



Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness

A Self-Study Training Opportunity

Description:

“Sometimes all it takes is a series of unfortunate events and no safety net to quickly make a once thriving family lose their home. Whether this is occurring to a family that is new to your program or an existing family in your child care setting, homelessness has a devastating impact on families and their young children. This training will provide early learning professionals with an introduction to families experiencing homelessness and strategies to provide compassionate care during this traumatic time for these children and their families.”

Set One
Families and Community Systems (FCS)
1 Hour



Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness

A Self-Study Training Opportunity

Instructions for completing the Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness training

1. Read the self-study training and complete the questions and reflection opportunities.
2. Watch the videos (*or read the transcript of the videos*).
3. After reading the self-study training, take the "[Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness Questionnaire](#)." This is your "knowledge check" for the training.
 - a. Individuals who **achieve a minimum of at least 7 correct responses** will be qualified for a certificate of completion.

There are several options to submit your questionnaire. You may submit:

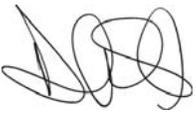
- b. Electronically by clicking "**submit**" at the end of the evaluation. This will automatically email your evaluation to the Early Learning Division.
 - c. By **mail or fax** (more information below).
4. If you achieve less than 7 correct answers on the questionnaire, you will not qualify for a certificate and will be notified by email or mail.
 - a. You will get an opportunity to try again.
5. If you qualify for a certificate, you will receive a certificate via email or email within 2 weeks of the Early Learning Division receiving your questionnaire.
 - a. Your certificate **does not** need to be submitted to the Oregon Registry Online (ORO) because the Early Learning Division will submit it to ORO on your behalf.
 - i. You may verify that this training is in your ORO account by visiting myORO at:
<https://my.oregonregistryonline.org/>

If you don't submit the questionnaire electronically by clicking on **SUBMIT** after completion, there are three other options to submit a completed questionnaire. You may also use these options if you have questions about the self-study training:

1. **Email:** ELD.ProfessionalDevelopment@ode.state.or.us
2. **Mail:** Early Learning Division
Attn: Families Experiencing Homelessness Training
875 Union Street NE
Salem, OR 97311-0024
3. **Fax:** (503) 612-4346
 - a. Note: This fax is located in Tualatin, OR, which may be long distance for you.

Dear Early Learning Professional:

Thank you for your commitment to learn about families experiencing homelessness. This may be a new topic for you in your professional development. The goal of this training is to help early learning professionals identify and serve families that are experiencing a very difficult time in their lives. As with all families that you serve, you want to be an asset to each of them, and to support them as part of their team in striving for positive early learning experiences. By providing physical and emotional safety for their children during child care hours, you could be a sort of “shelter” during a stormy time in their lives. Quality early learning programs are capable of developing successful strategies for children who are experiencing trauma of homelessness. The Early Learning Division hopes that at the end of this training you are informed and “team ready” should any of your families find themselves experiencing homelessness.



Dawn Woods
Child Care Director
Early Learning Division

In this self-study you will find:

- Reflection opportunity
- What does it mean to be homeless?
- Why do families become homeless?
- What settings do children experiencing homelessness in Oregon live?
- Strategies for identifying families experiencing homelessness.
- Caring for children experiencing homelessness.
- School aged children and homelessness: the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness Questionnaire and Evaluation.
- Appendixes:
 - Transcript for 211info recording
 - Transcript for McKinney-Vento Act and Oregon schools video
 - Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education contact numbers

What do you already know about families experiencing homelessness?

Reflect on what you already know or think you might know about families that are experiencing homelessness and write down at least three features of these families (i.e.: Where are they living? How can you tell they are homeless?).

1.
2.
3.

Test your current knowledge about families experiencing homelessness:

Read each of the questions below. In the first column put in your “best guess” of what you think the answer might be. As you read the self-study information, you will see this symbol: 

This symbol lets you know that in that section, there is an answer to one of these questions below. Click the symbol to return and add that answer to this page to see if your guess was accurate (**hint:** these questions might appear in the Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness Questionnaire at the end). Click the Return button to return to your place in the study.

Question	Your Best Guess	Answer
1. Families are not considered homeless if they share housing or are living with another family (true or false)?		
2. In 2014-2015 most homeless families lived in shelters (true or false)?		
3. Some of the families experiencing homelessness have children under the age of 6 years old. Where do you think Oregon ranks in the U.S. for total number of children experiencing homelessness under 6 years old? Is Oregon high, average, or low?		
4. Families experiencing homelessness can access social services or aid only if they have all the proper documentation at the time of enrolling or accessing the services (true or false)?		
5. 211info serves families by connecting them to services in every county in Oregon (true or false)?		
6. 211info services can only be accessed by email (true or false)?		
7. In your county, how many children enrolled in school (K-12) are experiencing homelessness?		
8. Where would you go to find the contact information for all of the homeless liaisons in each school district across the state?		

What does it mean to be homeless?

“Families that **lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**” is a guiding phrase to describe homelessness.

- **Fixed Residence:** One that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.
- **Regular Residence:** One that is used on a regular (i.e.: nightly) basis.
- **Adequate Residence:** One which is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

Being homeless doesn't always mean that a family is living in a homeless shelter - it is much broader than that. Here are some examples of ways that a family can be experiencing homelessness.

