

Homeless families are usually headed by a single woman with limited education, are typically young, and have young children. The Impact of Homelessness on Children VIDEO: Children have a unique perspective on the experience of homelessness.

Homeless Families with Children Published by the National Coalition for the Homeless, July There is a common misconception that homelessness is an issue that only pertains to single men and women, but in reality thousands of families a year will experience homelessness. National Alliance to End Homelessness. Homelessness is a devastating experience for families. The problem of family homelessness is not solely restricted to urban areas; rural and suburban communities are increasingly plagued by the problem. The issue has become even more pressing recently in light of the severe economic downturn and the ensuing loss of jobs. Recent economic turmoil will assuredly lead to more families becoming homeless, testing already strained resources for homeless families. The numbers and citations uses in this report are mostly from before the economic downturn, due to the time and manpower it takes to assemble statistics concerning homelessness. With this in mind the statistics mentioned in this report most likely understate the severity of the issue. The looming and disastrous possibility of increased family homelessness makes understanding the issue immensely pertinent. The dimensions, causes, and consequences of family homelessness are discussed below. Additionally, an overview of policy issues and a list of resources for further study are also provided. Recent evidence confirms that homelessness among families is increasing. The rate of requests for emergency assistance by families rose faster than the rate for any other group between and Every single one of the 23 cities surveyed expected an increase in the number of families with children seeking assistance in Conference of Mayors, Additionally, a recent report by the Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD reported that the number of people in families that were homeless rose by 9 percent from Oct. Furthermore, there is another reason to believe the numbers might actually be higher; Homeless families often double up with other families. This causes them to be exempt from the federal definition of chronic homelessness, which states that a chronically homeless person is one who is on the streets or in a shelter The Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, Therefore, many homeless families are not counted and prevented from receiving assistance. It is clear that the problem of family homelessness is accelerating, but meanwhile services to accommodate the increasing numbers are lagging behind. In addition to the lack of resources to combat the problem the most pressing issue involved with family homelessness is the plight of the children involved. Estimates of the number of homeless children range from , to 1. National Center on Family Homelessness, While the number of poor people decreased every year between and , in recent years the number and percentage of poor people has increased. The percentage of poor people has risen from House of Representatives, , and by the number of poor people grew by 4. Bureau of the Census, Declining wages and changes in welfare programs account for increasing poverty among families. Declining wages have put housing out of reach for many families: In fact, the median wage needed to afford a two-bedroom apartment is more than twice the minimum wage. Current TANF benefits and Food Stamps combined are below the poverty level in every state; in fact, the median TANF benefit for a family of three is approximately one-third of the poverty level. In addition, as the percentage and number of poor people has increased in recent years, the number of people receiving TANF has decreased. Thus, contrary to popular opinion, welfare does not provide relief from poverty. Welfare caseloads have dropped sharply since the passage and implementation of welfare reform legislation. However, declining welfare rolls simply mean that fewer people are receiving benefits -- not that they are employed or doing better financially. Early findings suggest that although more families are moving from welfare to work, many of them are faring poorly due to low wages and inadequate work supports. Moreover, extreme poverty is growing more common for children, especially those in female-headed and working families. This increase can be traced directly to the declining number of children lifted above one-half of the poverty line by government cash assistance for the poor. As a result of loss of benefits, low wages, and unstable employment, many families leaving welfare struggle to get medical care,

