

# Early Care and Education Services in New York State for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness



## BACKGROUND

Did you know that participation in quality early care and education are especially helpful for families experiencing homelessness?

High-quality early learning programs are very beneficial for young children experiencing housing instability; such programs stimulate cognitive development and readiness for school. They also provide stability to daily life and reduce the stresses of child care on families experiencing homelessness.

Did you know that children who are homeless are less likely to participate in early childhood programs than children who are permanently housed?

It's true. That's why it is critical that professionals working with families experiencing homelessness share information about available early care and education services and help them access those services. This resource will help you identify the early care and education services in your community and enable you to better connect parents who are homeless with the highest quality services for their young children.

## WHO IS CONSIDERED TEMPORARILY HOUSED OR HOMELESS?\*

Children living in many different types of temporary situations are considered homeless under federal law, including:

- Shelters. This includes stand-alone shelters as well as situations where the local department of social services arranges for a family to temporarily stay in a motel, hotel, or an apartment (referred to as a cluster site in NYC).
- Temporarily staying with friends or relatives because the family lost their housing (also referred to as "doubled-up").

For more information about which families may be considered homeless, contact NYS-TEACHS at 800-388-2014 or visit [www.nysteachs.org](http://www.nysteachs.org).

## WHO SHOULD USE THIS DOCUMENT

- Child care providers
- Head Start and Early Head Start programs
- Local departments of social services
- Shelter providers
- Parents
- Staff from libraries, food pantries, and other organizations working with families experiencing homelessness.
- School district McKinney-Vento liaisons and other school district staff working with families in temporary housing (registration staff, guidance counselors, etc.)

Many of the people listed above are required to help children in temporary housing access early care and education programs, and this document can help them meet these responsibilities. For example:

- o SCHOOL DISTRICT MCKINNEY-VENTO LIAISONS are required to ensure that young children experiencing homelessness have access to early care and education programs including Head Start, Early Head Start, Early Intervention, preschool special education, and Pre-K.
- o HEAD START PROGRAMS AND CERTAIN CHILD CARE PROVIDERS must prioritize children who are homeless for enrollment.
- o CERTAIN SHELTER PROVIDERS KNOWN AS TIER II SHELTERS must make sure that families have access to child care so that parents can look for work, look for permanent housing, attend school, or attend a training program.
- o FAMILY SHELTER PROVIDERS AND LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES must refer infants and toddlers suspected of having or at risk of having a developmental delay or disability for an evaluation for Early Intervention services.

## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

- Read the Early Care and Education Resources section starting on the next page to learn more about different programs and services, including: ages served; types of services offered; eligibility requirements; requirements for serving children who are homeless, if any; and a link to the programs' websites.
- Use the links listed on Early Care and Education Resources in My Community chart at the end of this document to identify the programs and services in your community and fill in the chart.
- Share the Early Care and Education Resources in My Community chart with parents in temporary housing who have young children. Looking for strategies to connect with parents in temporary housing? Contact NYS-TEACHS at 800-388-2014.

\* The terms "homeless" and "temporary housing" are used interchangeably in this document. In general, it is recommended that the term "temporary housing" be used because many people do not know that the McKinney-Vento federal definition of "homeless" includes a range of temporary housing situations and because "homeless" often has negative associations.

# EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION RESOURCES

Know the early care and education infrastructure in your community and access the highest quality services for young children experiencing homelessness!



## Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Agencies

- Ages served: n/a
- Services: CCR&Rs provide information and referrals to parents/caretakers about where to find and how to choose a child care provider. Also, they provide information, training, and support to child care providers.
- Eligibility: Anyone can contact a CCR&R for information about child care.
- Serving children who are homeless: Provides information and trainings about the definition of "homeless" and the requirements early care and education programs have related to serving children who are homeless.
- Website: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/referralagencies.asp>

## Child Care Subsidies

- Ages served: 6 weeks old up to 13 years old (or 19 for children with disabilities).
- Services: Child care subsidies help parents/caretakers pay for some or all of the cost of child care services. Families receiving a child care subsidy can choose any eligible child care provider, such as: Day Care Centers, Small Day Care Centers, Family Day Care Homes, Group Family Day Care Homes, School-Age Child Care Programs, or Non-regulated/Informal Providers (typically, home-based care for one to two children in addition to the provider's children). For more information about the different types of child care see: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/brochure.asp>.
- Eligibility: Parents must meet income eligibility requirements and may need to meet work/school/training/counseling participation requirements, if any (depends on the county). Contact your local department of social services to find out the eligibility requirements in your county. NOTE: There may be a waiting list for child care subsidies.
- Serving children who are homeless:
- **No fees:** Parents who are homeless typically do not have to pay any fees. (Parents who are homeless must pay a fee if they choose child care that costs more than the market rate.)
  - **Grace period for records:** Parents have up to 2 weeks from the day the child starts attending child care to get immunization records to the child care provider. If the parent does not have a copy of the child's annual physical (medical statement) when they enroll, the child care provider should submit a waiver to OCFS to give the parent more time to get the annual physical. The child can receive child care services while the parent is getting the records.
  - **Outreach:** Contact your local CCR&R and department of social services to learn about outreach to families who are homeless.
  - **Priority enrollment:** Families who are homeless may get priority for child care subsidy to the extent that the local department of social services has funds available. For more information see your local child care plan: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/plans/plans.asp>.
  - **Enhanced rate:** Local departments of social services pay licensed child care providers at least 5% more for caring for a child who is homeless.
- Website: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/localdss.asp>  
For NYC see: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/early-care/find-child-care.page> and <https://access.nyc.gov/>

## Head Start and Early Head Start

- Ages served: Infants and toddlers under 3 and women who are pregnant (Early Head Start), and 3-5-year-olds (Head Start) and their families.
- Services: Comprehensive child development program for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers and their families (Early Head Start), and preschoolers and their families (Head Start) that provides early learning experiences, usually in a center-based setting, along with health and family support services. Some, but not all, Head Start programs include full-day early care and education.
- Eligibility: All children who are homeless are categorically eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start. NOTE: There may be a waiting list for Early Head Start or Head Start.

Serving children who are homeless:

- **Priority enrollment:** Children who are homeless are prioritized for enrollment (for example, their application may get more “points” or the Head Start/Early Head Start may set aside seats for children who are homeless). Ask your local Head Start/Early Head Start program for how they prioritize children who are homeless.
- **Reasonable time to get records:** Parents have up to 2 weeks from the day the child starts attending Head Start/Early Head Start to get immunization records to the Head Start provider. If the parent does not have a copy of the child’s annual physical (medical statement) when they enroll, the Head Start/Early Head Start provider should submit a waiver to OCFS to give the parent more time to get the annual physical. The child can attend Head Start/Early Head Start while the parent is getting the records.

Website:

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator>  
<http://ccf.ny.gov/council-initiatives/head-start-collaboration-project/>

## Pre-K (also known as UPK or Universal Pre-K )

Ages served: 4-year-olds (must have turned 4 by December 1 or December 31 in NYC) and in certain school districts programs for 3-year-olds.

Services: Half-day and full-day programs in schools and in community-based organizations (for example, local day care programs, early childhood centers).

Eligibility: All children who meet the age requirements and who live in a school district that has Pre-K. NOTE: There may be a waiting list for Pre-K.

Serving children who are homeless:

- **School selection:** Children who are homeless can apply for Pre-K in the school district where they are temporarily housed or in the school district where they were last permanently housed even if they are now temporarily housed outside of that district.
- **Immediate enrollment:** Children who are homeless are entitled to immediate enrollment if a seat is available, even if the parents do not have the documents normally needed. The school district’s McKinney-Vento liaison must help the parent get any missing documents (for example, birth certificate, immunization records).
- **Class-size waiver:** If a Pre-K class already has 20 children enrolled and a child who is homeless would like to enroll, the school district should apply to the State Education Department for a class size waiver to allow the child who is homeless to participate in Pre-K.
- **Transportation:** If a child is enrolled in a Pre-K and becomes homeless, the school district must provide transportation to the child so that the child can continue attending the Pre-K.