Families can be considered homeless if they:



- ◆ Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardships, or a similar reason
- ◆ Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- ◆ Are living in emergency or transitional shelters
- ◆ Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- ◆ Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- ◆ Are migrant children and youth (as defined under NCLB Title IC - Migrant Education) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above.

Why do families become homeless?

Families might experience homelessness after a series of misfortunate or tragic events that have an immediate impact on their income, such as the loss of a job or loved one, divorce, chronic family illness, etc. The lack of affordable housing can have a huge impact on a family's housing stability. For families living in poverty or close to poverty, sometimes there isn't a safety net of resources large enough to manage or outlast the events while trying to find other strategies. These events become financially unmanageable. Other factors could include: untreated mental illness, substance abuse, and/or domestic violence. Sometimes natural disasters, such as severe weather like floods, hurricanes, tornados, etc. can cause families to unexpectedly experience homelessness.



What settings do Oregon's homeless children live in? ⁱ



What are the Living Situations of Homeless Students in Oregon?

School Year	In Shelters	Sharing Housing	Unsheltered	Motels
2012-13*	1,793	13,964	1,600	808
2013-14	1,836	14,275	1,842	949
2014-15	1,853	15,298	2,272	1,101

Think about this chart:

1. Have you provided child care for any children who lived in settings like the ones above?
2. In 2014-2015, in what settings were most of the children experiencing homelessness living?
3. What do you think it must be like for the 1,853 children who lived in shelters in 2014-2015?

States with the highest percentage of young children under age 6 experiencing homelessness wereⁱⁱ:

- Kentucky - 10.6%
- New York - 9.6%
- California - 9.1%
- Alabama - 8.6%
- **Oregon - 7.2%**
- Oklahoma - 7.1%
- West Virginia - 7.0%
- District of Columbia - 7.0%
- New Mexico - 7.0%
- Alaska - 6.4%



Oregon has the **5th highest percentage** of young children under the age of 6 experiencing homelessness in the nation!

It could be that some of these children have been in your child care setting at one time, or will be in the future.

Strategies for identifying families experiencing homelessness



As an early learning professional, you might not always know if one of your families begins to experience homelessness. Unfortunately, it's not always obvious and families will not always self-identify, often due to a fear of child welfare involvement, stigma and embarrassment (or other reasonsⁱⁱⁱ).

Early learning program leaders would want to know if a family is experiencing homelessness so they can be sure they are supporting this

family with a level of care and resources for a family that is experiencing trauma. This is a time to withhold judgment and be a strong “team player” for this family. You won't have to know why the family is homeless, but you want to know that this is occurring so you can be a supportive resource to the children and their families.

Are there opportunities during the time that a family is enrolling in childcare to learn about a family's living situation? The process of enrolling a new child (forms or conversation) could provide a chance for families to describe their living situation, if their housing situation is permanent, or if they are living temporarily with friends, family, in a shelter, or other substandard housing.

Perhaps a family that previously enrolled could be experiencing homelessness as a new event in their lives. The family may not volunteer this information. There are, however, some signs and behaviors that could be observed by you if you are aware of them. Below are a few symptoms that may cause you to pause and pay closer attention to a family that may need extra information about how to seek help and resources. None of these symptoms should be used alone to “diagnose” homelessness, rather, if they are seen in combination, it is likely that an unstable housing situation might be occurring.

- Families moving frequently
- Observations of family issues
- Children are frequently very tired during the day
- Children are very hungry and really look forward to meals and snacks, or needs to be reassured that they will be provided
- Lack of sufficient or correctly sized clothing
- Hygiene issues
- Extreme poverty (shoes too small, lack of clean clothes, inability to pay child care bill, etc.)



Strategies for helping families who may be experiencing homelessness

Many families who qualify for services and aid often don't know about the services that are available to them, especially if they have not experienced poverty before. They may not know programs exist to help them in meaningful ways, such as help with paying for child care, where to find help, or who to ask. Often, families don't access services they qualify for because they are so overwhelmed. Perhaps they feel they can't get grounded enough to work on accessing the social services that would benefit them and their children, or they start a process and then move out of the area.



Parents experiencing homelessness frequently don't have the paperwork that is needed (birth certificates, immunization or payroll records, etc.) to enroll their child in school or publically funded early learning programs, or to seek state aid such as: food stamps, medical care, funds to pay for child care, etc. Due to these barriers, there are new laws that allow families experiencing homelessness a grace period so they can temporarily access public services while they are working to gather the required documentation. Families may not be aware of these accommodations.

One very important resource that you can make sure your families know about: [211info](http://211info.org).



211info 
2-1-1®

 Dial 211 |  Text your zip code to 898211

 Visit 211info.org |  Email help@211info.org

Connect with us:    | In strategic partnership with: 



**Cut this out and put it into your newsletter, on a bulletin board, or in children's backpacks for parents to see.*



211info serves every county in Oregon and some counties in Southwest Washington as well. As you can see from the card above, there are several different ways a family can communicate with 211info for services. They can call, text, email and/or go onto the website to find resources. Sometimes a family may call 211info for one resource or service they have in mind and 211info helps them access additional services they didn't know existed. 211 is one contact for many services - for families experiencing homelessness or poverty, this is a resource that is not to be missed.

