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Whole Child, Whole Families, Whole Systems Webinar Series

No Place to Grow: Rethinking Homelessness
Through a Whole-Child, Whole-Family Lens

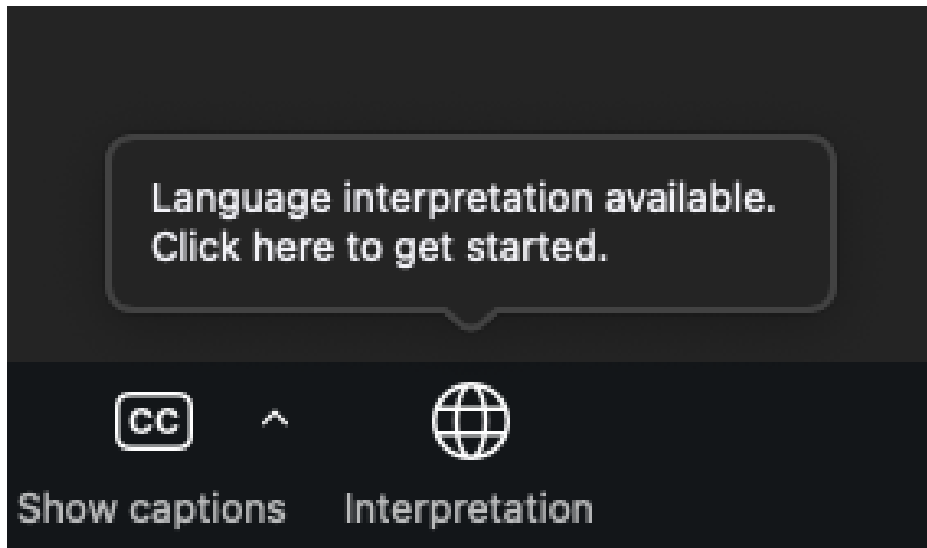
Moderated by Michelle Adkins and Ngozi Lawal

Thursday, June 5, 2025

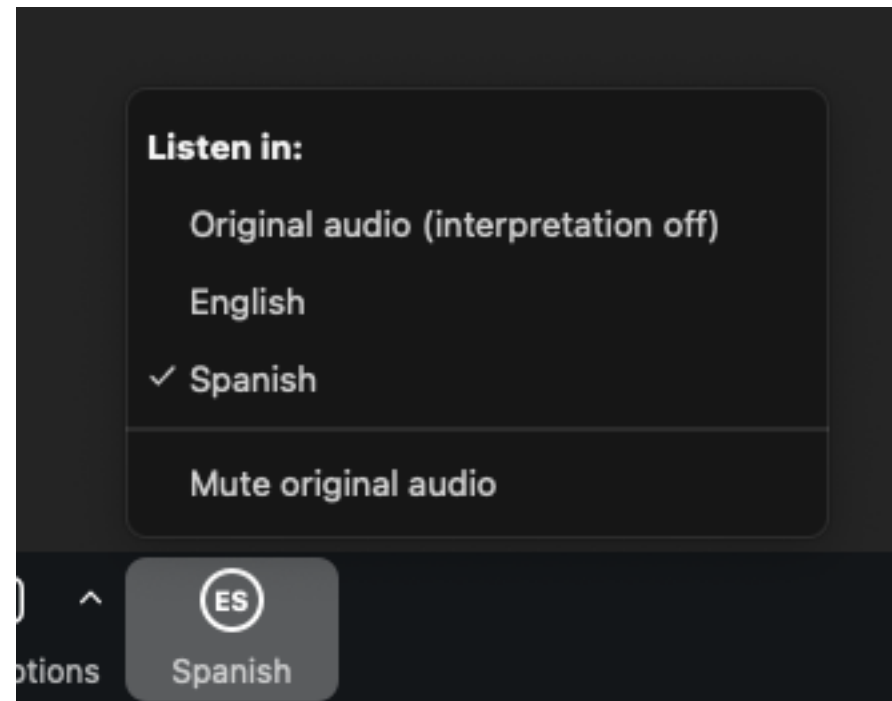


Language Interpretation

Once the interpretation function is activated, click the globe icon at the bottom of your screen.



