



Bridging the Gap:

Early Care and Education
for Massachusetts
Young Homeless Children

By Ed Cameron and Sue Heilman

April 2004



HORIZONS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN

Table of Contents

- I. Executive Summary..... 2**
- II. Introduction..... 4**
- III. Child and Family Homelessness..... 6**
 - A. Demographics and Trends..... 6**
 - B. Causes of Child and Family Homelessness..... 7**
 - C. Accessing Family Shelter..... 7**
 - D. Shelter System..... 8**
 - E. Impacts of Homelessness on Children..... 9**
 - F. Supports for Homeless Families and Children in Shelter..... 10**
 - G. Early Care and Education System..... 10**
- IV. Survey Purpose and Methodology..... 12**
- V. Survey Results..... 13**
 - A. Shelter Type and Region (Tables 1 and 1A)..... 13**
 - B. Ages of Children (Tables 2 and 2A)..... 14**
 - C. Family Composition (Table 3)..... 15**
 - D. Work (Table 4)..... 15**
 - E. TAFDC (Table 4A)..... 16**
 - F. Access to Early Care and Education (Tables 5-5D)..... 17**
 - G. Child Care Vouchers (Tables 6-6B)..... 24**
- VI. Findings..... 25**
 - A. Accessing Child Care and Early Education..... 27**
 - B. Barriers to Child Care and Early Education..... 27**
- VII. Recommendations..... 28**
- VIII. Appendix 1: The Value of High-Quality Preschool Services..... 31**
- IX. Appendix 2: MA DOE Preschool Advisory..... 33**
- X. Information about Homelessness and Early Care and Education... 35**
- XI. Acknowledgements..... 36**
- XII. Profile of Horizons for Homeless Children..... 37**

I. Executive Summary

The facts are simple, yet startling:

- Homelessness is impacting more families and children in Massachusetts each year. At the end of 2003, 1,545 homeless families were living in emergency family shelters and motels funded by the state with more than 3,000 children, 1,400 of whom were between birth and five years of age.
- Homelessness has grave impacts on child development. As a result, compared with their housed peers, young homeless children experience more developmental delays, emotional problems such as anxiety and depression, and behavioral issues. Homelessness, whether of long or short duration, is a condition that impacts greatly on a child's school readiness.
- Homeless families should be eligible for subsidized childcare and early education services based on their low income status.

This past winter, Horizons for Homeless Children conducted a survey of shelters serving homeless families. The survey found that only 44% of homeless young children aged birth to 5 years of age are in some form of early care and education program compared to 68% of all MA young children in the general population.

The Commonwealth has recognized the value of linking child care and early education services with homeless children. The survey results indicate the extent to which many homeless young children are receiving high quality services and point to areas where outcomes can be improved, existing linkages can be strengthened, and best practices can be shared.

To increase access to early education and child care for homeless young children, to improve the quality of those services, and to coordinate the planning of service delivery, Horizons for Homeless Children (HHC) makes the following recommendations:

Information, Access and Referral to Child Care

HHC recommends that the lead state agencies, DOE, DTA, and OCCS, improve information, access and referral to child care.

Vouchers

HHC recommends that the regulations determining eligibility for TANF child care vouchers be revised so that the required 20 hours of housing search (while in shelter) be included as an approved Employment Development Plan activity.

Homeless Contracted Slots

HHC recommends that state funding for child care services be increased across the board and a portion of this increase be targeted to homeless young children.

Head Start

HHC recommends that the MA Head Start State Collaboration Project should continue its efforts to increase access to Head Start programs for homeless children and families. Head Start programs should continue and increase their efforts in serving homeless children and families in partnership with other systems of early care and education.

Transportation

HHC recommends that transportation to child care and early education sites be factored into any comprehensive plan to improve access for homeless families.

Linkages and Cross Training

HHC recommends that linkages between the family shelter system and the early care and education system be more fully developed.

Homelessness Prevention and Shelter Access

HHC recommends that the Legislature and Administration work together to adequately fund a homelessness prevention strategy and more equitable shelter access policy.

Data

HHC recommends that state agencies improve collection and analysis of basic data, not only on the demographics of sheltered families, but to include doubled up families and families which have been denied state-funded shelter.

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 Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and McKinney Supportive Housing Program (SHP).

Acknowledging the many positive steps taken by service providers and Massachusetts state agencies to serve better homeless children, these recommendations are offered as a way to focus attention and resources on the needs of these vulnerable children.

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:

I am the mother of 2 children who are in child care at Horizons. I am married and we have 5 members in our family including my niece. We became homeless about 2 years ago. The apartment where we were living in Mattapan, which we shared with another family, was overcrowded and the landlord forced us to leave because her family needed the whole apartment.

I used to stereotype people on welfare assistance saying that they are lazy but all of a sudden I found myself in a situation where I was forced to be [on assistance]. I felt worthless, and every time I looked at my daughters, I would cry. In fact, as I look back on that time, I think that I spent most of the time crying. I just felt terrible that they were in this situation because they deserved better. I was so depressed, and it made them very sad. They had no way to play and no way to learn and I was stuck. My older daughter would come over and kiss me and hug me and try to make things better because she felt my sadness and didn't know what to do.

The turning point for us was Horizons. One day, my shelter case manager, told me that there was a wonderful place where my children could go for day care while I tried to get my life back together. Getting into Horizons was a long shot, and so I didn't get my hopes up, but one month later, my daughter was accepted into the infant program, and my older daughter was accepted one month after that. I finally had some luck!

Now a year later, the sun is starting to come out again. I am working in a security job at Brigham and Women's Hospital, and we have recently found permanent housing in Randolph. I am also crying MUCH less. I honestly don't know how my husband and I would have done this without Horizons. It's not just what they did for my children. It's what they did for me: from the advice that I have gotten from my advocate, to the support that I received from my Nurturing Program Group about how to be a better parent.

A year ago, I was so sad and so stressed and now my family is whole again.

Horizons for Homeless Children (HHC) conducted this survey of Massachusetts homeless young children to better understand their needs and to focus attention on how we as a society can improve their lives. HHC, a non-profit based in Boston (formerly known as The Horizons Initiative), operates two Community Children's Centers, providing full-time, professional early education and childcare and family support services for 126 homeless children and their parents each weekday. In addition, HHC has established Playspace Programs in 58 homeless family shelters in Massachusetts, through the installation of playrooms in these family shelters, and through nearly 600 trained and supervised volunteers who each week engage approximately 700 children in the shelters in healthy, educational play.