211info Mission

"Keeping people and communities healthy means more than access to medical care. It means ensuring people have the basics, like food, housing economic opportunity. At the nonprofit 211info, we believe in the area of Health for Your Whole Life. It's our commitment to work toward an Oregon and Southwest Washington where everyone's health and social services needs are met."

211info is also available to help all parents find child care options regardless of the parents' income. Click at the link below to watch a YouTube video about how 211info helps families.

211info: Providing Services to Families

Link: <https://youtu.be/vQTA2d1xjyE>

**If you are not able to watch the video, you can read the transcript at the end of the self-study packet in the appendixes.*

Caring for children who are experiencing homelessness



Homelessness is a traumatic experience. Individuals and families experiencing homelessness are under constant stress, unsure of whether they will be able to sleep in a safe environment or obtain a decent meal (Hopper, 2010)^{iv}. Since there are many environments and settings that families experiencing homelessness could be staying in, it isn't always possible to say "the child experiencing homelessness will have this experience." Some children may have unstable diets while others will not; some may experience isolation and others will experience overcrowding. Some may fear being found in a secret location while others will experience fear of their known surroundings, and some may experience sleeplessness while others may sleep soundly. One aspect that will be common is that children experiencing homelessness have higher stress levels than their peers who are securely housed.

Their environments may change often and produce unpredictable experiences in their lives. Some children experiencing homelessness may have higher exposure to greater negative experiences and may be vulnerable to victimization. Children who are homeless may feel unsure of or unwelcomed in their surroundings. They may feel unwanted or "in the way" in an environment. Their sense of safety is altered and their experiences may be beyond their self-regulation abilities. These children are experiencing trauma, and trauma is not a typical developing skill that children are capable of mastering.

Trauma refers to an experience that creates a sense of fear, helplessness or horror, and overwhelms a person's resources for coping. Trauma Informed Care (TIC) involves “**understanding, anticipating, and responding** to the issues expectations, and special needs that a person who has been victimized may have in a particular setting or service” (Hopper, 2010)^v. Trauma informed approaches will also create opportunities for children and their families to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment



As you previously read in this section, a child experiencing homelessness could be experiencing fear, physical, psychological and emotional insecurity, hunger, high stress levels, the inability to cope with the stress, sleeplessness, etc. As part of a family's team, and by providing trauma informed care, you put in place strategies that help these symptoms be less severe and painful for the children experiencing homelessness and create opportunities for children to thrive physically, emotionally, and socially. Giving a child who is experiencing homelessness an opportunity to lead an activity or project in the child care setting could help the child experience what they **can** do, help other children and have an opportunity to feel successful and proud of themselves. Giving children the opportunity to feel capable will help them build resiliency (the ability to recover); a skill they will need as the trauma continues.

As an early learning professional, what strategies do you already have in place to build up all children's' sense of self-worth, emotional security, and resiliency?

List 3 strategies that you already have in place:

1.

2.

3.

One consistent symptom of homelessness is *unpredictability*. Routines are important for all children and can be a life-line for a child experiencing homelessness. The routines and schedule in a child care setting can be predictable and provide a very stable setting. Routines can provide a child who is experiencing a high level of instability a chance for their stress levels to decrease during the day. Think about the routines that you already have in place in your child care setting and how reassuring they are to the children in care. For example, do the children in your care experience:

- The same enthusiastic greeting in the morning from their caregiver?
- The same place to store their personal belongings (i.e.: cubbies)?
- Typical daily schedule of circle time, outside play, meal times?
- Same meal and snack location and times?

Think about how all of these contribute to a child's sense of security and “knowing” in your setting.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)

This is a link to the **Ages and Stages Questionnaire**: <http://asqoregon.com/whatisasq.php?lang=en>



This online questionnaire, regarding children from birth to five, is designed to give parents and caregivers an opportunity to check in on a child's development. If you and the child's family have concerns about the child's development, make sure to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). This will help you and the parent know if development is taking place on schedule. Parents, family members, or caregivers can participate in the online questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, a confidential email is sent to the person who completed the form and includes feedback regarding the development stages for the age of the child, fun play activities, and parenting links. Parents can use the results of the ASQ to help talk with pediatricians, teachers, or other professionals if they have concerns about their child's development.

The Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) Program

If the ASQ feedback shows concern in any area, it is helpful to share this information with the Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) program in your area. Below is a link to a brochure that gives information about how to tap into other developmental support services. The brochure includes phone numbers for every county in Oregon.

Brochure Link: http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/pre_k/eiecse/dyhcfinalenglish.pdf

**If you are not able to open the link, you can view the brochure at the end of the self-study packet in the appendixes.*

School aged children and homelessness

School aged children that experience homelessness say that school is like a home to them. It's a place where they see the same faces, sit in the same seat. They have an opportunity to be engaged and stimulated in their school work that helps to ease their daily troubles."^{vi}



School district homeless liaisons

Did you know that each school district has a designated Homeless Student Liaison? They work to provide direct assistance to homeless families and unaccompanied youths to access and achieve in school. The help they provide is tailored to each individual student's needs. If you learn that a family in your program is experiencing homelessness, you want to be sure that the school district Homeless Liaison is in the loop.