Then click Spanish to listen in that language. (To turn off interpretation, click "Original audio.")



Who is represented here?

- 1,000 + registrants
- 49 states and D.C.

You are from...

- State agencies: Children, Youth and Families, Health and Human Services, Public Health, Early Learning and Care, Education
- Child and family serving organizations/nonprofits (community-based, state, regional, and national)
- Early childhood coalitions/networks
- Colleges and universities
- Center-based and home-based child care
- Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Foundations and philanthropy
- Hospitals and health care providers
- Faith-based organizations

What Do You Do?



Webinar Series' Objectives

- Define a whole system approach
- Identify key challenges
- Explore strategies for system integration
- Center family voices and equity
- Leverage leadership and data for improvement
- Learn from real-world examples
- Apply actionable strategies
- Promote sustainability

Today's Objectives

- Elevate the voices of families with lived experience to help ensure that policies and services reflect the real needs and strengths of the communities they are designed to serve.
- Understand the impacts of homelessness on child development, particularly during the first three years of life.
- Discern how the differences in federal definitions of homelessness play out for families and children experiencing homelessness, causing barriers to accessing services.
- Identify actions that providers, policymakers, advocates, and others can take to increase access to services for children and families experiencing homelessness.
- Evaluate how South Carolina's Child Care Resource and Referral Homelessness initiative could be adapted or implemented in other states or localities.
- Analyze the cumulative impact of connecting families to high-quality early childhood education and sustainable financial support.
- Discuss actionable steps for building cross-sector partnerships to support early intervention and long-term family stability.

Presenters



Aimee Dubé Weller

Homeless Support & Parent
Referral Specialist,
South Carolina Child Care
Resource & Referral



Darryl Savell

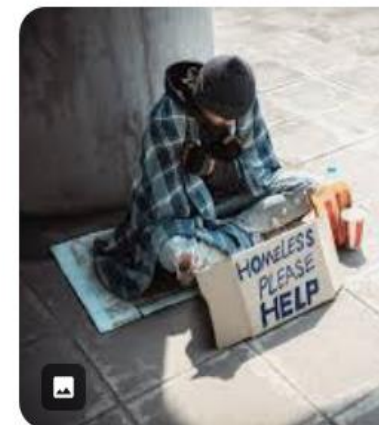
Parent Advisor, Homeless
Children and Youth
Steering Committee,
Oklahoma Commission on
Children and Youth



Erin Patterson

Senior Director, Strategic
Initiatives and Partnerships,
SchoolHouse Connection

Tools ▾



Utah News Dispatch
Family homelessness is a



The Darryl and Bella Savell Story

Infant & Toddler Homelessness Across 50 States

June 5, 2025



About SchoolHouse Connection



SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness, from prenatal to postsecondary, through strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with youth, families, schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, and service providers.

Learn more:

schoolhouseconnection.org

Join our Newsletter:

<https://bit.ly/4brxboR>

What is Homelessness?

Homelessness Defined:

Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.

Hidden Homelessness

Why Families with Children Might Stay Temporarily with Other People

- Lack of shelter availability
- Prioritization of single adults in available shelters
- Fear of child welfare system involvement