food, and housing. Many lose health insurance, despite continued Medicaid eligibility. A study found that , people lost health insurance in as a result of the federal welfare reform legislation, including , children Families USA, In addition, housing is rarely affordable for families leaving welfare for low wages, yet subsidized housing is so limited that fewer than one in four TANF families nationwide lives in public housing or receives a housing voucher to help them rent a private unit. For most families leaving the rolls, housing subsidies are not an option. A shortage of housing options for poor families is a problem that exists no matter the economic conditions. When the economy was strong, rental rates soared as a result of the housing bubble, making it difficult for poorer families to find affordable rental housing. After the s, income growth has never kept pace with rents, and since , the incomes of low-income households has declined as rents continue to rise National Low Income Housing Coalition, Once the housing bubble burst and the economy fell on hard times the problem did not subside. Poorer families had to contend with two large issues, an increase in competition for rental properties, which sustained high prices and the loss of income that comes with layoffs and job losses. This situation is another factor underlying the growth in family homelessness. In the average wait for Section 8 Vouchers was 35 months U. Excessive waiting lists for public housing mean that families must remain in shelters or inadequate housing arrangements longer. Consequently, there is less shelter space available for other homeless families, who must find shelter elsewhere or live on the streets. Domestic violence also contributes to homelessness among families. When a woman leaves an abusive relationship, she often has nowhere to go. This is particularly true of women with few resources. Lack of affordable housing and long waiting lists for assisted housing mean that many women are forced to choose between abuse and the streets. In a study of homeless parents the majority of whom were mothers in ten U. Conference of Mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness U. Nationally, approximately half of all women and children experiencing homelessness are fleeing domestic violence Zorza, ; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, The situation is dire; these families are facing a tough job market, a shortage of affordable housing, restricted access to healthcare, and maybe domestic violence. These families are only a lost job, a paycheck, an illness, or an act of domestic violence away from becoming homeless. Children without a home are in fair or poor health twice as often as other children, and have higher rates of asthma, ear infections, stomach problems, and speech problems Better Homes Fund, Homeless children also experience more mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, and withdrawal. They are twice as likely to experience hunger, and four times as likely to have delayed development. These illnesses have potentially devastating consequences if not treated early. Deep poverty and housing instability are especially harmful during the earliest years of childhood; alarmingly, it is estimated that almost half of children in shelter are under the age of five Homes for the Homeless, School-age homeless children face barriers to enrolling and attending school, including transportation problems, residency requirements, inability to obtain previous school records, and lack of clothing and school supplies. Parents also suffer the ill effects of homelessness and poverty. One study of homeless and low-income housed families found that both groups experienced higher rates of depressive disorders than the overall female population, and that one-third of homeless mothers compared to one-fourth of poor housed mothers had made at least one suicide attempt Bassuk et al. In both groups, over one-third of the sample had a chronic health condition. Homelessness frequently breaks up families. Families may be separated as a result of shelter policies which deny access to older boys or fathers. Separations may also be caused by placement of children into foster care when their parents become homeless. In addition, parents may leave their children with relatives and friends in order to save them from the ordeal of homelessness or to permit them to continue attending their regular school. The break-up of families is a well-documented phenomenon: In order to work, families with children need access to quality childcare that they can afford, and adequate transportation. Education and training are also essential elements in preparing parents for better paying jobs to support their families. But jobs, childcare, and transportation are not enough. Without affordable, decent housing, people cannot keep their jobs and they cannot remain healthy. As this study and others demonstrate, affordable housing is a key component to resolving family homelessness. Preventing poverty and homelessness also requires access to affordable health care, so that illness and accidents no longer threaten to throw individuals and families into the streets. Hopefully, a proportional

amount of this money will be used to combat the issues that specifically lead to the increasingly problematic situation of family homelessness in the United States. Early Findings on Family Hardship and Well-being, National Coalition for the Homeless, P St. Population Research and Policy Review, 18 3 , In Search of Shelter: The Unintended Consequences of Welfare Reform, Greenberg, Mark, and Jim Baumohl. Homes for the Homeless. National Low Income Housing Coalition. Rental Housing at What Cost? National Center on Family Homelessness. Available free at [http:](http://) Homeless Children Fact Sheet. First Presidential Press Conference. Homeless Families and Children. Shinn, Marybeth and Beth Weitzman. Available from Beth Weitzman, Ph. A new look at homelessness in America.

Chapter 2 : Los Angeles Times - We are currently unavailable in your region

For more than 25 years, NCFH has been at the forefront of national efforts to understand and respond to homelessness, trauma, poverty and the need for social services and supports to mitigate the impact of homelessness on children, youth, and families.

Minimum wage is often close to the starting pay even at skilled positions. So when life goes the wrong way, it is easy to very rapidly lose everything. We faced this reality not too long ago, and now we have managed to pull through. I never thought I would be the one to find my not-so-long-ago, middle class family on the street wondering where we could go. Here are my tips to surviving homelessness with a family. Remember, no housing is like your own. There will be negatives to all aspects of living options as long as we are not in a comfortable place to call our own. The key is finding the option that is the easiest to handle for both yourself and your child or children. Family - The obvious best option is to check with family. See if there is any way that you could live there in exchange for cleaning, doing the yard work, or cooking. This would give your child a place to be somewhere hopefully familiar during the process. Not everyone has the family option. If that is the case, you will need to look at other options. Friends - Sometimes this can be the best option, and as I learned sometimes it can be a total nightmare. It can be really bad if the other person parents their children differently than you do or if the friend has no children. That being said, it is a roof. Right now that is the priority. Hotel - Many slightly lower quality hotels offer a weekly rate. There are even some hotels that offer complete kitchens. This option could easily take up most of your check, but it provides a decent roof, water, electricity, and no living with other people. Some of these even feed you a good breakfast. I find they are better than any hotel reservation price on online sites. We tried it and all of the ones in my area split the family up. Boys over 10 had to be split from their mother at night to go to the "mens" section. Husband and wife had to sleep in different buildings. Showers were five minutes. Also the one we went to openly told us that we may be housed with sex offenders and violent criminals. There were NO family shelters in a mile radius of our fairly large city. It was truly sad and made us feel worse than we already did. Grateful they have a system in place but it should definitely be a last resort. Homeless people, even with no permanent address, can get food stamps if you meet income requirements. This is true in all states. Everything helps and this is what the system is for. Food Banks - This is a great option but often conflicts with a work schedule if you are a working family. Some have weekend giveaway times. Make sure you tell them if you have no access to a can opener, stove, or refrigerator. Most can pack a bag made just for homeless. Dumpster Diving - Do you have any idea how much food that is still good and very edible goes into dumpsters every year. Let go of your ego and you can often fill a car with food in a couple hours of dumpster diving. Couponing- Check sites like moneysavingmom. Often you can get free food from couponing, or at least save a good bit of money on the bill. If you were homeless where would you stay?