With the Liaison's assistance, students experiencing homelessness are identified and the level of support they need is determined. If needed, they can expedite student records for transfer and school placement, assist with immediate school enrollment, and when feasible, arrange for transportation to their school of origin (the school they attended when they had housing). School district liaison's also report data on the number of homeless students served each year within the school district.

School district personnel know that the mobility of homelessness has adverse effects on both student performance and attendance, so many homeless liaisons work diligently to address these two concerns. Students may have a hard time getting homework completed in non-traditional living arrangements. Opportunities to read after school may not exist, or be very difficult. The homeless liaisons work with school age children who are experiencing homelessness to help them to be successful. They become part of that child's team to access what is needed to ensure success in school.

To find the find the District Liaison Contact in your school district (click on **District Liaison Contacts**) please visit:

<http://www.ode.state.or.us/Go/HomelessEd>



Every school district in Oregon has at least one district liaison, contact the district's administrative

District Liaison Contacts

Phone contacts for each Oregon School District.

Beginning on the 2nd page, you will find your school district and the contact information for the liaison in your area.

What school district are you in?

What is the name of your District Liaison?

What is their phone number?

What is the McKinney-Vento Act?

The McKinney-Vento Act is a legislative bill that was developed to ensure that children and youth in homeless situations have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool as provided to other children and youth that are not experiencing homelessness. Oregon uses the definitions and guidance of the McKinney-Vento Act to help determine the appropriate levels of services and supports these children and their families need.

- (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;**
- (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;**
- (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and**
- (iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless.**

To learn more about how Oregon follows the McKinney-Vento Act to help school age children who are experiencing homelessness, please watch the video below.

When School Age Children Experience Homelessness

Link: <https://youtu.be/NkXhmOuTlI0>

**If you are not able to watch the video, you can read the transcript at the end of the self-study packet in the appendixes.*

School aged children may have an especially hard time navigating homelessness and school responsibilities and expectations. Completing assignments and projects may be especially challenging. They may find it difficult to:

- Keep track of school supplies and books
- Find time/locations to do homework
- Have access to light after dark to see their school work
- Receive enough nutrition to concentrate and enough energy to be motivated
- Purchase materials and supplies that help them stay organized or to complete their assignments

School age children experiencing homelessness



Homeless Students by County of Enrollment 2014 - 2015	
County	Total Enrolled K-12
Baker	140
Benton	261
Clackamas	1259
Clatsop	213
Columbia	176
Coos	408
Crook	97
Curry	131
Deshutes	1264
Douglas	502
Gilliam	*
Grant	8
Harney	43
Hood River	45
Jackson	2218
Jefferson	210
Josephine	637
Klamath	394
Lake	16
Lane	2156
Lincoln	571
Linn	989
Malheur	381
Marion	1618
Morrow	42
Multnomah	4069
Polk	144
Sherman	11
Tillamook	137
Umatilla	118
Union	216
Wallowa	37
Wasco	94
Washington	2150
Wheeler	*
Yamhill	494
* Suppressed; 5 or fewer students	

This list shows the number of homeless students enrolled in schools in each county. There are likely more students that have not volunteered the information or have not yet been identified as experiencing homelessness.

The Homeless Liaison in each school district works to prevent and end homelessness. They find collaboration and assistance from several non-profit agencies. Like you, these agencies are part of that family's team. The liaisons can get help with supplies, glasses, dental and medical care, etc. A family can really benefit from the support of their school district homeless liaison.

If you were caring for a school aged child that was experiencing homelessness, what actions would you do to support his or her needs?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Complete your training on “[Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness.](#)”

The next portion of the training is designed to ensure that you learned from this self-study process.

1. Completely fill out the top portion of the questionnaire.
2. Answer all questions in the Questionnaire and Evaluation.
3. You need to achieve at least 7 correct answers in order to qualify for a certificate.
4. If you qualify for a certificate, you will see the training in your Oregon Registry Online (ORO) account within 10 days of submission.
5. You will receive a certificate by mail or email within two weeks.
 - a. **You do not need to submit this certificate to ORO, as we will do it for you!**



Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness QUESTIONNAIRE

The following information is needed to credit a certificate to your ORO account

Full Legal First Name		Middle Name	Last Name
Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	Home Phone Number	Email Address	
CBR Number		Former Names	

Home Physical Address

Street Address	City	State	Zip
----------------	------	-------	-----

Mailing Address (if different from above)

Street Address	City	State	Zip
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In order to qualify for a certificate in your ORO account for this training, you must answer at least 7 questions correctly. When you are finished, please press the submit button on the next page. You will receive an email response letting you know that your Questionnaire was received.