Website:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/upkdirectory.html>. For NYC, see:  
<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/enrollment/enroll-grade-by-grade/pre-k>

# Services for Young Children with Developmental Delays or Disabilities

## Early Intervention

Ages served: Birth up to 3 years old

Services: Services for children with developmental delays and disabilities. Examples of services include: occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy; health, nursing, or nutrition services; psychological or social work services; family training, counseling, respite; service coordination; special instruction; and Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA).

Eligibility: Child must have a qualifying developmental delay or disability.

Serving children who are homeless: Shelter providers and school district McKinney-Vento liaisons must refer children who may have a developmental delay for an Early Intervention evaluation unless the parent objects.

Website:

[https://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants\\_children/early\\_intervention/county\\_eip.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/county_eip.htm)

## Preschool Special Education

Ages served: 3-5-year-olds

Services: Special education services for children with developmental delays or disabilities. Examples of services include: speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling (play

therapy), parent training, school health services, Special Education Itinerant Teacher (SEIT), special class in an integrated setting (half-day or full-day), special class (half-day or full-day). Many children receive preschool special education services at another early childhood program, such as Head Start, child care, or Pre-K. Children with more significant disabilities may receive a preschool special education class.

Eligibility: Child must have a qualifying developmental delay or disability.

Serving children who are homeless: See Pre-K

Website: Contact information for the Chairpersons of school districts' Committees on Special Education can be found here: <http://eservices.nysed.gov/sedreports/list?id=1> (searching for "School Districts: Active School Districts Director of Special Ed Info"). For NYC, see: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/special-education/help/cpse-cse>

## Other Resources

### Home Visiting Programs

Ages served: Pregnant or parenting (child is under 5)

Services: Provides family support through visits in the home by a home visitor. Home visitors provide information and support about parenting, the child's health and development, healthy coping strategies for stressful parenting situations, and services in the community (such as health care and job training). There are different types of home visiting programs, such as: Early Head Start; Healthy Families New York; Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY); Nurse-Family Partnership; Parents as Teachers; SafeCare; and Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-Up program (ABC)

Eligibility: Depends on the program.

Serving children who are homeless: No specific statewide requirements, though some programs may prioritize families who are homeless.

Website: [https://www.health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/home\\_visiting\\_programs/pregnant\\_parenting\\_fam.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/home_visiting_programs/pregnant_parenting_fam.htm)

### McKinney-Vento Liaisons

Ages served: Preschool and school-age children and youth and their families

Services: Every school district, BOCES, and charter school must appoint a McKinney-Vento liaison to help children and youth experiencing homelessness. Responsibilities include: ensuring that children and youth who are homeless are identified, are enrolled in school, maintain school stability, and are provided transportation; connecting families who are homeless with early care and education programs; and providing referrals for housing, health, mental health, dental, and substance abuse services. For a full list of liaison responsibilities, see: <https://www.nysteachs.org/liason-overview>.

Website: For a list of liaisons, see: <https://www.nysteachs.org/homeless-liason-contact-list>

State Contact: Melanie Faby, McKinney-Vento State Coordinator, (518) 473-0295, [melanie.faby@nysed.gov](mailto:melanie.faby@nysed.gov)  
New York State Technical and Education Assistance Center for Homeless Students (NYS-TEACHS), 800-388-2014, [info@nysteachs.org](mailto:info@nysteachs.org)

### Shelter and Housing Providers

Shelters: Every local department of social services (DSS) offers emergency housing (usually in a shelter or motel/hotel) for families who do not have other resources. There are also shelters and safe houses for survivors of domestic violence, which are not overseen by DSSs.

