staff on the new policy.)
- Most homeless families are on TAFDC; even prior to the new policy that is currently being implemented, most of these families were eligible for a TANF child care voucher.
- Homeless families are connected to shelter providers who want to link them to needed services, including child care.
- Homeless parents identify child care as one of their primary needs on the way to self-sufficiency.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Mass. Department of Early Education and Care, EEC Management Bulletin FY 2007-01, June 27, 2006, sec. 2.2.1.

⁵⁰ See footnote 3, above.

⁵¹ “Supporting Young Homeless Children and Their Families in Massachusetts”, Mass. Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Children Without Homes Initiative, June 2001.

B. Barriers to Child Care and Early Education

The following are reasons why homeless young children have difficulties accessing early education and care:

- Priority status is limited to homeless families living in shelters, excluding the vast majority of homeless families who live in other makeshift arrangements.
- As discussed in section V-G above, low-income families face considerable red tape from Department of Transitional Assistance caseworkers and from local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies when seeking child care vouchers, **in spite of well-intentioned efforts in recent years to streamline the process for securing vouchers**. It is hoped that with the advent of the new policy described above, and with concurrent efforts by the Dept. of Early Education and Care and the Dept. of Transitional Assistance to train shelter staff, DTA staff, and Child Care Resource and Referral agency staff on the new policy, this will be a less frequent occurrence.
- Homeless families often transition through multiple residences prior to entering shelter and some are placed by the state in shelter far from their communities. Although the Mass. Dept. of Transitional Assistance has been more successful in recent years in placing families in their own communities, some relocation still occurs. Because of this mobility, families may have difficulty meeting ‘service need’ requirements (such as employment, job training, and education) and therefore do not qualify for subsidized child care.
- Some homeless parents living in homeless shelters may not be aware of the availability of subsidized care, or may not have effective assistance in negotiating the process for applying for subsidized care.
- Despite eligibility for subsidized care and the new priority status for homeless families living in shelters seeking child care vouchers, homeless parents may still have to put their children on waiting lists for Head Start and other forms of subsidized child care because of limited government funding or lack of capacity in the community.
- Transportation to work, training, education, and child care sites is difficult for homeless families.

VII. Recommendations

Much work has been done in recent years in Massachusetts to raise awareness of family homelessness and much has been done to emphasize the importance of early care and education for the Commonwealth's youngest children.

However, while an end to homelessness and universal access to early care and education are the eventual goals, now is the time to target early education and care services to children who are experiencing homelessness, among the most vulnerable children in the Commonwealth, to ensure that they are not left behind.

Voucher access

As with any new policy, it is reasonable to anticipate that implementation issues will arise as the new "immediate voucher for homeless families" policy is rolled out. **Horizons for Homeless Children urges the Department of Early Education and Care and Department of Transitional Assistance to closely monitor implementation of the new policy, to ensure that the promise of the new policy is realized, resulting in dramatically less red tape for parents seeking vouchers, and much higher rates of access to early education and care for families living in shelter. We are encouraged by recent efforts by the Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Transitional Assistance to train Child Care Resource and Referral staff, DTA staff, and shelter staff on the new policy; we urge both agencies to conduct periodic outreach to each of these audiences. We also urge EEC to implement the new policy for all homeless families living in shelter, whether or not they have been referred to the shelter by DTA. We encourage EEC and DTA to focus in particular on shelters in the Southeastern and Western parts of the state, as access to early education and care in those regions has consistently lagged for homeless families living in shelter.**

Add-on rate for vouchers used by homeless families

To adequately meet the needs of homeless children and their families, early education and care providers who serve homeless children must provide a low child to teacher ratio, highly-qualified teachers, and support services for parents. Whereas the 85 contracted slots set aside for homeless children (see next item, "Homeless contracted slots") include additional reimbursement (an "add-on rate") to help meet the additional cost of serving homeless children and families, there is no additional reimbursement for homeless families who use vouchers. As a result, there is a large gap between the actual cost of providing services and the level of reimbursement for those providers offering enhanced services for homeless children and their families. **To address this problem we recommend that the Dept. of Early Education and Care establish a voucher add-on rate for early education and care providers offering enhanced services to homeless children and families to help pay for those services, to be determined on the basis of the level of services offered by a given provider to the homeless children and families they serve.**