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 in homeless situations (PreK-12) identified by State Departments of Education increased from approximately 841,700 in 1997 to 930,200 in 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

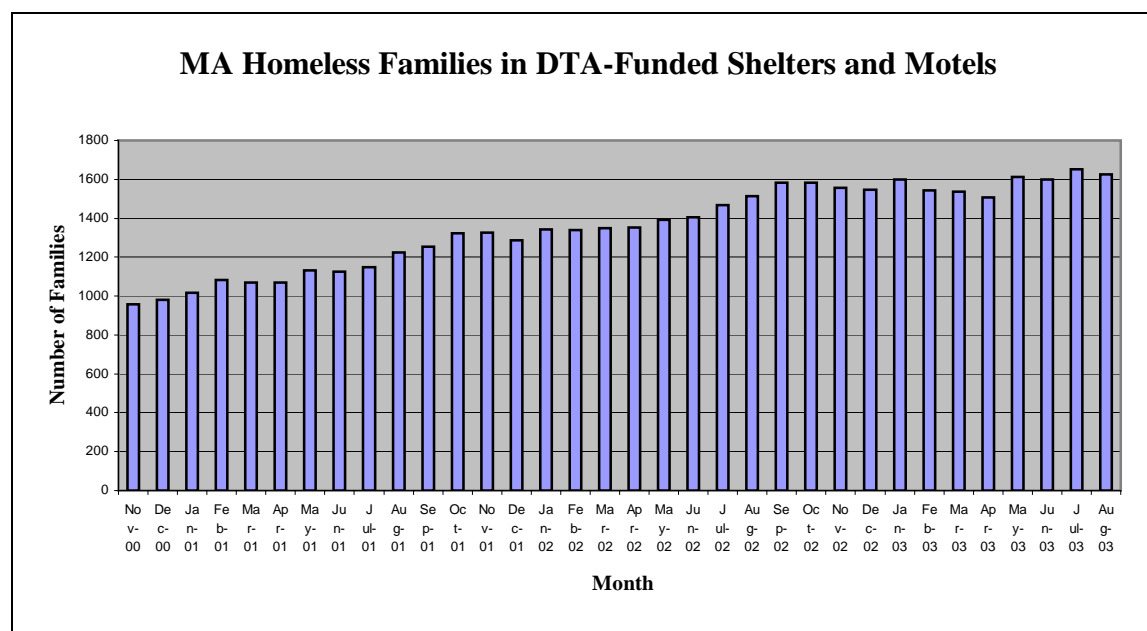
We hope that the findings and recommendations contained in this report can be useful to other states and the federal government to better serve these vulnerable children.

III. Child and Family Homelessness in Massachusetts

A. Demographics and Trends

At the end of November 2003, 1,545 homeless families (or 4,609 family members) were living in emergency family shelters and motels funded by MA Department of Transitional Assistance (MA DTA). A single mother headed most of these families. These 1,545 families contained 2,864 children between birth and 18 years of age. Of these children, 1,396 were between birth and five years of age.¹

The number of homeless families in shelters and motels funded by MA DTA has increased since 2000. Fewer than 1,000 families were in shelter or motel at the end of 2000 with over 1,600 families in late 2003. The chart below is taken from MA DTA data.



But the homeless families in MA DTA funded shelters are only part of the story of family homelessness.

DTA neither tracks the number of families who are denied shelter nor counts the families who have no fixed residence and are on the move from couch to couch. A 2000 report estimated that 20,000 children per year experience homelessness in Massachusetts, including 10,000 under school age.² According to the US Census 2000, the total number of children under 18 years of age in MA is 1,500,064, which means that 1 out of every 76 Massachusetts children will experience homelessness each year.

Often not categorized as serving homeless families, shelters serving victims of domestic violence (DV) are funded by private donations and MA Department of Social Services (MA DSS). 1,488 children under the age of 6 were served in MA domestic violence residential programs in FY

¹ MA DTA data November 29, 2003.

² UMASS Boston, McCormack Institute, Situation Critical, Report 2000, Meeting the Housing Needs of Lower Income Massachusetts Residents (2000), page 8.

2002.³ In reality, domestic violence shelters usually have 90-day lengths of stay because of their funding limitations. These families often end up in MA DTA-funded family shelter after their time in the DV shelter.

B. Causes of Child and Family Homelessness

While families in some cases make decisions that contribute to their homelessness, 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.

Housing

In the recently released report 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 2000.⁴ 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.⁵ 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.⁶

In 1999, then-Governor Celluci's response to the housing crisis was to say, "The free market got us into this situation, and it will be the free market that gets us out of it." Five years later, the thousands of homeless children in Massachusetts, who each night sleep with their families in shelters and motels, are still waiting.

Poverty

According to the U.S. Census 2000, Massachusetts ranks 12th in the United States in the percentage of children who are poor, with 12.0% of children under 18 living in poverty.

According to a 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."⁷

C. Accessing Family Shelter

In contrast to single homeless men and women who essentially receive shelter on demand, the majority of homeless families who access shelter do so after intake by the MA Department of

³ <http://nieer.org/docs/index.php?DocID=57>

⁴ Andrew Sum, Ishwar Khatiwada, and Mykhaylo Trub'sky, *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).

⁵ Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight, State index data, Second Quarter 2003.

⁶ National Low Income Housing Coalition, *Out of Reach 2003: America's Growing Wage-Rent Disparity* (Washington, D.C.: National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2003).

⁷ The State of the American Dream in Massachusetts, 2002, May 2002, p. 148

Transitional Assistance (DTA). DTA determines each family's eligibility for shelter. Many families are screened out of shelter for various reasons including a family:

- 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 \$1,252 (\$15,024 annually or \$7.22 per hour for 40 hours per week);
- 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, it must be noted that the family is nonetheless homeless and the denial of shelter further marginalizes their already tenuous existence.

The MA Coalition for the Homeless website has an overview of regulations for family shelter eligibility at <http://www.mahomeless.org/facts/factseligibility.html>.

D. Shelter System

Congregate Family Shelters account for the majority of MA family shelters and are primarily funded by MA DTA. There are approximately 68 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 the poverty line in order to stay in shelter. 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 approximately 13 scattered site shelter programs, funding is primarily from MA 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 MA 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 27 DV shelters in the Commonwealth.

Teen Living Programs (TLPs) provide residential shelter and services for pregnant and parenting homeless adolescent mothers. Highly structured, these MA DTA-funded programs offer many services for their clientele.

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.

Motels are used by DTA as a last resort family shelter placement when capacity is reached in the other sheltering programs. The use of motels as shelter peaked in the mid 1990's and was discontinued by the end of that decade, a feat largely accomplished by targeting housing resources to motel families and by tightening eligibility requirements to access shelter. However, increased demand forced the Commonwealth to place 12 families in motels in 2000; by the end of 2002, over 500 homeless families at a time were placed in motels, a number which stayed consistent then began to drop in early 2004. In these settings, each family has its own motel room with bathroom. However, cooking facilities are rare and families rely on take-out food and microwaves. Families in motels are sometimes far from their community of last residence and transportation is difficult, since many of the motels are difficult to access via public transportation.

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.⁸

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 their housed peers, young homeless children experience more developmental delays, emotional problems such as anxiety and depression, and behavioral issues. 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.

The factors associated with homelessness have an impact on 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.⁹

⁸ 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 Children, Youth, and Families National Research Council and Institute of Medicine NATIONAL ACADEMY PRESS Washington, D.C. 2000

Because of resource limitations, family shelters very often are 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 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.