- 1) A family can be considered homeless if they are not living in a shelter, or outdoors. True False
- 2) In 2014-15, most families who experience homelessness lived in shelters. True False
- 3) Families experiencing homelessness can enroll their children in school without immunization or birth certificate records. True False
- 4) Resources and services can be found from accessing 211 by phone, text, email and their website. True False
- 5) 211 serves most counties in Oregon. True False
- 6) Every school district in Oregon has a homeless Liaison? True False
- 7) Oregon is ranked lower in the nation for children under the age of 6 years old that are experiencing homelessness? True False
- 8) The _____ and _____ in child care setting can be predictable, and and provide a very stable setting. (fill in the blanks)
- 9) What school district do you live or work in? _____
 What is the name of this school districts Homeless Liaison: _____
- 10) "Families that lack a _____, _____ and adequate _____ is a guiding phrase to describe families that are experiencing homelessness.

SERVING FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS EVALUATION

Full Legal First Name	Middle Name	Last Name
CBR Number R	Home Phone Number	Email Address

Rate your pre-training experience from 1 (new to topic) to 5 (very familiar with topic):	1	2	3	4	5
Before this training session, my knowledge level on this topic was:	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Complete this sentence: I took this training hoping to...

Rate your experience of all the following from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree):

GENERAL ORGANIZATION	1	2	3	4	5
The self-study information was easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The self-study and information provided was useful.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The resources provided were easy to locate.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I increased my knowledge about families experiencing homelessness as a result of taking this training.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	1	2	3	4	5
I became aware of the definition of homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>				

What new information did you take away from this training that you didn't expect to learn?

What are some of the ways you will use this information in your work?

What else would you like to tell the trainer?

Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness Appendixes

A. Transcript of the 211 video:

[Click Here](#) to return to the 211Info section of the study.

Kelli Walker: Hi, everybody, my name is Kelli Walker; I am the child care policy manager with the Early Learning Division - State of Oregon. I am happy to be here as part of your training on families experiencing homelessness and introduce you to Kerry Wels, who is with 211info. She is going to talk to us a little bit about information that is available to childcare providers and parents, who may be experiencing some changes in their homes. Kerry, do you want to go ahead and introduce yourself?

Kerry Wells: Hi, my name is Kerry Wels; and I am the program manager for the 211info child care program here at 211.

Kelli Walker: Kerry, we've really been working, (actually federally too) on working with families that are experiencing homelessness, and there is lots of information on things happening around working with these families. So much has happened over the last several years, especially since the recession with working families, and people changing livelihoods. We know a lot of children are impacted. So if the early learning provider learns that one of their families may be experiencing some instability in their home, should they encourage their families to call 211?

Kerry Wells: Yes, the family should definitely give us a call here at 211.

Kelli Walker: What kinds of information can you help them with?

Kerry Wells: Here at 211, we have 30,000 programs in our database, and these programs cover the whole state of Oregon and parts of Southwest Washington. Childcare providers and parents are welcome to call 211 and we can provide information and referrals to many different social services throughout the state.

Kelli Walker: So, exactly how does 211 help a family?

Kerry Wells: We can provide information and referral to social services. We receive calls daily parents asking for things like shelter, housing, rent assistance, energy assistance, food, clothing, and many other resources.

Kelli Walker: Do you find that the referrals that you give parents that they can easily access the organizations that can help them?

Kerry Wells: The organizations that we give out are based on location, so we basically take down some information from the parent, regarding what their zip code is and where they're located, and try to find resources near where they are living.

Kelli Walker: So, it is really important to us, obviously, coming from the Department of Education that the children are able to go to school. So do you have a way to connect the families to their schools, as well?

Kerry Wells: We do, we have contact information for all the different schools and school districts in Oregon and we also have contact information for the homelessness liaisons' services, which are programs that try to help families to receive accurate information about help for families experiencing homelessness in their area.

Kelli Walker: That is great. I know we are going to be talking later on with Dona Bolt who is the Homeless Education Coordinator for the State of Oregon, and she will be telling us more information about that. So, what kinds of resources are there for parents that they might not think of? Maybe they were calling you because they are trying to find a place to live or subsidized housing or something. What kind of resources might you have that they wouldn't think to ask for?

Kerry Wells: We go through a list of demographic questions with each caller, so we get a better idea of what their current income is, their living situation; sometimes families might be living with a family member and might not consider themselves homeless. When they call us, we are able to give them resources around housing, rent assistance, energy assistance, and many different needs they might not realize exist.

Kelli Walker: So if they call you for something else maybe they were looking for medical care, through asking the demographic questions you can also find if they might be experiencing homelessness?

Kerry Wells: Yes, that is often what happens.

Kelli Walker: Can you tell us the 211 hours of operation?

Kerry Wells: 211info, (the general call center) hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Our 211info child care program [parents seeking child care referrals] has extended hours; we are open from Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m.

Kelli Walker: You know, we know a lot of have families who may be having unstable housing situation, are also working so they may or may not be available during your hours that you are taking calls. Are there other ways for them to reach you?

Kerry Wells: Yes, people can text us, by texting your zip code to 898211, or they can email us at children@211info.org.

Kelli Walker: So you do quite a bit of referral and information via email and text?

Kerry Wells: Yes, we do, quite a bit via email and text.

Kelli Walker: That really makes it convenient for the families and parents. So is there anything else that you would want to tell us about 211 before we close up?

Kerry Wells: I just really would like to invite all of you to give us a try, give us a call. You can reach us by dialing 211 on your phone.