Contracted slots

Over a decade ago, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts first contracted with a handful of early education and care providers to set aside fully-subsidized "slots" in child care centers for homeless children. (Slots and vouchers constitute the primary forms of subsidized early education and care.) Today, there are still only 85 "slots" for homeless children under these contracts for the entire state. While, as noted above, EEC and DTA are implementing a policy intended to give homeless families living in shelters immediate access to vouchers, we believe

that these families should be served through a mix of vouchers and contracted slots, in order to support access, and to give providers of enhanced services for homeless families enough structure to anticipate and respond to the demand for services. **We recommend that the Legislature substantially increase the number of contracted slots designated for homeless children to at least 250 contracted slots, and provide the necessary funding.**

Definition of “homeless”

There are conflicting definitions of the term “homeless” at both the state and federal levels of government. Some definitions include the many “doubled-up” children and/or families sleeping on sofas and floors in another family’s home due to economic hardship, while other definitions do not. For example, here in Massachusetts, the state Legislature recently adopted a definition of “homelessness” that includes doubled-up families.⁵² However, soon thereafter, the Massachusetts Commission to End Homelessness adopted a definition of “homeless” that does not include doubled-up families, and instead included those families in its definition of “at risk of homelessness.” At the federal level, legislation that President Bush is expected to sign by the end of 2007 reauthorizing the Head Start program⁵³ adopted a definition of “homeless child” that includes children living in doubled-up situations, reiterating a definition previously adopted by Congress in Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Legislation moving through Congress would bring the definition of “homeless” used by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development – which currently does not include doubled-up families – closer to the more comprehensive definition of “homeless” as appearing in McKinney-Vento and the recently-passed Head Start legislation, by adding some or all doubled-up families to the HUD definition. **We recommend that both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the federal government adopt a uniform definition of homelessness that includes children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, consistent with the education subtitle U.S. McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and with the U.S. Head Start Act as reauthorized in late 2007 – i.e., children and youths living in so-called “doubled-up situations.”**

Head Start

The Head Start State Collaboration Project has established a goal of developing systems for enrolling more homeless families in quality early education and child care, Head Start, and after school care. We view the adoption of this goal as a positive step. However, Head Start providers in Massachusetts and their counterparts throughout the U.S. will need to significantly expand efforts to identify and enroll homeless children, under the Head Start reauthorization bill that was enacted in late 2007.

Data

For the 2004-2005 school year, public school districts reported to the Mass. Department of Education (DOE) that they have identified a total of 7,085 homeless children. However, a recent analysis conducted by DOE concludes that the school districts have identified only about 15% of the homeless students attending public school, largely due to the phenomenon of “hidden doubled up families.” While the Department of Transitional Assistance now issues quarterly reports on homeless families and ages of children including denials of Emergency Shelter Assistance, much work remains to be done in terms of State tracking of this issue. The Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Transitional Assistance have begun to match their caseloads to

⁵² Mass. Resolves of 2006, c. 2, sec. 3.

⁵³ The “Improving Head Start Act,” H.R. 1429.

identify families living in emergency shelters receiving subsidized early education and care, and it is hoped that they will do so on a monthly basis.

Transportation

Transportation remains a barrier for homeless families seeking to access subsidized early education and care. While some vouchers and all contracted slots include partial reimbursement for early education and care providers who provide transportation, most providers are unable to do so. Moreover, often vouchers do not include transportation reimbursement. As this report goes to print, Congress is considering legislation that would authorize partial federal reimbursement for school districts' expenses for transporting homeless children to their school of origin under the U.S. McKinney-Vento Act.

Linkages and Cross Training

There is a continuing need to more fully develop linkages between the family shelter system and the early education and care system. The Mass. Dept. of Early Education and Care and Dept. of Transitional Assistance recently took an important step in this direction, by bringing together Child Care Resource and Referral agencies with shelter providers in their geographic area, to be trained on the new policy regarding access to childcare vouchers for families living in shelter.