F. Supports for Homeless Families and Children in Shelter

The needs of homeless families vary depending on their individual circumstances. However, most residential programs provide some degree of housing search services either provided 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.

Specific supports for homeless children are also present. 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 MA Department of Education issued a series of Advisories in 2003, including one targeted to young homeless children, to Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Homeless Education Liaisons, Early Childhood Providers and other interested parties. The Advisories are listed at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/hssss/program/homeless.html>.

G. The Early Care and Education System in Massachusetts

While the services for homeless families are targeted through shelters and other supportive services providers, early care and education for homeless young children is generally provided through the same system which is used by all Massachusetts young children, as follows:

“Parents are the primary funding source for early education and care, providing about 65 percent of the total funds spent. Federal and state programs are administered through four agencies: the Administration for Children and Families (federal Head Start and child care subsidies); the Department of Education (early childhood special education and Community Partnerships for Children, Head Start expansion and salary enhancement grants, Title I); Department of Public Health (Early Intervention); and the Office of Child Care Services (income eligible

⁹ America’s New Outcasts: Homeless Children, National Center on Family Homelessness, 1999.

vouchers and contracts; transitional assistance, child protective child care and teen parent care).”¹⁰

The Early Education For All Campaign’s website provides a good overview of the current early care system¹¹:

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.

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.

In 2002, approximately 65,000 preschoolers received some type of government subsidy, which paid for at least a portion of the cost of a part- or full-time program.¹² More than 6,000 preschool-aged children were also on waiting lists to receive a child care subsidy and an estimated 44,000 additional children would have been eligible for government financial assistance if sufficient funding were available.¹³ Families who receive government subsidies are required to contribute a co-payment, which can range from \$52 to \$7,280 per child each year.¹⁴

In fiscal year (FY) 2002, an estimated \$300 million in public funding was spent on early education and care for Massachusetts three- to five-year-olds. Federal funding sources account for approximately 70 percent of the state’s public spending on early education and care.

Compared to other states, the Commonwealth’s early care and education system offers good access and quality for young children.¹⁵ The purpose of this survey and report is to better understand how this system interacts with homeless families and to make recommendations for improvement.

¹⁰ Securing Our Future: Planning What We Want for Our Youngest Children, Future Trends – Volume VI: MA Dept. of Education, 2001.

¹¹ Early Education and Care in Massachusetts today, Early Education for All website, http://www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/research/eea_research_facts_data.htm

¹² Sources: Office of Child Care Services, Budget Office estimate, 2001; Securing Our Future, p. 76.

¹³ Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services, FY2002 fourth quarter “unduplicated” count of children eligible for subsidized child care; *Securing Our Future*, p.35.

¹⁴ Commonwealth of Massachusetts Subsidized Child Care Sliding Fee Scale, effective 7/1/01.

¹⁵ National Institute for Early Education Research, The State of Preschool: 2003 State Preschool Yearbook, <http://nieer.org/yearbook/>

IV. Survey Purpose and Methodology

Because data about homeless young children in Massachusetts is not generally available, Horizons for Homeless Children (HHC), in consultation with colleagues from the service provider community and state government, decided to conduct this survey 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.

127 sheltering programs were identified from lists compiled by the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless and the MA 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. Data on children staying with their families in motels was not collected.

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.). A sample filled-out sheet was attached to the end of the survey.

An initial mailing of surveys to the 127 family sheltering programs was done in November 2003 with a second mailing in January 2004 to shelters that had not responded. The total shelter response rate was 59.84% with 76 out of 127 programs responding.

V. Survey Results

Data was reported on 777 children in shelters from birth through 5 years of age. N may vary with each question based on number of complete responses. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

A. Responses by Shelter Type and Region

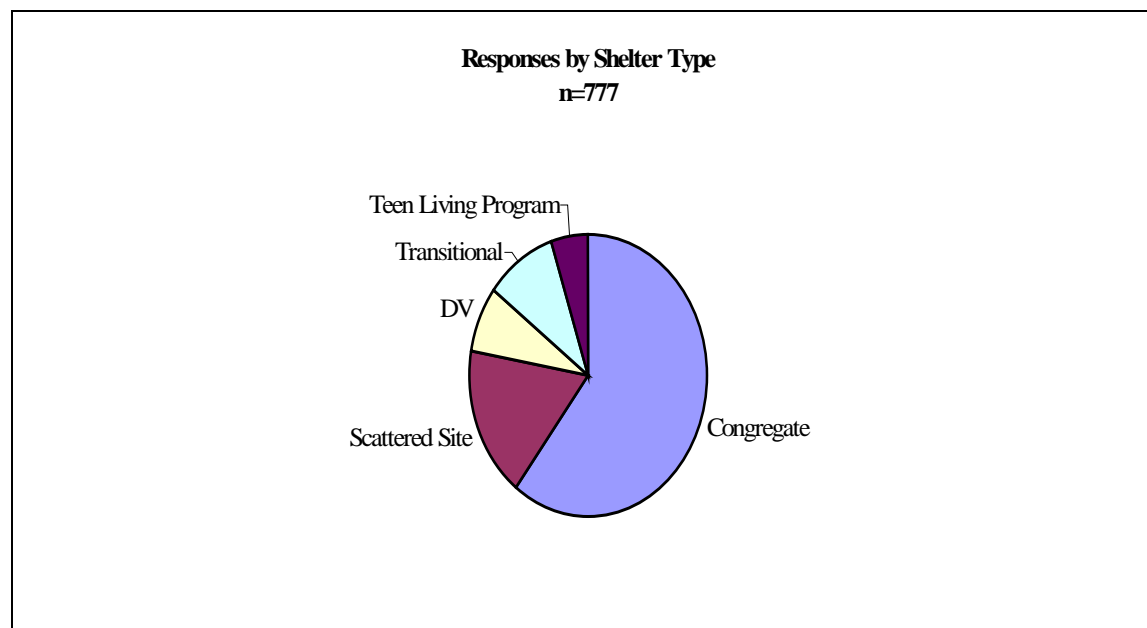
The 777 children in the responses were distributed from the following types of shelter. These percentages are consistent with the actual capacity in MA DTA-funded types of shelter. Please note that the MA DTA data from November 2003 is not inclusive of most of the DV shelters in the state nor are Transitional Living Programs included. Regional responses are consistent with regional shelter capacity.

Shelter Type (Table 1)

Shelter Type	HHC Survey		MA DTA Nov 2003	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Congregate	60.23%	468	69.97%	664
Scattered Site	17.50%	136	20.65%	196
DV	7.46%	58	1.69%	16
Transitional	9.78%	76	7.69%	73
Teen Living Program	5.02%	39	NA	NA
Total	99.99%	777	100.00%	949

Region (Table 1A)

	All	Cape	Southeast	Greater Boston	Northeast	Central	West
N=	724	60	39	446	74	54	51
Percentage	100.00%	8.29%	5.39%	61.60%	10.22%	7.46%	7.04%



B. Ages of Children

While data was submitted for 777 children, two of the data records did not have age information. Therefore, for age of children, n = 775. Infants are over represented in the family shelter population compared to the general population which has a more even distribution of ages.