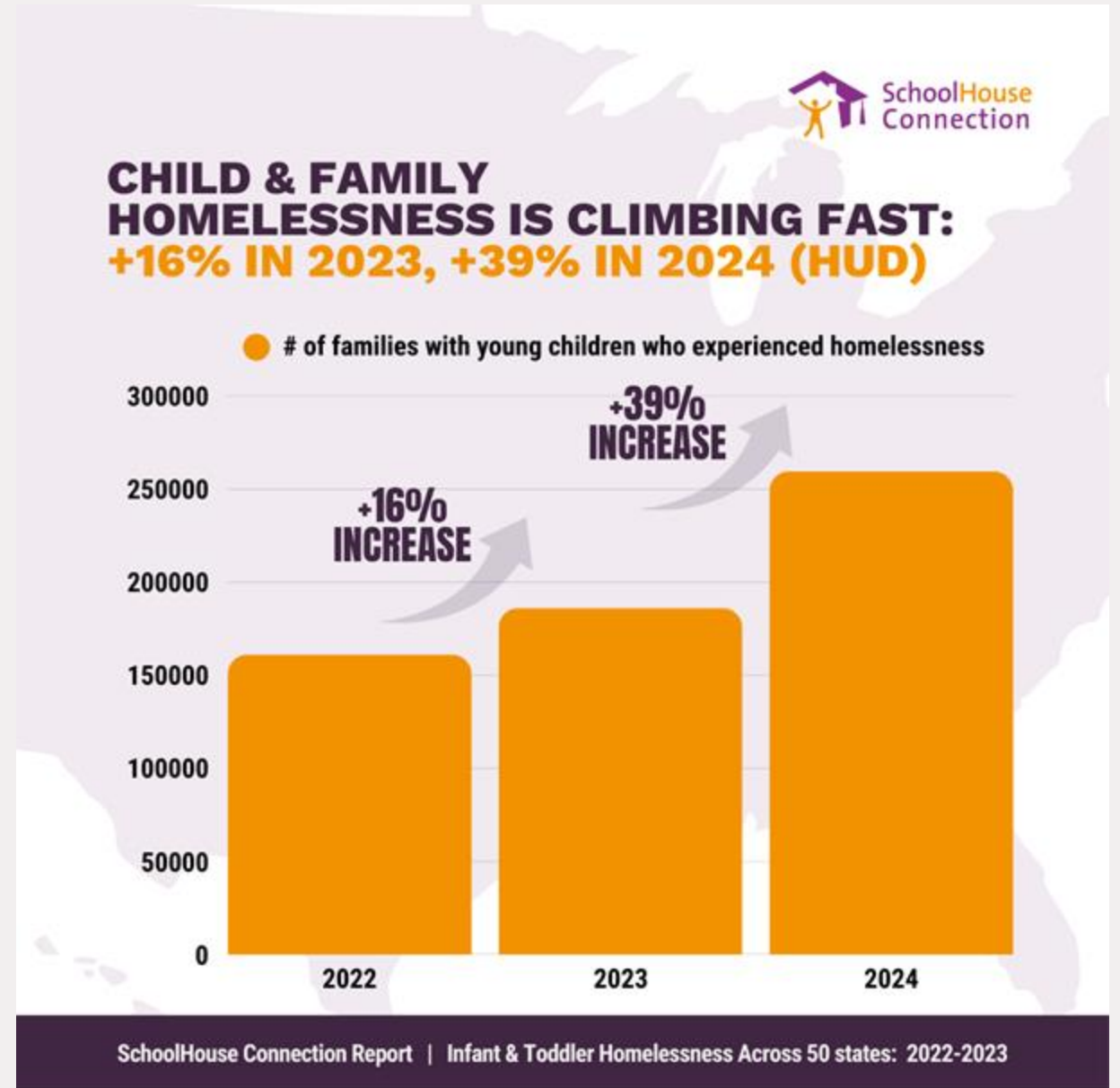
What this looks like:

- Renting a walk-in closet
- Staying with abusive/exploitive people (trading sex for housing)
- Unsafe sleep practices
- Inadequate play spaces



How Many Babies Experience Homelessness in the US?

Increase in families staying in shelters and visibly homeless (HUD data)



How many infants and toddlers experience homelessness?



In 2022-23, approximately

450,000

infants and toddlers **ages birth through three** experienced homelessness across the US.



Data

Infant and toddler homelessness is increasing



Infants and toddlers need access to *both* early childhood development *and* housing – and for many families, safe shelter

 **Just 10% of infants & toddlers experiencing homelessness were served in 2022–23 – a drop from 11.5%.**

These babies are being left behind.