Homelessness Prevention and Shelter Access

The eligibility threshold for families seeking emergency shelter, which had been reduced from 130% of the poverty line to 100% of the poverty line, was subsequently restored by the Legislature to 130% of the poverty line – still a very low threshold, but a significant improvement. (For a family of three, 130% of the poverty line is \$22,321 as of 2007.) The Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program, which covers rental arrearages, first month's rent/last month's rent and utility arrearages was reinstated by the Legislature after being shut down in mid-FY05 due to insufficient funding, but is only accessible in very limited circumstances. Massachusetts still does not have a comprehensive, funded homelessness prevention strategy. Horizons for Homeless Children applauds the work of the Massachusetts Commission to End Homelessness, and urges the Legislature to provide the necessary funding to implement the strategy developed by the Commission.

State Planning

HHC recommends that the needs of homeless children, particularly young children, be addressed in the following State Plans (required by the federal government) and planning processes: Transitional Aid to Needy Families (TANF), Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and McKinney Supportive Housing Program (SHP).

The Mass. Department of Early Education and Care made extensive reference to its efforts to meet the needs of homeless families and their children in the state plan submitted to the federal government in connection with the Child Care and Development Fund. Horizons for Homeless Children urges the Mass. Interagency Council on Homelessness, recently re-convened by Gov. Patrick to coordinate implementation of the recommendations of the Commission to End Homelessness, to ensure that the above-referenced State Plans address the needs of young homeless children.

VIII. Appendix 1: New Policy on Mass. Regarding Immediate Access to Childcare Vouchers for Families Living in Homeless Shelters



ANN REALE
COMMISSIONER

EMB FY 2008 - 01

EEC Management Bulletin

Subject: **Managing EEC Financial Assistance: Voucher Process for Families Referred to Shelters by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)**

Date Issued: November 13, 2007

Effective Date: December 3, 2007

For Use By: Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs)

Supersedes: Voucher Child Care P-EEC-Income Eligible-25

Synopsis: Outlines new procedure for CCR&Rs to follow when issuing vouchers for families referred to temporary emergency shelters by DTA.

Further Info: bulletinquestions@massmail.state.ma.us

1.0 Determination of Eligibility

Families referred by DTA to temporary emergency assistance shelters, domestic violence shelters, or non-emergency assistance shelters are eligible for EEC homeless child care assistance when they first arrive at the shelter and at any future date they choose while residing in the shelter.

1.1 Income

It is not necessary for any family placed in a shelter by DTA to document their income in order to access homeless child care assistance because the family's eligibility for such assistance has been determined by DTA. Families living in a shelter who have not been placed there by DTA are required to document their household income and must meet EEC's income eligibility criteria in order to access homeless child care assistance.

1.2 Family Activity

For purposes of eligibility for homeless child care assistance, the family's activity is "living in shelter."

2.0 Referrals

2.1 The DTA Referral Process

DTA staff will use a special homeless child care referral form called the *Child Care Referral Notice for Homeless Families (EA-CCRN (12/2007))*, which was developed jointly by EEC and DTA to refer homeless families for child care services. DTA will give the *Child Care Referral*

Notice for Homeless Families to the family and will fax a copy to the shelter. If the family is also participating in an Employment Services Program (ESP) job-related activity, an existing BEACON *Child Care Referral Notice* will be attached to the *Child Care Referral Notice for Homeless Families* form. (See DTA Field Operations Memo 2007-62 for a detailed description of the DTA referral process.)

2.2 The Shelter Referral Process

Shelter staff shall assist all families placed in the shelter by DTA and referred for homeless child care services in accessing these services by helping them connect to the local CCR&R when they are ready to access child care. Please note that a family may choose to delay accessing child care or may choose not to access child care at all. (See DTA Field Operations Memo 2007-62 for a detailed description of the shelter referral process.)

Shelter staff shall also assist families living in shelters who have not been placed there by DTA in accessing child care services by referring them directly to the CCR&R. The eligibility criteria and CCIMS code definition applicable to these families are outlined in Section 3.3 below.

3.0 The Voucher Process

The CCR&R will offer families resource and referral information and provide them with the pamphlet, *Child Care Assistance for Families Living In Shelters*.

The voucher process will be explained to the family in person or over the phone if the family chooses to complete the voucher process through the mail.