Kelli Walker: Great, thanks so much for your time Kerry, I really appreciate it.

Kerry Wells: Thank you.

[Click Here](#) to return to the 211Info section of the study.

B. Transcript of the McKinney-Vento Act [Click Here](#) to return to the McKinney-Vento Act section of the study.

Kelli Walker: Hi, my name is Kelli Walker; I am the child care policy manager with the Early Learning Division and the Oregon Department of Education. I am really excited today to be here with Dona Bolt, who is our State Coordinator of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program.

Just to frame our conversation: there's been really big efforts over the last couple of years, federal efforts with both the Federal Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services to really provide services and assistance to families, especially children experiencing homelessness.

In our state, like many other states and territories across the country, we want to share with you some information about working with families experiencing homelessness, and what you as child care providers in both private and public areas can do to support these families.

So, I am going to ask Dona some questions and we are going to have a conversation that will hopefully provide you some additional information.

So can you talk to us a little bit first about what the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act is?

Dona Bolt: Sure, McKinney-Vento is an act that was first enacted in about 1987, and it covers many different federal program areas including housing and urban development, health and human services, veterans, employment, and then also education. It is set up to help homeless families, homeless individuals all throughout the country to get shelter services, medical services, and other kind of things they need in order to survive.

Kelli Walker: So they move forward in life?

Dona Bolt: Exactly, and with the education program, what we do make sure is that children and youth in homeless situations can attend the school, and succeed in school, despite having to move around in their homelessness. We try to stabilize the kids in their school setting so they are able to take part in their

education without all of the stress of changing schools every time their housing situation changes.

Kelli Walker: Is this that much of an issue here in Oregon?

Dona Bolt: It's huge, it is a very big issue and we have lots of communities now that have been struggling with homelessness for many, many years. We had the recession back in 2008, which put a lot of families into foreclosure and we never really recovered from that. Communities that haven't had affordable housing ever since, are still struggling to find low income housing and find housing that people can afford when the rents are so sky high this days.

Kelli Walker: So given that, what really is the definition of homelessness? Is it just people who are living on the streets...or...?

Dona Bolt: We've been finding that we can come up with about four categories that really represent the four different types of living situations for homeless children and youth and those, are very briefly:

- **In sheltered** or transitioning housing, that's a pretty easy one, a publically funded shelter.
- Another one would be **unsheltered**. That would be a family that is living on the streets, or child or youth, or in a car, an abandoned building, (Kelli Walker: or an RV) exactly, or very substandard housing. Some place that is something that is normally considered a living place for a human being: a shed or a tent in a backyard.
 - If a family is camping in a rural area during the winter time that is a strong indicator that this is a substandard housing situation or living in a trailer that doesn't have running water or all the accommodations of a typical house.
 - If you have an overcrowded living situation, where families and kids piled on top of one another and there is no safe or personal space for anybody; that is another form of homelessness.

Kelli Walker: Could it be when they are perhaps living with other family members, some of them are on the couch?

Dona Bolt: Yes, certainly. We have sheltered, unsheltered, doubled up or sharing housing. That tends to be our largest category; about 75% of homeless of homeless children and youth in Oregon are “doubled up” or “sharing housing” kind of situation. And the fourth category that we have is families that have to live in motels because there is no other place they can afford to live. There is no permanent type of housing in that area, so they are spending all of their money on a weekly rates motel; that counts as another category of homelessness.

Kelli Walker: I imagine the problem is problem in both urban and rural area. I was thinking, with the high cost of housing in some of our metro areas its bad, but in rural areas there is quite a bit of need as well.

Dona Bolt: Oh absolutely, and because in rural areas you are not going to have shelters available usually and services are limited, they could be very distant, and so you have families that are sort of “isolated” from the help that they need. They could be isolated in an area where they don't have transportation to get food, supplies, and other things they need. School transportation is often a great need of families that are low income, living out in the rural areas. And something that is actually a great need all over the place

is transportation for families that are homeless.

Kelli Walker: You know, I think there is often times a misconception that the families who are experiencing homeless are not working. I think what we know is that a lot of families are working and still unable to have stable housing. And so these children who are not school age are going to need child care and many of our child care providers whether they know it or not, may be serving families who are having some disruptions in their living.

So what kinds of suggestions would you have for early learning programs to, not necessarily drill families or grill them about their homelessness, but to help them know how to support families, and maybe what to look for and how to approach that?

Dona Bolt: Big question. If I were a provider of services in a community and I had a family that was moving a lot, that changed their residence during the school year frequently, and they had small children, I would be concerned that their living condition was unstable. With younger homeless kids, we often see wearing the same outfit day to day, poor hygiene, or if the kids are hungry a lot or hoarding food, or they are sick a lot. Oftentimes, poverty and homelessness works together and just creates sort of a lot of disadvantages that families are facing all at the same time, so you look for stressed out kids or kids that seem not as playful and involved as other children. It is very traumatic, for little kids especially, to be moving around a lot and to have uncertainty in their home environment and this is what homelessness does to a lot of kids.