2% are served by Home Visiting programs



4% are served by Early Head Start programs

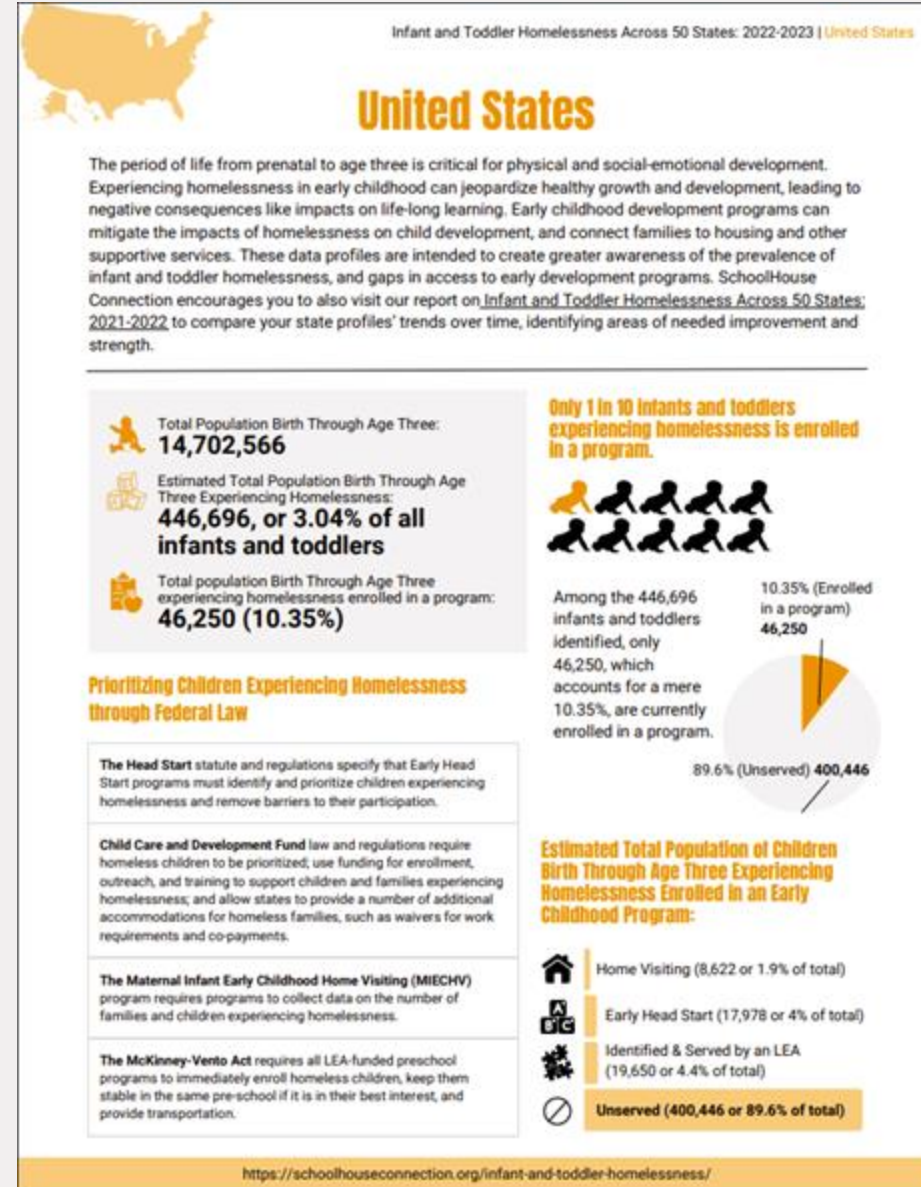


4.4% are served by a Local Education Agency



Unserved (89.6%)

Access your state's data!



Homelessness Has Serious Consequences for Young Children

- Homelessness in infancy has been found to be associated with **delays in language, literacy, and social-emotional development**, putting children at risk for later academic problems.
- The younger and longer a child experiences homelessness, the **greater the cumulative toll of negative health outcomes like chronic asthma**.
- The **impacts of homelessness on young children are long-lasting, even once families are housed**, including on children's school readiness.

Homelessness Also Has Long- Term Consequences

- The high school graduation rate for students experiencing homelessness is **68%** compared to **85% for all students**. This is the lowest graduation rate of any student sub-group, including economically disadvantaged.
- High school students who experience homelessness are **10x more likely to become pregnant or get someone pregnant**.
- In addition to the academic impacts, homelessness in the early years can cause **developmental delays, social-emotional challenges, and long-term trauma**.



Homelessness Creates Barriers to Accessing Early Childhood Programs

- **High Mobility** of families moving in and out of motels, staying with others, living in cars, etc.
- **Lack of documentation** and other enrollment barriers, including child immunization and parent work requirements
- **Lack of transportation** to and from programs
- **Lack of awareness** among early care providers of both the definition of homelessness and the best ways to reach families



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Dwindling federal housing support



Families are getting pushed out of federal housing support.