If a family chooses to complete the voucher process through the mail, the CCR&R will collaborate with the shelter to assist the family in completing the process. The CCR&R will fax a copy of the voucher to shelter staff for the parent to sign. Once the parent has signed a copy of the voucher, the shelter will fax the copy of the voucher with the parent's original signature back to the CCR&R and will assist the parent in mailing the signed copy of the voucher to the CCR&R. Upon receipt of the fax from the shelter, the CCR&R can begin processing the voucher. The CCR&R will keep the fax with the signed copy of the voucher in the parent's file. The voucher process will be complete once the copy of the voucher with the parent's original signature is on file at the CCR&R.

3.1 Service Need

Families living in shelters are eligible for full time child care.

3.2 Parent Co-Payment

Families referred by DTA, including families receiving Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits and non-TAFDC families receiving emergency assistance (EA) do not pay a parent co-payment.

3.3 CCIMS Codes

The CCR&Rs will code all families living in temporary shelters as outlined below:

Code	Definition	Income Requirement	Required Documents	Activity	Service Need	Schedule of Care	Parent Co-payment	Reassessment	Type of Care
1H	Placed in shelter by DTA and also participating in ESP activity	No	Only DTA referral & authorization	Living in shelter	Full time	Parent Choice	No	12 months or within 30 days of shelter departure date	Licensed family child care; Licensed or license exempt center-based care
3H	Placed in shelter by DTA	No	Only DTA referral	Living in shelter	Full time	Parent Choice	No	12 months or within 30 days of shelter departure date	Licensed family child care; Licensed or license exempt center-based care
6H	Living in shelter, but not placed there by DTA	Yes	Shelter Referral & Standard Documents	Living in shelter	Full time	Parent Choice	Yes	12 months or within 30 days of shelter departure date	Licensed family child care; Licensed or license exempt center-based care

Note: DTA will notify the CCR&R if a TAFDC family receiving homeless child care begins participating in an ESP activity by generating a current BEACON *Child Care Referral Notice* and faxing it to the CCR&R. The family's code should be changed from 3H to 1H if this occurs.

4.0 Reassessment Process

The CCR&R will send a reassessment notice to the family 45 days before the voucher will end or when the shelter notifies the CCR&R that the family will be leaving the shelter. The CCR&R will collaborate with the shelter to assist the family in completing the re-assessment process. (See DTA Field Operations Memo 2007-62 for a detailed description of shelter re-assessment process.)

If a family leaves the shelter before renewing their voucher, the CCR&R will contact the shelter to obtain the family's new address and will send a notice to the family advising them of the need to complete a reassessment in order to determine if they are eligible to continue receiving child care assistance (EEC financial assistance) after their departure from the shelter.

4.1 Reassessment Period

The initial voucher is written for up to twelve months or up to 30 days after the family's scheduled departure date (when known), whichever period is shorter.

4.2 Continuity of Care

Families leaving shelters are eligible for continuation of child care assistance (EEC financial assistance) in the form of an EEC contract, voucher, or Community Partnerships for Children scholarship provided the child remains eligible.

Please refer to Section 6.3 of the EEC Financial Assistance Policy Guide:

All families who have a change in activity, income, family size or composition (including DTA authorized families who lose their authorization and children who experience a change in child custody) upon reassessment or who are reassessed due to a reported change in activity, income, family size or composition will continue to be eligible for financial assistance, as long as they continue to meet EEC income and activity requirements.

IX. Appendix 2: The Value of High-Quality Preschool Services

A growing body of research strongly suggests that high quality early care and education has profound positive effects on the lives of low-income children and significant savings to society.

Evaluation of Horizons for Homeless Children's Centers

As noted above, a study issued in February of 2006 by the National Center on Family Homelessness documented the positive impact of quality early education and care on young homeless children. ("Evaluation of Horizons for Homeless Children's Community Children's Centers: Final Report.") Please see section III-H above for a summary of the evaluation findings.

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project⁵⁴

From 1962-1967, children ages 3 and 4 in Ypsilanti, Michigan, born in poverty and at high risk of failing in school, were randomly divided into a program group who received a high-quality preschool program based on High/Scope's active learning approach and a comparison group who received no preschool program. In the study's most recent phase, the original study participants were interviewed at age 40. Additional data were gathered from the subjects' school, social services, and arrest records.