Kelli Walker: You know, I've seen quite a lot of training and work done on trauma informed care and the kind of things that providers of child care can do to really just treat families in a way that would help their trauma without being overly specific or overly focused. And I think the schools do that as well, right?

Dona Bolt: Absolutely, that is one of the new kinds of professional development that we are really hoping to share with all types of people throughout the continuum of helping families, whether they are in education or child care or, medicine, or social services. Coming into the job with a sort of idea in mind that a child or family may have incurred some type of trouble or traumatic circumstances, whether is domestic violence, lack of food, lack of housing, death of a parent, foreclosure, the loss of a house; when you lose your home you often losing all of your possessions, your pets, and your stability. All of that is like a loss, it's like a death.

Kelli Walker: I think about the stress factor list that you always get and you say, "oh my goodness, I have suffered at least four of those things," and that happens to children who experience homelessness as well. So I know schools do a lot of work, preschool through 12, but the schools have some pretty good programs. Are there school liaisons...is that what they're called?

Dona Bolt: Yes, every the school district in the country has a designated homeless liaison now, and that has been in effect for many, many years now. Since about 2002, every district has been required. Some districts, if they are larger districts, may have more than one liaison. Sometimes, if it's a very tiny district it might be somebody who is already on staff, like a principal or counselor. But that homeless liaison, that individual, is there to help the families and the youths, who might be homeless, to enroll, get transportation, get referrals to other services and hopefully to succeed in school, and monitoring attendance and progress in academics.

Kelli Walker: If the family has young children that are not yet in their local school, can this liaison also help them or do you know of other...?

Dona Bolt: Absolutely, in fact on of the things we do when we train liaisons in school districts is to do a

whole family intake, a whole family evaluation. When they are enrolling their school age children, they look to see if the child has little kids, too. If the family has toddlers, the first thing I want the liaison to do is to contact their local ESD (Educational Services District). The regional ESD at any county would have services for screening and assessment of children for early intervention and also hearing and vision and those sorts of things. We are constantly hoping to get the liaisons in the pre-k-12 system, encouraging families to get their younger children into educational child care settings, or early preschool settings, so they are able to get some readiness for kindergarten early on. Readiness even for preschool can be helpful when a family is severe chronic poverty of or homelessness.

Kelli Walker: You know, you mentioned something a minute ago, about homeless youth and homeless families. Is there a difference in that definition?

Dona Bolt: I'm glad you brought that up. In the way that we look at homeless people, homeless children and youth in the school system, there are two types;

- Children and youth in homeless families, where the whole family is homeless; with the parent, and the children.
- And then there is an unaccompanied homeless child or youth. So an unaccompanied youth you would typically think of as a runaway youth, or a youth that is on their own. They've left home or been abandoned for whatever reason, but we also have children who are very young who are unaccompanied because the parent was called away, had to leave the child with a neighbor or something and school started and they weren't back yet, so the neighbor is enrolling the child in school. A much more kind of serious and complicated scenario is if the parent had been incarcerated suddenly and needed to leave the child with relatives and there wasn't a formal guardianship assigned, or the parent was deported, or something that made the parent have to go out of the picture so there was no official guardian for this child. We can call that child unaccompanied as well and provide the same level of services. But a family who is taking in such a child, that family wouldn't be homeless, but you would still consider, for service purposes, that child could be an unaccompanied homeless child, therefore eligible for whatever kind of services that are available.

Kelli Walker: You know, one of our efforts for the last couple of years we worked very closely with the Department of Human Services on their employment related daycare subsidy program. It is often difficult if you are experiencing homelessness to know where your identification is and things like that, so we've made some efforts to make sure to enroll families who have childcare needs into our program and give them a little extra time, to find their documentation and things like that. And another effort is we are really trying to make sure folk have information about developmental screening because all children can benefit from that in the long run. But what I'm wondering about is, if you work with your local liaisons who are working with families experiencing homelessness in their early learning hubs, have you seen much work there? The Early Learning Hubs who are connecting all of these services for youths?

Dona Bolt: It is part of my job to make those connections where they are not happening yet. The way I see it is, this is all developmental, and I know that a lot of the hubs are just starting out and getting a grip on what they have available in their region and what they need to offer in their regions. I am sort of at the front of this tide that's trying to provide information to build the ship while we are floating around in it. Any opportunities I find to increase the knowledge of the hubs and for them to be able to provide services....

Kelli Walker: The other thought I have is, what we really want to do is to be able to work with our child care and early learning workforce within the context of their current experience. So some of them have master's degrees in early childhood and others are a little more ground level doing this work, but what we know is that everybody is there to support the child that is in their care. So from your point of view, thinking about serving children who are in these sorts of situation, what would be the top three things that you would encourage the early learning workforce and professionals to do in order to be prepared to be in service to these families? And I put you on the spot, just off the top of your head.