Age of Children (Table 2)

Age	Percentage	Number
Less than or = to 1yr	37.94%	294
Less than or = to 2	22.06%	171
Less than or = to 3	15.48%	120
Less than or = to 4	11.74%	91
Less than or = to 5	12.52%	97
Less than or = to 6	00.26%	2
Total	99.96%	775

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. As a measure of comparison, HHC survey data is similar to the actual ages of children in shelters (not motels) according to MA DTA at the end of November 2003. Please note that the HHC survey asked about children in all types of family shelters (excluding motels); the MA DTA data likewise excludes the motel population but (unlike the HHC data) does not include domestic violence programs or Teen Living Programs.

Age of Children by Category (Table 2A)

Age	HHC Survey		MA DTA Nov 2003	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Infant & Toddler (Birth and up to but not including 3 Years)	62.06%	481	62.07%	589
Preschool (3-5 Years)	37.68%	292	37.93%	360
School Age (6 Years)	00.26%	2	0	0
Total	100.00%	775	100.00%	949

C. Family Composition

While data was collected on 777 children, the survey obtained information on head of household for 766 children. Data on head of household is consistent with previous studies of Massachusetts homeless families.¹⁶

Family Composition by Shelter Type (Table 3)

Family Type	All	Congregate	Scat Site	DV	TLP	Trans
N=	766	461	135	58	39	73
Two Parent	13.58%	8.89%	40.00%	0	0	12.23%
Single Mother	85.12%	89.59%	58.52%	100.00%	100.00%	86.30%
Single Father	01.17%	1.50%	1.48%	0	0	0
Single Grandparent	00.13%	0	0	0	0	1.37%
Total	100.00%	99.98%	100.00	100.00%	100.00%	99.90%

D. Parents Working

Shelter staff were asked whether the children's parents were working. Out of the 777 child responses, data on work was collected for 733 children's parents.

Parents and Work (Table 4)

Status	Percentage	Number
Yes, Working	20.46%	150
No, Not Working	79.54%	583
Total	100.00%	733

¹⁶ "Characteristics of Homeless Families Accessing Massachusetts Emergency Shelters 1999-2001" McCormack Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston, April 2003.

E. Parent(s) on TAFDC

“Welfare” or Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) is a government program that gives time-limited cash and medical assistance to needy families with dependent children, including pregnant women, to help them meet the basic needs of their children. For example, a single parent with two children would get a cash benefit of \$593 per month.

Out of the 777 child responses, data on TAFDC was collected for 717 children’s parents. Data on parental employment and TAFDC is consistent with recent MA DTA reporting¹⁷ although the percentage of families on TAFDC is higher than data from years past.¹⁸

Parents and TAFDC (Table 4A)

Status	Percentage	Number
Yes TAFDC	83.26%	597
No TAFDC	16.74%	120
Total	100.00%	717

¹⁷ Commissioner John Wagner, Citizen Housing and Planning Association forum, February 25, 2003.

¹⁸ “Characteristics of Homeless Families Accessing Massachusetts Emergency Shelters 1999-2001” McCormack Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston, April 2003.

F. Access to Early Care and Education

The purpose of the survey was to determine what is happening with young homeless children during the usual weekday. After consultation with experts in the fields of homelessness and early education/care, the following categories were included as possible responses.

Stays with Parent means that the child spends most of her or his time during the day with the parent. While this option is often a desirable one for families at higher income levels and with their own home, 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.

Stays with Relative/Friend indicates an informal arrangement whereby the child is staying with someone outside the immediate family.

Head Start is a comprehensive program for 3 & 4 year old children in families with income at or below the official poverty line (\$18,400 for a family of four). Head Start also serves children with disabilities. Early Head Start serves children birth to 3 years. With 31 grantees in Massachusetts, Head Start is a federal to local program funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start Bureau. Because of funding limitations, Head Start is not able to serve all children who are eligible.

Center-based Child Care for the purposes of this survey refers to a 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. Massachusetts is the only state that provides contracted slots targeted to homeless children.

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.

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

Kindergarten is offered by local school districts. Enrollment is mostly open to children who turn 5 years old by the beginning of the school year, although this varies by school district. Kindergarten can be either part or full time and is not mandatory.

In some cases, two categories were chosen for what a child was doing during the day. Each response was coded as having one category. The most common double category was "Stays with Parent" *and* "Head Start", which was coded as Head Start.

Child Status During the Weekday by Shelter Type (includes Kindergarten) (Table 5)

Category	All Shelters	Cong	Scat	DV	TLP	Trans
N=	777	468	136	58	39	76
Stays with Parent	48.39%	53.85%	52.94%	32.76%	30.77%	27.63%
Stays with Relative/Friend	3.60%	3.63%	2.94%	3.45%	7.69%	2.63%
Head Start/Early Head Start	11.07%	10.90%	13.97%	13.79%	0	10.53%
Center-based Child Care/Early Ed/Preschool	24.71%	19.87%	18.38%	39.66%	53.85%	39.47%
Home-based/Family Child Care	5.28%	4.91%	2.94%	5.17%	7.69%	10.53%
Other	0.13%	0.21%	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten	6.82%	6.62%	8.82%	5.17%	0	9.21%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	99.99%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Access to Kindergarten (either part- or full-day) is universal as long as the child is of eligible age and the parent wants to enroll the child. Child care and early education programs for those younger than Kindergarten age, in contrast, are not accessed as easily. To focus on access to child care and early education, the results below are given factoring out Kindergarten enrollment.