In 2009, they received 42% of HUD subsidies.

By 2022, just 33%.





Families with Young Children Face Unique Housing Barriers

If housing is available, families with young children experiencing homelessness are left out

- Only one in four families that qualify for housing assistance actually receive it; thirteen percent of extremely low-income renters are single adult caregivers of a young child. (National Low-Income Housing Coalition)
- Recent data show that the lowest-income renters in the U.S. face a shortage of 7.1 million affordable and available rental homes, with only 35 affordable and available homes for every 100 extremely low-income renter households. (National Low-Income Housing Coalition)
- **Babies and toddlers are the age group at highest risk of eviction**. The rate of eviction for families with children (10.4%) was more than double the eviction rate of those without children (5.0%) (Eviction Lab)

Families with Young Children Face **Unique Shelter Barriers**


Most families experiencing homelessness are not eligible nor prioritized for federal homelessness assistance

- HUD's restrictive definition of homelessness excludes families who stay with others temporarily due to lack of alternatives, and families in self-paid motels, despite their comparable vulnerabilities to other homeless situations.
- **More than 80% of children identified as homeless by public schools are excluded from HUD assistance.**
- The HUD homeless assistance system prioritizes single chronically homeless adults in "vulnerability assessments" used to triage access to resources.

How are Systems Responding?

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HOMELESSNESS

EARLY HEAD START	EARLY INTERVENTION/ CHILD FIND	CHILD CARE	HUD HOMELESS ASSISTANCE	MATERNAL, INFANT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING (MIECHV)
<p>Homeless families are categorically eligible. Also requires proactive outreach, grace periods for immunizations, and prioritized enrollment. Allows programs to reserve slots for homeless infants and toddlers</p>	<p>States must make early intervention services available to homeless infants/toddlers; LEAs must identify and evaluate children with disabilities experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p>Requires lead agencies to prioritize children experiencing homelessness and use funds for outreach and enrollment of homeless families and expedited enrollment. Lead agencies also must use some grants/contracts to expand the supply of child care for all infants and toddlers.</p>	<p>Requires programs serving families experiencing homelessness to designate a staff person to ensure that young children (including infants and toddlers) are enrolled in early childhood programs.</p>	<p>Some data collection on homelessness is required by the Health Resource and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services</p>



Connecting Children & Families to Early Childhood

- Extensions and grace periods for submitting **eligibility documentation**;
- 24 states **waive copayments** for families experiencing homelessness;
- 22 states **waive work requirements** for families experiencing homelessness



Connecting Children & Families to Housing

- Prioritizing expectant parents on **waitlists for public housing**;
- Utilizing **Medicaid Section 1115 waivers** to provide housing;
- Expanding eligibility through **early childhood/housing partnerships**.

How States are Leading

- Connecticut **Head Start on Housing**
- Nevada **Preschool Development Grant**
- New York **Medicaid Waiver**
- Oklahoma **Commission on Children & Youth**
- South Carolina **Child Care Resource & Referral**

What More Should be Done?

Action Opportunity: Thrive From the Start

Four organizations across the early childhood, housing, and homelessness systems dedicated to ensuring every expectant parent, infant, toddler, and their families have the resources and opportunities to thrive.



Policy Agenda



**EXPAND ACCESS TO SHELTER AND
PERMANENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING**



**INTEGRATE HEALTH CARE SERVICES
AND HOUSING SERVICES**



**INCREASE ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD
PROGRAMS AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
SERVICES**



**IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS,
USE, AND COORDINATION**



Three Things to Get Started Today

- **Research:** how many infants and toddlers experience homelessness in your state? How do your state's policies prioritize access to both housing and early childhood programs for homeless families?
- **Listen:** ask parents with lived experience what they need.
- **Act:** share data, connect with other systems, and advocate on behalf of homeless children and families