Dona Bolt: You touched on a big one with the trauma informed readiness and care and service provision. I mean I think that the awareness of where a child might have been, or the kinds of stresses that the child might be under, and how that might affect their daily life. Being there for that child and being kind to the family is so important. I think that a lot of times the families where they are under the stress of homelessness and having to go out and request services, request free things, and request help...a lot of times that's not a comfortable situation to be in and it can be very humiliating. Helping families retain a sense of pride and dignity while you are helping them is so important. I'm always confronted by people who think that there are folks who are trying to "game the system," or trying to get something for free, or get something that maybe they are not eligible for. I have seen so much of the other way around; people not asking for the help that they need because of their pride and because of the stigma. I am always pushing forward for providing the services, even if the people are not requesting them, because in many cases you are actually saving the child, you are helping the child, you know? And sometimes there are difficult parents, and in the school system we deal with parents every day and always focusing on the kids. This is what I'm training to the liaisons and they are talking to me about the issues they might have with the adults in the room. I am always trying to bring it back to the kid. What does this child need right now? And what are we doing for the child tomorrow? What are they looking forward to tomorrow and how can we do to set them up to be successful? No matter what that is.

Kelli Walker: The other thing that I have found is that oftentimes the early learning professionals really understand and know more about child development than parents. There are times when having the opportunity to have a frank conversation with your parents about maybe doing some developmental screening just to see that everything is on track or you know, if their having problems at home being able to address some behavioral issues because you've had some training that helped you do it.

Dona Bolt: It is those little milestones; those things can be fun for the parents, too. Bringing them back to "you know, I know you are under stress, but look at your child and look at what he did today!" And that checks off another one of those milestones. Being positive is always helpful. There is an old saying, "it takes a village." Every community is going to have different resources for families and every community is going to be different and just being aware of what's available for families, and if you are in a place where you don't know what's available, there is always 211info.

Kelli Walker: 211info, that's our "go to." Yeah, and I don't think that we should feel like we should have all the answers as a provider or even as a service provider and to take advantage of any and every opportunity that is out there.

Dona Bolt: I have been doing this for almost 30 years and I have learned something new every day that I work on this job.

Kelli Walker: I do too, I do too. Well, I think we are going to wrap up here, and Dona, thanks so much for your time and we appreciate it and we are glad we were able to introduce you to our child care and early learning workforce out there and we will maybe hear more from you later and maybe get you to do a

statewide training.

Dona Bolt: I'd be happy to, thank you very much for having me.

Kelli Walker: Ok great, thanks Dona.

[Click Here](#) to return to the McKinney-Vento Act section of the study.

C. EI/ECSE Brochure (page 2, contact phone numbers:

[Click Here](#) to return to the (EL/ECSE) Program section of the study.

http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/pre_k/eiecse/dyhcfinalenglish.pdf

Call the local phone number in your county for help with children, ages birth to kindergarten.



Service Area 1

Baker County	800-927-5847
Grant County	800-927-5847
Malheur County	541-372-2214
Morrow County	800-927-5847
Umatilla County	800-927-5847
Union County	800-927-5847
Wallowa County	800-927-5847

Service Area 2

Crook County	541-693-5630
Deschutes County	541-312-1195
Gilliam County	541-565-3600
Harney County	541-573-6461
Jefferson County	541-693-5740
Sherman County	541-565-3600
Warm Springs	541-553-3241
Wheeler County	541-565-3600

Service Area 3

Douglas County	541-440-4794
Jackson County	541-494-7800
Josephine County	541-956-2059
Klamath County	541-883-4748
Lake County	541-947-3371

Service Area 4

Toll Free	877-589-9751
Benton County	541-753-1202 x106
Coos County	541-269-4524
Curry County	541-269-4524
Lincoln County	541-574-2240 x100
Linn County	541-753-1202 x106

Service Area 5

Toll Free	888-560-4666
Marion County	503-385-4714
Polk County	503-435-5918
Yamhill County	503-435-5918

Service Area 6

Multnomah County	503-261-5535
Hood River County	541-386-4919
Wasco County	541-296-1478

Service Area 7

Lane County	800-925-8694
	541-346-2578

Service Area 8

Clatsop County	503-338-3368
Columbia County	503-366-4141
Tillamook County	503-842-8423
Washington County	
English	503-614-1446
Spanish	503-614-1263

Service Area 9

Clackamas County	503-675-4097
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Do you have concerns?



Do you have concerns about how your child walks, talks, hears, sees, plays with toys or responds to others?

Call the local telephone number in your county to get information about screening and evaluation for your child.

Early Intervention & Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) Services in Oregon



Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310-0203

ⁱ "Homeless Students in Oregon." *Http://www.ode.state.or.us/Go/HomelessEd*. Oregon Statewide Report Card 2014-15, n.d. Web. Sept. 2016

ⁱⁱ USA, Department of Health & Human Services- USA, Administration for Children & Families. (2016, January). *Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: 50-State Profile*. Retrieved September, 2016, from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/homelessness_profile_package_with_blanks_for_printing_508.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Bires, C., Garcia, C., & Zhu, J. (n.d.). *Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness: CCDF State Guide* (pp. 1-27) (National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth).

^{iv} Hopper, E.K (2010) Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Services Settings. Brookline, MA, *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal*, 2010, 3, 80-100

^v Hopper, E.K (2010) Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Services Settings. Brookline, MA, *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal*, 2010, 3, 80-100

^{vi} "Homeless Students in Oregon." *Http://www.ode.state.or.us/Go/HomelessEd*. Oregon Statewide Report Card 2014-15, n.d. Web. Sept. 2016.

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