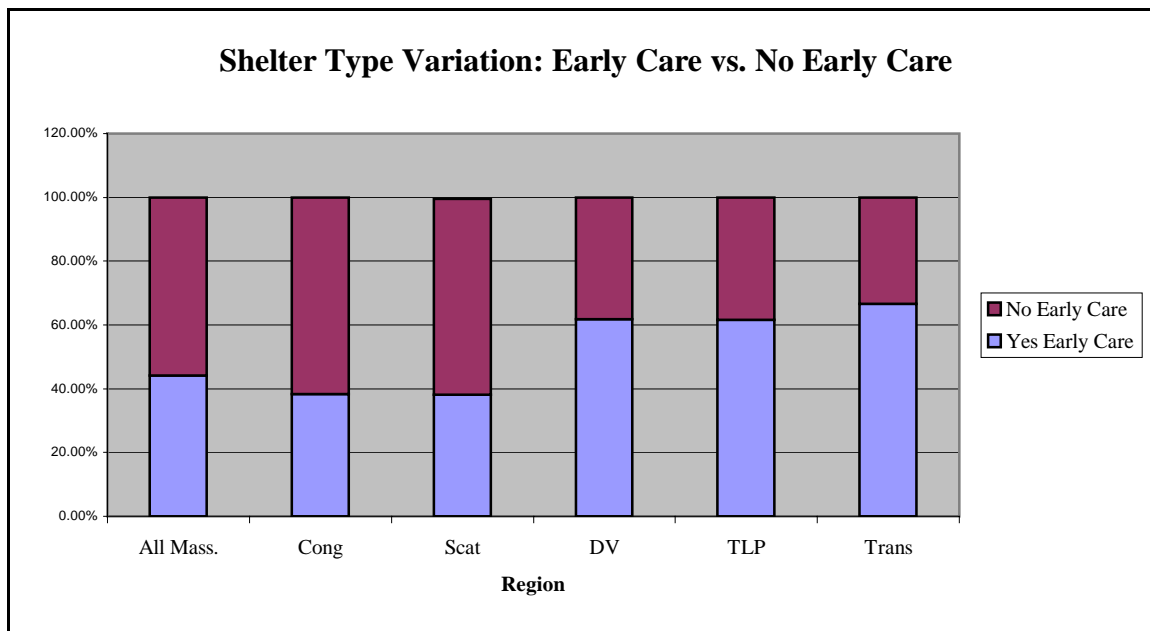
Child Status During the Weekday by Shelter Type (excluding Kindergarten) (Table 5A)

Category	All	Cong	Scat	DV	TLP	Trans
N=	724	437	124	55	39	69
Stays with Parent	51.93%	57.67%	58.06%	34.55%	30.77%	30.43%
Stays with Relative/Friend	3.87%	3.89%	3.23%	3.64%	7.69%	2.90%
Head Start/Early Head Start	11.88%	11.67%	15.32%	14.55%	0	11.59%
Center-based Child Care/Early Ed/Preschool	26.52%	21.28%	20.16%	41.82%	53.85%	43.48%
Home-based/Family Child Care	5.66%	5.26%	3.23%	5.45%	7.69%	11.59%
Other	0.14%	0.23%	0	0	0	0
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	99.99%

Another way to look at this data is to combine the responses into children with no formal early care versus children with some formal care/education arrangement. No form of care includes those children staying with parent or staying with a relative or friend. A formal care arrangement includes children in Head Start, Center-based Program or Home-based (or Family) Child Care. Please note that the one 'other' response is included as a type of formal care arrangement.

Early Care vs. No Early Care by Shelter Type (Table 5B)

Category	All	Cong	Scat	DV	TLP	Trans
Yes Early Care	44.20%	38.37%	38.17%	61.82%	61.54%	66.66%
No Early Care	55.80%	61.56%	61.29%	38.19%	38.46%	33.33%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.99%



The data was also broken down by region.

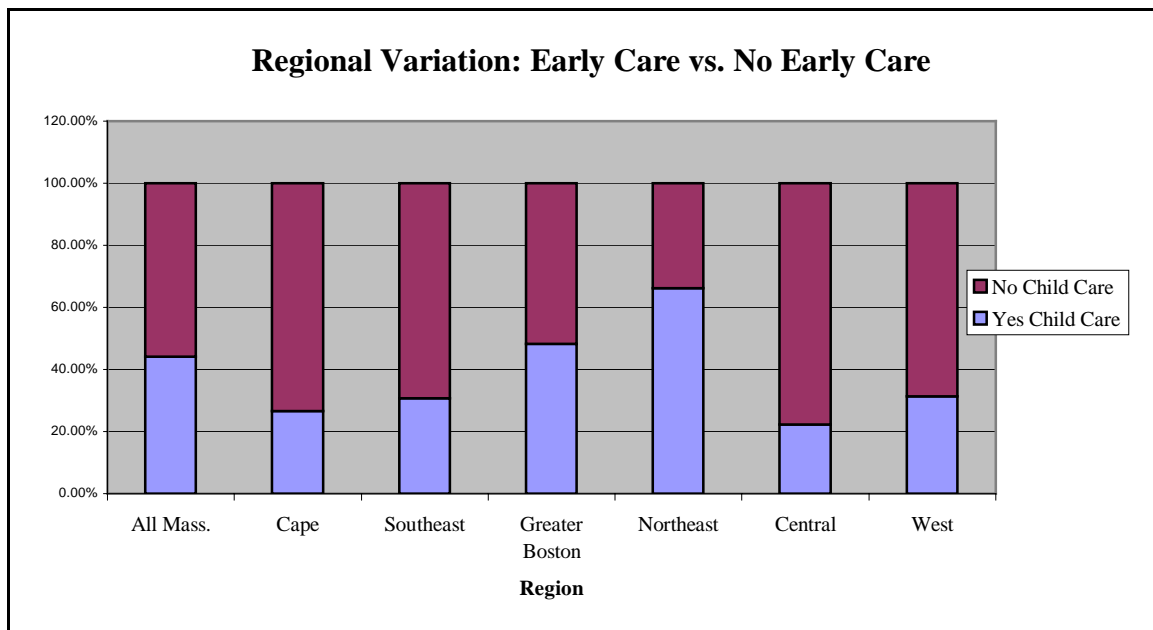
Child Status by Region (excluding Kindergarten) (Table 5C)

Category	All	Cape	Southeast	Greater Boston	Northeast	Central	West
N=	724	60	39	446	74	54	51
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%

As in Table 5B, another way to look at this data is to combine the responses into children with some formal care/education arrangement versus those with no formal early care.

Early Care vs. No Child Care by Region (Table 5D)

Category	All	Cape	Southeast	Greater Boston	Northeast	Central	West
Yes Early Care	44.20%	26.67%	30.76%	48.20%	66.22%	22.22%	31.37%
No Early Care	55.80%	73.34%	69.23%	51.80%	33.78%	77.78%	68.63%
Total	100.00%	100.01%	99.99%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%



The table below presents the following data sets for comparison:

- All MA shelter survey responses as described above,
- Data on what all Massachusetts 0-5 year old children at all income levels are doing during the weekday
- Survey responses from shelters which currently have at least some homeless children enrolled in one of Horizons for Homeless Children's two Community Children's Centers,
- Survey responses from shelters which do NOT currently have children enrolled with Horizons for Homeless Children, and
- Responses from all Greater Boston shelters.

Please note in Table 5E that the categories of Center-based and Head Start were combined to form a category comparable to that in the overall state data.