Contact Information



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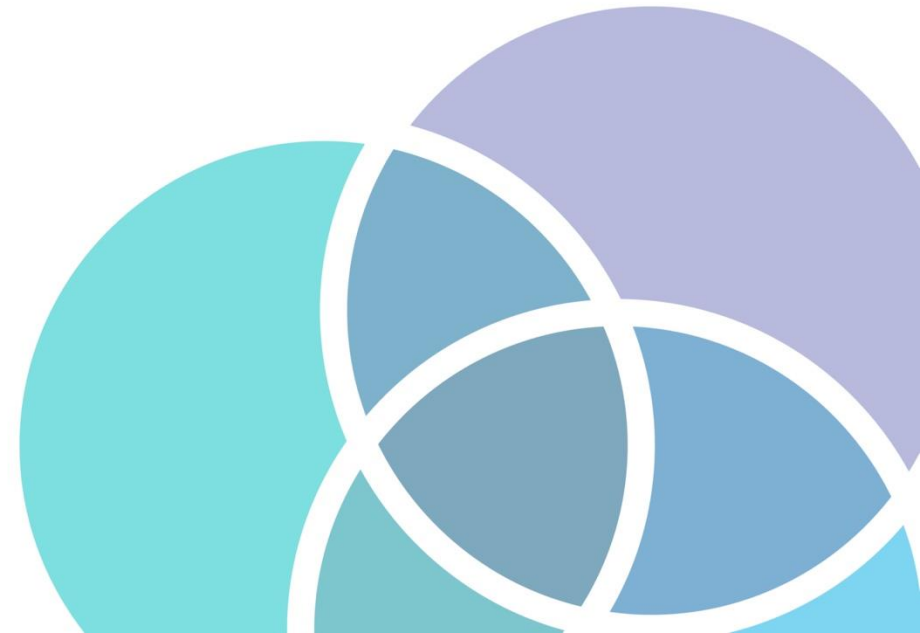
SOUTH CAROLINA
CCR&R

Child Care Resource & Referral


Aimee Dubé Weller

Homeless Support and Parent Referral Specialist

How do I prioritize families
experiencing homelessness in
accessing child care?



***Please choose the options that describe your living situation:**

 Check all that apply

- ☐ I rent or own my own home.
- ☐ I am temporarily living with a family member or friend.
- ☐ I'm staying in a hotel/motel.
- ☐ I'm staying in a residence with no water, heat, electricity, etc.
- ☐ I'm staying in a shelter or transitional housing.
- ☐ I'm staying in a car, park, campsite, or similar location.
- ☐ I've received an eviction notice.
- ☐ I'm moving from place to place/couch surfing.
- ☐ I prefer not to say.

Required



What common barriers do families face in accessing child care while experiencing housing instability?

Transportation
Openings/Vacancies
Registration Fees/Waitlist Fees
Complicated/Confusing Processes



How do I coordinate across systems to support these families experiencing homelessness?

Child Care Subsidy Expedited Process (resource connection)
McKinney-Vento Liaisons (school connection)
Homeless Shelters/Transitional Housing (housing connection)



What lessons can be learned from
South Carolina's approach?



South Carolina Child Care Homeless Initiative

**A partnership of SC Child Care Resource and Referral &
SC Department of Social Services
Funded through the Child Care Development Fund**

The Homeless Support and Parent Referral Specialist position was developed utilizing CCDF funding from SC DSS to support families and providers. South Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral promotes high-quality early care and education by providing free, statewide services to SC's families, providers, and communities. SC CCR&R is housed at the University of South Carolina and funded through the Department of Social Services.

The Homeless Support and Parent Referral Specialist position works statewide with families qualified under the McKinney-Vento Act, providing them with referrals to child care providers in their area and connecting them with resources for financial assistance. Specifically, the partnership allows for an expedited process for assisting families to apply for the Department of Social Services Child Care Scholarship.

The specialist also trains child care providers and other community service providers on the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness and best practices for working with children and families experiencing homelessness.

2023

263 Child care Referrals
152 SC DSS Scholarship Connections

2024

259 Child care Referrals
147 SC DSS Scholarship Connections



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<https://sc-ccrr.org>



<https://www.facebook.com/scccrr>





Panel Discussion

Thank you for joining us today!

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Save the dates for the upcoming webinars in the series! All webinars will be held from 2-3:30 PM ET.

- July 10
- August 7
- September 11
- October 9

Please fill out the survey!!