The Project estimated for every dollar invested, the return is \$17, based on the reduced costs of special and remedial education and justice system and welfare expenditures, and in the increased earnings and projected tax revenues for participants. Out of that \$17 return, about \$13 went to the government and the general public, and about \$4 went to the preschool participant over the course of their lives through age 40. Of the public return, 88% came from crime savings, 4% came from education savings, 7% came from increased taxes due to higher earnings, and 1% came from welfare savings.

Researchers found the following major differences favoring the 40-year-olds who had been enrolled in High/Scope's active learning preschool program:

- Educational performance. Significantly more preschool program participants graduated from regular high school (65% vs. 45%). Over the course of the study, the preschool program group had significantly higher average school achievement scores at ages 9, 10 and 14, and had higher average literacy scores at ages 19 and 27.
- Earnings and economic status. At age 40, preschool program participants had significantly higher median annual earnings than non-participants (\$20,800 vs. \$15,300). More preschool program participants than non-participants were employed (76% vs. 62%), owned their own homes (37% vs. 28%), owned cars (82% vs. 60%), and had savings accounts (76% vs. 50%).
- Social responsibility. By age 40, fewer preschool program participants had been arrested five or more times (preschool participants 36% vs. comparison group 55%), and less than half as many preschool program participants as non-participants had ever been arrested for drug-related crimes (preschool participants 14% vs. comparison group 34%).

⁵⁴ Schweinhart, "The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40" (2005) (www.highscope.org/Research/PerryProject/PerryAge40_SumWeb.pdf).

Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Center Program⁵⁵

This study compared children who attended Child-Parent Centers from 1983-86 to a random sample of eligible children who did not participate in the program. Relative to the comparison group, preschool participants had:

- 29% higher rate of high school completion,
- 42% reduction in arrest for a violent offense,
- 41% reduction in special education placement,
- 40% reduction in the rate of grade retention.

Overall, by the time that preschool participants had reached the age of 21, \$7 was returned to society at large for every dollar invested in preschool. Excluding benefits to participants, the ratio of program benefits to costs for the general public was \$3.83 for every dollar invested. The ratio of benefits to costs for government savings alone was \$2.88 per dollar invested.

Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project⁵⁶

The Abecedarian Project began in the 1970's when children from low-income families in North Carolina were randomly assigned to a high quality child care setting. A control group did not receive the same intervention and high quality education.

- The children in high-quality programs are projected to make roughly \$143,000 more over their lifetimes than those who didn't take part in the program.
- Mothers of children who were enrolled can also expect greater earnings – about \$133,000 more over their lifetimes.
- School districts can expect to save more than \$11,000 per child because participants are less likely to require special or remedial education.
- At age 21, twice as many of the participants (35%) had graduated from or were attending a 4-year college. Only 14 % in the control group had done so.
- Results suggested a possible impact on smoking. Participants were less likely to smoke (39% vs. 55% in the control group), resulting in health benefits and longer lives, for a total benefit of \$164,000 per person.
- Taxpayers received a four-to-one return on their investment, in addition to significant social dividends and including better school success.

⁵⁵ Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, and Mann, "Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Center Program: Executive Summary." Institute for Research on Poverty (2001). (<http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/cls/cbaexecsum4.html>)

⁵⁶ Masse and Barnett, "A Benefit-Cost Analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention" (<http://nieer.org/docs/index.php?DocID=57>)

2006 Child Status by Region (Table 8-2006)

Category	All	Southeast	Greater Boston	Northeast	Central	West
Stays w/ parent	44.5%	64.3%	35.2%	42.5%	43.1%	72.4%
Stays w/ rel./friend	3.7%	2.0%	5.8%	2.3%	0.5%	6.9%
Head Start/Early Head Start	7.7%	4.1%	9.0%	6.5%	9.1%	5.7%
Center-based	26.3%	23.5%	34.9%	19.2%	27.9%	4.6%
Home-based/Family child care	11.4%	4.1%	8.3%	23.4%	12.7%	2.3%
Kindergarten	2.7%	2.0%	1.5%	1.4%	4.6%	8.0%
Other/not spec.	3.7%	0.0%	5.3%	4.7%	2.0%	0.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