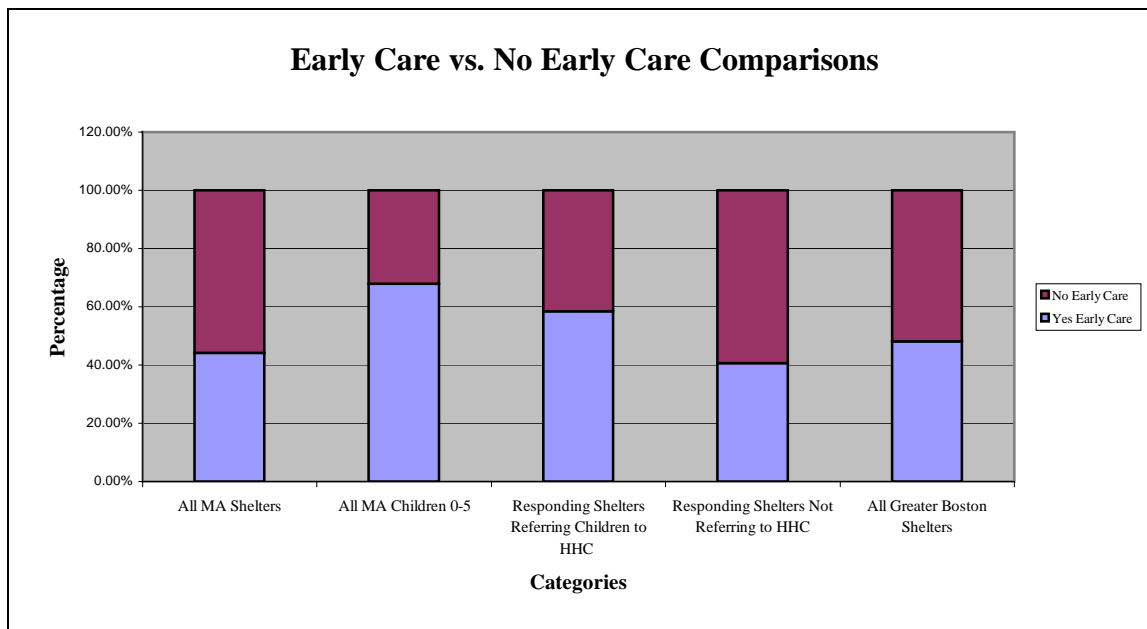
Comparison of Child Status (excluding Kindergarten) (Table 5E)

Category	All MA Shelters	All MA Children 0-5 years ¹⁹	Responding Shelters Referring Children to HHC	Responding Shelters Not Referring to HHC	All Greater Boston Shelters
N =	724	320,722	147	577	446
Stays with Parent	51.93%	24.00%	36.05%	55.98%	48.21%
Stays with Relative/Friend	3.87%	8.00%	5.44%	3.47%	3.59%
Head Start/Early Head Start/Center-based Child Care/Early Ed/Preschool	38.40%	56.00%	50.34%	35.36%	43.49%
Home-based/Family Child Care	5.66%	12.00%	8.16%	5.03%	4.71%
Other	0.14%	0.00%	0.00%	0.17%	0.00%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	99.99%	100.01%	100.00%

¹⁹ Securing Our Future: Planning What We Want for Our Youngest Children, Future Trends – Volume VI: MA Dept. of Education, 2001.

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

Category	All MA Shelters	All MA Children 0-5 years	Responding Shelters Referring Children to HHC	Responding Shelters Not Referring to HHC	All Greater Boston Shelters
Yes Early Care	44.20%	68.00%	58.50%	40.56%	48.20%
No Early Care	55.80%	32.00%	41.49%	59.45%	51.80%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	99.99%	100.01%	100.00%



G. Child Care Vouchers

Generally when child care or early education is subsidized, the service is provided through either vouchers or contracted (or dedicated) slots. While contracted slots are given to service providers, vouchers are given to parents and allow them to choose a child care provider.

The state provides two types of child care vouchers:

- TANF vouchers are for families on TAFDC with an “approved Employment Development Plan.” If a family is eligible for a TANF voucher, they will get one immediately.
- 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. Although the list does move, as of August 2003, 18,492 children in Massachusetts were on the waiting list for subsidized child care.²⁰

Data below describes whether homeless parents have accessed a voucher for their child.

Does Parent have a Child Care Voucher for this Child? (Table 6)

Voucher Status	Percentage	Number
Yes	25.36%	175
No	74.64	515
Total	100.00%	690

If NO, has parent tried to get a Child Care Voucher for this child? (Table 6A)

Answer	Percentage	Number
Yes, did try	31.07%	160
No, did not try	64.27%	331
No Response	4.66%	24
Total	100.00%	515

Although receiving TAFDC and therefore being more likely to receive a TANF voucher would seem to relate to whether or not a family had a child care voucher, TAFDC and non-TAFDC families were just as likely to have a voucher as shown in Table 7B.

TAFDC and Child Care Vouchers (Table 6B)

	Yes TAFDC (n=597)	No TAFDC (n=120)
Yes Voucher	22.28%	21.67%
No Voucher	67.17%	69.17%
No Response	10.55%	9.17%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

²⁰ MA Office of Child Care Services website www.qualitychildcare.org

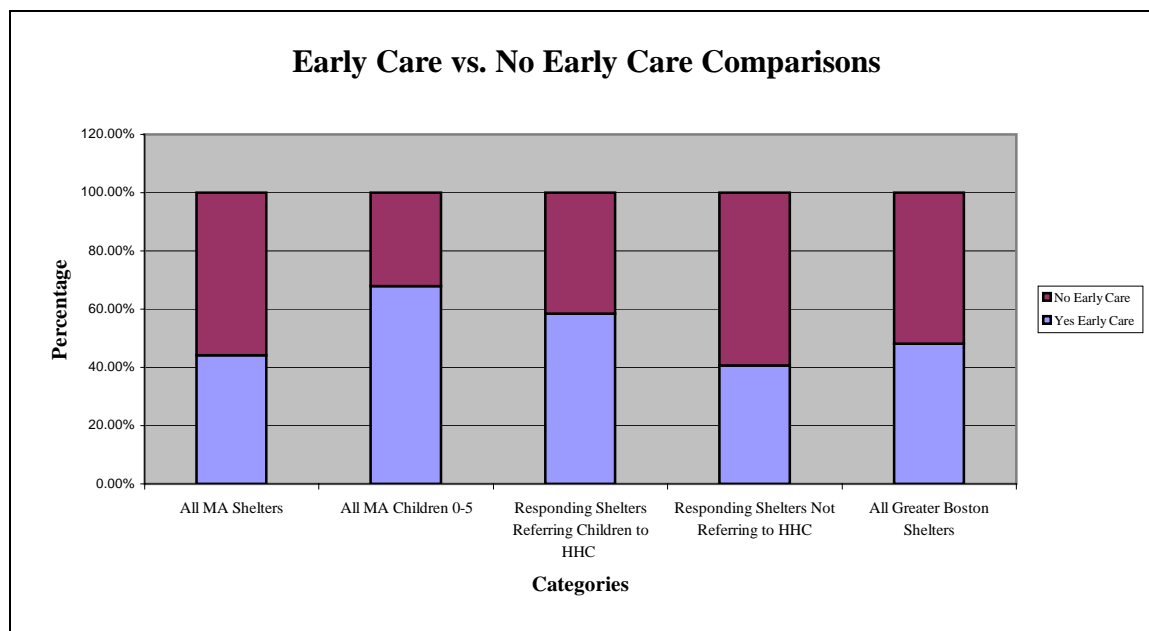
VI. Findings

The Commonwealth has recognized the value of linking child care and early education services with homeless children. The survey results indicate the extent to which many homeless young children are receiving high quality services and point to areas where outcomes can be improved, existing linkages can be strengthened, and best practices can be shared.