Chapter 3 : Families with Children: Applying for Temporary Housing Assistance - DHS

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The new law requires states to develop their own strategies to better serve homeless children and calls for: Outreach to homeless families with children, Training and technical assistance on identifying and serving homeless children and their families, The coordination of services so that families with children can get the help that they need, A grace period or flexibility to obtain immunizations and other documents needed so that homeless children can be served more quickly, and Data reporting so that the number of homeless children who receive child care services is known. An introductory brief and a chart of submitted activities related to homelessness can be found below. Read the Introductory Brief. Supporting the well-being of these young children and their families is an urgent task and one that is critical to improving the long-term educational outcomes of children nationwide. Several federal policies and programs are in place to strengthen the ability of early care and education ECE providers to serve young children experiencing homelessness. Whether you are in a Head Start program, early childhood program, or work at the state level on early childhood systems and services, the resources listed below will assist you in ensuring that these young children are prioritized for services that support their learning and development. Resource Guides This Self-Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Programs Serving Families Experiencing Homelessness has been specifically designed for child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, and public pre-k programs as a guide for welcoming and supporting families and children experiencing homelessness into these programs. Early care and education providers play a critical role in identifying and supporting families with young children who are experiencing homelessness and connecting those families to other resources within their community. Being exposed to a safe, stable, and developmentally appropriate environment while young is important to healthy child development. The Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters is specifically designed to guide family shelter staff as they create a safe and developmentally appropriate environment for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. This new tool contains suggestions for making supportive housing, both scattered site and single site, safe and developmentally appropriate for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. A chart comparing preschool, Head Start, and child care policies for children experiencing homelessness. Department of Health and Human Services. An Exploratory Project that examines the challenges of families with young children and how they manage daily life and child development when they experience episodes of homelessness, including times when they temporarily live doubled-up or in a hotel or motel due to a loss of housing or economic hardship. It includes publicly available data for The updated profile also includes two new related factors: Early Childhood Homelessness in the United States: Find your Individual state profiles here. The Guide to Developmental and Behavioral Screening for housing and shelter providers addresses the importance of developmental and behavioral screening , how to talk to parents, where to go for help, and how to select the most appropriate screening tool for the population served as well as the provider implementing the screening. Head Start Interactive Homelessness Lessons provide Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal programs information about serving families who are experiencing homelessness, including eligibility and enrollment requirements. The lessons highlight outreach and identification strategies, evaluate positive options for working with families, and identify ways to work with community partners. A Look at Two States resource paper providing a fresh look at the effects of homelessness on young children, and efforts in Massachusetts and Oregon to implement innovative policies to improve early childhood outcomes for young children experiencing homelessness Building Partnerships to Address Family Homelessness resource paper highlighting efforts by local Head Start and Early Head Start programs to connect with public housing associations, emergency shelter providers, local education agencies, and other community service providers Additional Resources.

Chapter 4 : Ending Family Homelessness | United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH)

families with children was the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. Between and , the typical state's AFDC benefits for a family of three fell 47%, after adjusting for inflation (Greenberg and Baumohl,).

Chapter 5 : National Coalition for the Homeless

In , approximately 48 percent of sheltered homeless families with children were black, although black families made up just 14 percent of U.S. families with children, and 29 percent of families with children in poverty.

Chapter 6 : Homeless Families Research Briefs, | Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation | ACF

Enhance your knowledge around family homelessness and the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act's definition of "homeless" as it refers to children and youth. Review other relevant federal regulations for Head Start, Early Head Start, and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)-subsidized programs.

Chapter 7 : Family Homelessness Facts | Green Doors

Paradis said the shelter has a system to bring in families the same day, and that there is a complex system in prioritizing for children, including family housing navigators in New Haven trying to.