2005 Child Status by Region (Table 8-2005)

Category	All	Cape ⁵⁷	Southeast	Greater Boston	Northeast	Central	West
Stays with Parent	40.05%	28.13%	44.58%	36.57%	35.45%	50.52%	55.07%
Stays with Relative/Friend	2.40%	0.00%	1.20%	2.26%	1.82%	2.06%	7.25%
Head Start/Early Head Start	12.23%	9.38%	14.46%	9.93%	17.27%	11.34%	18.84%
Center-based Child Care/Early Ed/Preschool	34.77%	62.50%	36.14%	40.86%	28.18%	21.65%	10.14%
Home-based/Family Child Care	9.11%	0.00%	2.41%	7.90%	17.27%	14.43%	8.70%
Other	1.44%	0.00%	1.20%	2.48%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

2004 Child Status by Region (Table 8-2004)

Category	All	Cape	Southeast	Greater Boston	Northeast	Central	West
Stays with Parent	51.93%	71.67%	61.54%	48.21%	29.73%	72.22%	64.71%
Stays with Relative/Friend	3.87%	1.67%	7.69%	3.59%	4.05%	5.56%	3.92%
Head Start/Early Head Start	11.88%	6.67%	12.82%	11.88%	22.97%	9.26%	3.92%
Center-based Child Care/Early Ed/Preschool	26.52%	15.00%	15.38%	31.61%	27.03%	9.26%	21.57%
Home-based/Family Child Care	5.66%	5.00%	0.00%	4.71%	16.22%	3.70%	5.88%
Other	0.14%	0.00%	2.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

⁵⁷ The tables with regional data from the 2005 and 2004 surveys (tables 8-2004, 8-2005, 9-2004 and 9-2005) include separate data for Cape Cod and Southeastern Massachusetts. Horizons for Homeless Children subsequently combined its Cape Cod and Southeastern Mass. regions into a single Southeastern Mass. region, as reflected in the tables with regional data from the 2006 and 2007 survey (tables 8-2006, 8-2007, 9-2006 and 9-2007).

XI. Appendix 4: Mass. DOE Homeless Education Advisory 2003 - 6: Serving Homeless Preschool Children

This advisory is intended to provide guidance to school officials, Homeless Education Liaisons child development specialists, preschool program personnel, and providers of services to preschool children and their families, as they implement the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act requirement that "each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, **including public preschool education** (emphasis added), as other children and youth."

Homeless preschoolers are an under-served population due to the transient nature of homelessness and the enrollment barriers that children without homes and their families face, such as:

- Residency requirements;
- Lack of medical/immunization records;
- The inability to afford tuition based programs;
- Inflexible enrollment periods and procedures, such as wait list priorities; and
- Conflicting eligibility guidelines.

An important goal of McKinney-Vento is to afford homeless preschoolers the same opportunity to enroll, attend and succeed in preschool as non-homeless preschoolers, thereby minimizing their educational disruption due to homelessness. The intent is to better connect the available community resources for young children to improve the provision of comprehensive services to homeless children and their families.

School District Homeless Education Liaisons and early care and education providers, including child development and preschool program personnel, child care resource and referral agencies (CCRRs), and other service providers, must coordinate and collaborate to review and undertake a revision of practices, or policies that inadvertently act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children in child care and early education programs. As stated in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Non-Regulatory Guidance (F.2, F.4, and F.6) Homeless Education Liaisons play a central role in ensuring that "Homeless children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, and preschool programs administered by the LEA" and must:

- identify preschool-aged homeless children by working closely with shelters, emergency assistance motels, and social service agencies in their area, and by inquiring when enrolling homeless students in school, whether the family also has younger children.
- collaborate with the school district special education program and providers of Early Intervention services to ensure that the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirement that highly mobile children with disabilities, such as homeless children who are in need of early intervention, special education and related services, are located, identified and evaluated and that homeless children are included in the "Child Find" process for early identification of special education needs.
- work with preschool program staff to stress the essential nature of their services for homeless children and their families, to help them identify and remove barriers, such as waiting lists, that may prevent homeless families from obtaining child care or related services.