On the *positive* side, 44% of these young homeless children are accessing some form of child care/early education services (see Table 5B). This is good news for those children because of the importance of these developmental years. And it is good news for their parents because the adult can focus on work, education, training, and housing search to assist the family’s move to a permanent and stable housing situation.

As would be expected because of the nature of their programming, DV, TLP, and Transitional programs have a higher percentage of children receiving formal care.

Comparing MA children in shelter to all MA children (see Chart below), 44% of homeless young children are in some form of care compared to 68% of all MA young children. This comparison is particularly striking since homeless parents obviously have a great incentive to work, perform housing search activities, attend training or school; in order to do these activities, homeless parents need to have a child care arrangement. Two-parent families at higher income levels in the general population *may* have the option of one of the parents staying home with the child. Homeless families do not have that option.



Also noteworthy is the fact that homeless children in shelters served by Horizons for Homeless Children had a higher likelihood of being in formal care, which points out that targeted resources can make a difference.

Another positive from the data is the extent to which homeless young children in the Northeast Region are accessing Head Start, with 23% accessing Head Start in the Northeast compared to

13% in the next highest region (see Table 5C). Overall the Northeast Region has the highest percentage of homeless young children accessing some form of early care (see Table 5D).

Overall on the *negative* side, 56% of all these young homeless children are not receiving structured early care or education during the typical weekday (see Table 5B). Because most shelters are not staffed or licensed to assist with child care, the child will often accompany the parent on interviews for housing and other needs. While parental involvement in the child's development is key, whether the family is homeless or housed, for homeless families, a formal care arrangement is in the best interest of the parent and child.

Of all homeless children accessing child care other than Head Start (where no voucher is necessary), 75% were doing so through a voucher (see Table 6).

Of the 515 who answered that the child did not have a child care voucher (see Table 6A), 31% of the parents did try to get a child care voucher for the child and 64% of the parents did not try to access a voucher. Several reasons are possible for this:

- Parent and child were not eligible for either the income-eligible voucher or the TANF voucher or never bothered applying.
- Parents who did not seek out a child care voucher might not have been aware of child care resources.
- Homeless families' mobility is such that they have difficulty in accessing child care when they need it or have difficulties in establishing 'service need' such as work, training, or education.

A. Accessing Child Care and Early Education

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

- Homeless young children by virtue of their economic status should be “income eligible” for a subsidy. Because the family sheltered population is defined by state eligibility policy, any sheltered family is at or below 100% of poverty (\$18,400 for a family of four).
- Most homeless families are on TAFDC and consequently MAY be eligible for a TANF child care voucher if they are working or engaged in training.
- 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.²¹
- State agencies and service providers are working more collaboratively to address needs including efforts to target services to homeless people (Governor’s Interagency Council on Homelessness and Housing, MA DOE-convened McKinney-Vento Steering Committee) and the general population (Early Care and Education Council, MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services re-organization).
- Improved targeting of child care resources to homeless young children such as the 85 MA OCCS contracted slots for homeless young children.

B. Barriers to Child Care and Early Education

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

- Despite eligibility for subsidized care, homeless parents will still have to put their children on waiting lists for Head Start and other forms of subsidized child care because of limited funding.
- 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 MA DTA has been more successful in recent years in placing families in their own communities, the 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.
- Homeless parents may not be aware of child care options or may not be able to negotiate the process to receive a child care voucher.
- Transportation to work, training, education, and child care sites is difficult for homeless families.

The following recommendations are offered acknowledging the realities, strengths, and opportunities of our current system.

²¹ “Supporting Young Homeless Children and Their Families in Massachusetts”, MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Children Without Homes Initiative, June 2001.

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. Horizons for Homeless Children has been supportive of these efforts.

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 care services to children who are experiencing homelessness, among the most vulnerable children in the Commonwealth, to ensure that they are not left behind.

Information, Access and Referral to Child Care

HHC recommends that the lead state agencies, MA DOE, DTA, and OCCS, improve information, access and referral to child care.

Information on child care options should be provided to all homeless families and shelter staff. Overall funding for the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) network should be increased and a CCRR liaison should be designated for every family shelter. CCRRs and MA DTA offices should be located to allow clients to access services. Currently, to receive a TANF child care voucher, a family must get the authorization from MA DTA, then travel to the nearest CCRR to access the actual voucher. This can be difficult for poor housed families without access to private transportation; it is extremely difficult for homeless families.

Vouchers

HHC recommends that the regulations determining eligibility for TANF child care vouchers be revised so that the required 20 hours of housing search (while in shelter) be included as an approved Employment Development Plan activity.

While eligibility for subsidized child care is based on the parent's 'service need', HHC believes that it is in the best interest of the homeless child to have a positive early care and education experience while they are in this traumatic situation. The flexibility of a voucher is a good fit for a homeless family in shelter, because when the family finds permanent housing, that housing is often in a far away community. The voucher allows the child to access a new early care and education setting more quickly. Currently families on Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children with an approved Employment Development Plan have immediate access to a child care voucher. However, many homeless families are having difficulties accessing vouchers. Modifying eligibility requirements and recertification periods to fit the realities of homelessness would improve access to child care vouchers. The outcome would be that more homeless families on TAFDC would have a voucher. (Late note: MA OCCS is in the process of implementing a child care voucher program for homeless children.)

Homeless Contracted Slots

HHC recommends that state funding for child care services be increased across the board and a portion of this increase be targeted to homeless young children.

As the only state in the country which dedicates contracted slots to homeless children, the Commonwealth should build on this foundation and target additional slots to homeless children while preserving other child care services.

Head Start

HHC recommends that the MA Head Start State Collaboration Project should continue its efforts to increase access to Head Start programs for homeless children and families. Head Start programs should continue and increase their efforts in serving homeless children and families in partnership with other systems of early care and education.

Head Start programs in MA are dedicated to serving homeless children and families. Head Start's comprehensive services for children coupled with Head Start's focus on parent development and empowerment can be a powerful support for homeless families. Many Head Start programs prioritize children from homeless families in their enrollment criteria and have developed special relationships with local shelters and motels housing homeless families to better serve those families. Using what they have learned about serving homeless children and families, Head Start programs should reach out to other early care and education programs and share their knowledge. The Head Start State Collaboration Project should build on the work begun with the Children Without Homes initiative, to enhance awareness throughout state early care systems of the unique needs of homeless families with young children, including those doubled up with other family members.

Transportation

HHC recommends that transportation to child care and early education sites be factored into any comprehensive plan to improve access for homeless families.

Because homeless families usually do not have an automobile, transportation should be coordinated by the provider and funded by the state if necessary.