Housing: There are housing programs that help families who are or who have been homeless. Some counties offer subsidized housing, such as Section 8 or public housing through the local Housing Authority. Some housing developments set aside units for families who are low or middle income. Many communities have eviction prevention providers that help families keep their homes.

Shelter and housing providers:

<https://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.asp>.

NYC: families apply for shelter at PATH, 151 East 151st St, Bronx  
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dhs/shelter/families/families-with-children-applying.page>

Housing providers:

<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/housing/providers/>

Lotteries for low-income housing:

<https://hcr.ny.gov/rental-programs-and-asset-management>

NYC: <http://www.nychdc.com/pages/Now-Renting.html>

Eviction prevention providers: <https://www.lawhelpny.org/>

NYC: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dhs/prevention/homebase.page>

# EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION RESOURCES IN MY COMMUNITY



Program	Serves birth-3-years old	Serves 3-5 years old	Statewide list of local/county contacts	What is this program called in my community?	Contact Name, Address, Email, Phone
Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) (Provides information and resources only)	X	X	<a href="https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/CCRR-Biennial-Report-2016-18.pdf">https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/CCRR-Biennial-Report-2016-18.pdf</a>		
Child Care Subsidies	X	X	<a href="https://ocfs.ny.gov/search/docs.php?type=1&amp;topic=3">https://ocfs.ny.gov/search/docs.php?type=1&amp;topic=3</a>		
Head Start/ Early Head Start	X (Early Head Start)	X (Head Start)	<a href="https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator">https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator</a>		
Pre-K		X (4-year-olds & in certain school districts programs for 3-year-olds)	<a href="http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/upkdirectory.html">http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/upkdirectory.html</a> For NYC, contact Pre-K Outreach: 718-935-2009		
Early Intervention	X		<a href="https://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/county_eip">https://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/county_eip</a>		

Program	Serves birth-3-years old	Serves 3-5 years old	Statewide list of local/county contacts	What is this program called in my community?	Contact Name, Address, Email, Phone
Preschool Special Education		X	Contact the local school district's Chairperson of the Committee on Special Education by visiting <a href="http://eservices.nysed.gov/sedreports/list?id=1">http://eservices.nysed.gov/sedreports/list?id=1</a> and searching for "School Districts: Active School Districts Director of Special Ed Info." For NYC, see: <a href="https://www.schools.nyc.gov/special-education/help/cpse-cse">https://www.schools.nyc.gov/special-education/help/cpse-cse</a>		
Home Visiting Programs	X		<a href="https://www.health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/home_visiting_programs/pregnant_parenting_fam.htm#list">https://www.health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/home_visiting_programs/pregnant_parenting_fam.htm#list</a>		
McKinney-Vento Liaison			<a href="https://www.nysteachs.org/liasons">https://www.nysteachs.org/liasons</a>		
Shelter and Housing Providers			<a href="https://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.asp">https://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.asp</a> (family shelters) <a href="https://www.nyscadv.org/find-help/program-directory.html">https://www.nyscadv.org/find-help/program-directory.html</a> (family shelters for survivors of domestic violence) <a href="https://otda.ny.gov/programs/housing/providers/">https://otda.ny.gov/programs/housing/providers/</a> (housing providers) <a href="https://www.lawhelpny.org/">https://www.lawhelpny.org/</a> (eviction prevention)		
Other local resources:					
My Early Childhood Go-To Resource:					

**There's more!** In addition to the above resources, you can get information and referrals for many different types of services, including early care and education services by:

- Calling 211 (outside of New York City) or 311 (New York City)
- Visiting <https://211nys.org/find-services> (outside of New York City) or <https://access.nyc.gov/> (New York City).

Also, make sure to check places like libraries, family resource centers, community action centers, programs for pregnant and parenting teens, etc. for additional local resources.