- review and recommend that early care and education programs set priorities for homeless preschoolers in assigning available child care slots.

As stated in the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, et al Recommendation for the Reauthorization of the Head Start Act (p. 1), "over 40% of the children living in shelters are under the age of five, and therefore at an age where early childhood education can have a significant impact on their development and future academic achievement." Our challenge is to work together to alleviate the reality that "only 15% of preschool children identified as homeless were enrolled in preschool programs."

APPENDIX : RELATED EDUCATION LEGISLATION (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Non-Regulatory Guidance p.28)

- Head Start has added homeless preschoolers as a targeted population to be served. Background on homelessness and its impact on young children, as well as implementation guidance can be found in a 1992 Information Memorandum from the Head Start Bureau (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Log Number: ACF-IM-92-12: http://www.nlchp.org/FA_Education/us_hhs_memo.pdf). Just as the legislation requires public schools to identify and remove barriers that may delay enrollment, the same requirement applies to preschool programs, such as Head Start.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that homeless preschoolers and all homeless children be included in the Child Find process for early identification of special education needs. It is recommended that, when possible, the eligibility process for identifying special needs should be expedited to avoid delays in provided services to eligible children caused by frequent mobility.

XII. Appendix 5: Web Resources

Center for Social Policy, McCormack Graduate School, UMass/Boston
www.mccormacktmp.umb.edu/csp/index.jsp

Citizens Housing and Planning Association Housing Report
www.chapa.org/pdf/WinnersandLosers.pdf

Early Education for All Campaign
www.earlyeducationforall.org

Homes for Families
www.homesforfamilies.org

Horizons for Homeless Children
www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org

Mass. Coalition for the Homeless
www.mahomeless.org

Mass. Commission to End Homelessness
www.mass.gov/dhcd/components/hc/default.htm

Mass. Department of Early Education and Care
www.eec.state.ma.us

Mass. Department of Education
www.doe.mass.edu/mv/

Mass. Department of Transitional Assistance
www.state.ma.us/dta/

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
www.naehcy.org/

National Center for Homeless Education
www.serve.org/nche

National Center on Family Homelessness
www.familyhomelessness.org

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
www.nlchp.org

National Policy and Advocacy Council on Homelessness
www.npach.org

One Family Campaign
www.onefamilycampaign.org

XIII. Appendix 6: Acknowledgements

The authors want to thank the following people who provided resources, feedback, suggestions, comments, and encouragement for one or more of the reports issued in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. (All affiliations are as of the time of involvement with the report.)

Center for Social Policy, McCormack Graduate School, UMass/Boston: Donna Haig Friedman

Child Care Resources/Mass. Childcare Resource & Referral Network: Kim Dion

Communities United Inc.: Stacy Dimino

Family Economic Initiative: Elizabeth Toulan

Homes for Families: Stephanie Brown

Horizons for Homeless Children (current and former staff, interns and volunteers): Olga Bucko, Ed Cameron, Seunghee Chang, Jarrett Doherty, Karin Elliott, Nichole Fiore, Colette O'Neill, Evan Saint Clair, Ivy Trappiel, Deirdre Wade, Brendan Ward

Mass. Coalition for the Homeless: Kelly Turley

Mass. Department of Early Education and Care: Janet McKeon, Anita Moeller, Kindreth Taylor

Mass. Department of Education: Emily Caille, Peter D. Cirioni, Sarah Slutterback

Mass. Department of Mental Health: Ann Capoccia

Mass. Department of Transitional Assistance: Rosalind Brown, Valorie Faretra, Janet Fender, Sandra Osgood

Mass. Head Start Association: Nancy Topping-Tailby

Our Place (Salvation Army): Darlene Kopesky

Strategies for Children/Early Education for All: Ophelia Navarro, Joan Wasser-Gish

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families: Louise Eldridge

XIV. Appendix 7: Shelters Participating in the 2007 Survey

Horizons for Homeless Children thanks the staffs of the following shelter programs for completing the 2007 survey, and for all that they do every day to help families with children overcome homelessness:

A Family Place	HART House	Project Hope
Amity House	Hastings House at Crittenton- Women's Union	Prospect House
Angel House I, II & III	Haven Shelter	REACH Beyond Domestic Violence
Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence	HAWC	Renewal House
Athol-Orange Family Inn	Hestia House	Revision House
Battered Women's Resources, Inc.	Hildebrand Family Self-Help Center	Ruth House Teen Living Safe Harbor
Boston Family Shelter	Horizons Housing Program I & II (Crittenton-Women's Union)	Salvation Army Gentle Arms Teen Living Program
Brigid's Crossing	House of Hope	Salvation Army Roxbury Family H.O.P.E. Shelter
Broderick House	Housing Families Inc. – Cross St.	Sandra's Lodge
Brookview House	Housing Families Inc. – Revere Inn Between	Shepherd's Place – Willis Center I and II
Cape Cod Center for Women	Inn Transition	Sojourner House
Casa Myrna Vasquez Teen Living Program	Jessie's House	Spiritus
Casa Nueva Vida	Just a Start House	St. Ambrose Family Shelter
Community Action Committee of Cape Cod and Islands	Margaret's House	St. Mary's Home
Conway House	Mary Martha Learning Center	Taking Care of Business
Crittenton-Women's Union Community Housing	Medford Family Life Education Center	Temporary Home for Women and Children
Crossroads Family Shelter	Medway House	The Second Step, Inc.
Cross Street Family Shelter	Merrimack House	The Village at Cambridge Street
David Jon Louison Family Center	Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership	The Village at Cataumet
Daybreak	Milly's Place	Turning Point Inc. – Mainstream Housing Program
Elizabeth Freeman Center	My Father's House	Visions Teen Parent Home
Emmaus Family Shelter	New England Farm Worker's Council	Wellspring House
Fall River Family Resource Center	New Hope I & II	Willis Scattered Site Program
Families in Transition	OASIS/YWCA of Greater Lawrence	Woman's Place Crisis Center
Family Independence I & II	Olivia's Place	Women's Resource Center
Family Life Center – Old Colony	Open Pantry – Jefferson Avenue Shelter	Y.O.U., Inc. Teen Parent Program
Family Resource Center	Our Place	Youville House
Florence House	Our Sister's Place	YWCA of Greater Lawrence Teen Living Program
Frances Perkins	Orchard Street House	
Friends of the Homeless of the South Shore	Pathway Family Shelter	
Genesis II – Catholic Charities	Pilgrims Hope	
Greenfield Family Inn	Portis Family House	
HarbOUR House		

XV. Appendix 8: Profile of Horizons for Homeless Children

Established in 1988, Horizons for Homeless Children (HHC) is a non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to meeting the needs of young homeless children and their families.

The mission of Horizons for Homeless Children is to improve the lives of homeless children and their families. We provide homeless children in Massachusetts with the nurturing, stimulation and opportunities for early education and play that all children need to learn and grow in healthy ways. To improve the lives of the children we serve over the long term, we connect their parents with the tools they need to achieve social and economic self-sufficiency. We advocate for public policies that will improve the lives of homeless children and their families.

Horizons for Homeless Children helps in several ways:

Community Children's Centers

HHC operates three Community Children's Centers in Boston which provide full-time, professional early education, child care and family support services for 175 homeless children and their parents each weekday.

Playspace Programs

Since 1990, HHC's Playspace Programs have trained more than 9,000 volunteers to provide nurturing, stimulating play opportunities for children in homeless shelters throughout Greater Boston and Central Mass. Over 1,000 active volunteers now work in more than 140 family shelters each week.

Training and Technical Assistance

HHC is increasingly recognized as an authority on the needs of young homeless children. By providing training and technical assistance to organizations, government agencies, and communities, HHC wants to improve mainstream resources that often do not effectively serve homeless children and assist in the design of services targeted to homeless children. HHC sponsored its first National Conference on Young Children Without Homes in April 2005, hosted its second National Conference in May of 2007, and will hold its third National Conference in April of 2008.

Advocacy

HHC and advocates for funding and public policy that will improve the lives of homeless children and their families. HHC works with policymakers in state and federal government, and with state and national advocacy partners.

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