Linkages and Cross Training

HHC recommends that linkages between the family shelter system and the early care and education system be more fully developed.

A child development specialist or child advocate should be designated within each shelter to ensure that shelter operations are child-friendly as well as to assist with referral to needed services including child care, special education, and Early Intervention. The Domestic Violence programs typically have a children's advocate and this may be one of the reasons why children in DV programs access child care more frequently. Ever mindful that the goal is to avoid institutionalizing children in shelter, supports for children, including education and play opportunities as well as nurturing programs, should be a part of shelter routine. Training efforts should be expanded to all provider systems.

Homelessness Prevention and Shelter Access

HHC recommends that the Legislature and Administration work together to adequately fund a homelessness prevention strategy and more equitable shelter access policy.

Access to shelter continues to be rationed because of funding limitations; families over 100% of the poverty line (\$18,850 for a family of four) cannot access state-funded shelter. Even with strict eligibility restrictions, the state budget line item for family shelter has increased from \$30 million to \$79 million in three years because of increased demand. Driven by that surge in demand and increased spending on shelter, the state eliminated the primary prevention tool, a rental arrearage program, which gave rental assistance to thousands of families each year. Shortly after the annual funding of \$14 million for rent arrearage was eliminated in 2002, demand for family shelter spiked even higher.

Data

HHC recommends that state agencies improve collection and analysis of basic data, not only on the demographics of sheltered families, but to include doubled up families and families which have been denied state-funded shelter.

The Final Report of the Governor's Executive Commission for Homeless Services Coordination makes the point that data collection needs to be improved. This report may serve as a baseline for how sheltered families access child care and early education. Further data collection on child care access will be necessary.

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 Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and McKinney Supportive Housing Program (SHP).

The work of the new planning and implementation entities, the MA Interagency Council on Homelessness and Housing (headed by Lt. Governor Healey) and the Early Care and Education Council (headed the Commissioners of MA DOE, MA DPH, and MA OCCS), should be coordinated in relation to homeless children. A possible way to link these two Councils is through the existing Steering Committee on the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, a collaborative body which assists the state in the implementation of the federal McKinney-Vento Act. Convened by MA DOE, this Steering Committee brings all State agencies that serve (or should be serving) homeless families together with service providers, school districts, and advocates. This Steering Committee has successfully worked to better coordinate early care and education for this young homeless population.

VIII. Appendix 1: 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. Below are summarized three research studies on the value of such services for low-income children. These studies have even more relevance to the needs of homeless children.

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project²²

From 1962-1967, the subjects at ages 3 and 4 in 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, 95% of the original study participants were interviewed at age 27. Additional data were gathered from the subjects' school, social services, and arrest records.

The Project estimated for every dollar invested, the return is \$7, based on the reduced costs of remedial education and justice system expenditures, and in the increased earnings and projected tax revenues for participants. In analyzing the data collected at age 27, research staff found the following major differences favoring the 27-year-olds who had been enrolled in High/Scope's active learning preschool program:

- Social responsibility. By age 27, only one fifth as many preschool program group members as no-preschool program group members had been arrested five or more times (7% vs. 35%), and only one third as many had ever been arrested for drug dealing (7% vs. 25%).
- Earnings and economic status. Almost three times as many preschool program group members as no-preschool program group members owned their own homes (36% vs. 13%); and over twice as many owned second cars (30% vs. 13%). Only three fourths as many preschool program group members as no-preschool program group members received welfare assistance or other social services at some time as adults (59% vs. 80%).
- Educational performance. Almost a third again as many preschool program group members as no-preschool program group members graduated from regular or adult high school or received General Education Development certification (71% vs. 54%). Earlier in the study, the preschool program group had significantly higher average achievement scores at age 14 and literacy scores at age 19 than the no-preschool program group.

²² www.highscope.org/research/PerryProject/perrymain.htm

Age 21 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Title I Chicago Child-Parent Center Program (June 2001)²³

This study compared subjects who attended Child-Parent Centers from 1983-86 compared 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, \$7.10 dollars were 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.ⁱ

Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project²⁴

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.ⁱⁱ

²³ <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/cls/cbaexecsum4.html>

²⁴ <http://nieer.org/docs/index.php?DocID=57>

IX. Appendix 2: MA 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.

X. Information about Homelessness and Early Care and Education

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

Citizens Housing and Planning Association Housing Report
<http://www.chapa.org/WinnersandLosers.pdf>

Early Education for All Campaign
www.earlyeducationforall.org

Homes for Families
www.homesforfamilies.org

Horizons for Homeless Children
www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org

Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
www.mahomelessness.org

MA Department of Education
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/hssss/program/homeless.html>

MA Department of Transitional Assistance
<http://www.state.ma.us/dta/>

MA Governor's Executive Commission for Homeless Services Coordination, Final Report:
Housing the Homeless: A More Effective Approach
<http://www.state.ma.us/homelesscommission/pdf/docs/finalechrpt.pdf>

MA Office of Child Care Services
<http://www.qualitychildcare.org/>

One Family Campaign
www.onefamilycampaign.org

XI. Acknowledgements

The authors want to thank the following people who provided feedback, suggestions, comments, and encouragement for this report.

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

Child Care Resources/MA R&R Network: Kim Dion

Communities United Inc.: Stacy Dimino

Early Education for All: JD Chesloff

Horizons for Homeless Children: Karin Elliot, Colette O'Neill, Deirdre Wade

MA Department of Education: Peter D. Cirioni

MA Department of Education, Early Learning Services: Emily Roy

MA Department of Mental Health: Ann Capoccia

MA Department of Transitional Assistance: Valorie Faretra, Janet Fender

MA Office of Child Care Services: Phil Baimas, Anita Moeller

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

Thanks especially go to the shelter staffs who completed the survey!

XII. 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 provide leadership in advocating for homeless children and their families through leveraging and sharing our expertise with others and advocating with policy makers and the public.

Horizons for Homeless Children helps in several ways:

Community Children's Centers

HHC operates two Community Children's Centers in Boston which provide full-time, professional early education, child care and family support services for 126 homeless children and their parents each weekday. In 2000, Mayor Menino gave the Centers the Award for Excellence in Children's Health. HHC plans to open a third Community Children's Center in Roxbury in 2004 serving an additional 50 homeless children. To assess the impact of the Community Children's Center concept on homeless children's development and family stability, including enhanced behavioral and social development, increased school readiness, and parental self-sufficiency, HHC is in the midst of a multi-year evaluation project. Preliminary results are positive.

Playspace Programs

Since 1990, HHC's Playspace Programs have trained more than 4,000 volunteers to provide nurturing, stimulating play opportunities for children in homeless shelters throughout Greater Boston and Central MA. 580 active volunteers now work in 58 family shelters each week. Through the establishment of 4 regional offices by 2005, HHC will serve an additional 50 shelters throughout Massachusetts, helping an additional 600 children grow and learn 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. Since requests for technical assistance and training have increased in recent years, HHC has added a full-time training and technical assistance capacity.