



# **Bemidji Area Schools Parent Advisory Council**

## **Meeting Agenda**

**December 12, 2014**

**12:00 PM**

**Downtown District Office**

**Board Room**

- 1. Welcome and Lunch**
- 2. District Title I Services**
- 3. Title I Monitor January 2015**
- 4. Bemidji Area Schools Homeless Program Presentation**  
Angie Lauderbaugh, Nancy Lundt
- 5. Group Discussion Regarding Homelessness in Bemidji Area**
- 6. Other**



# Homelessness through the Eyes of Children: A Special Needs Perspective



# Homelessness through the Eyes of Children: A Special Needs Perspective

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Homeless Liaison Bemidji School District

# Homelessness through the Eyes of Children: A Special Needs Perspective

## *This session will discuss:*

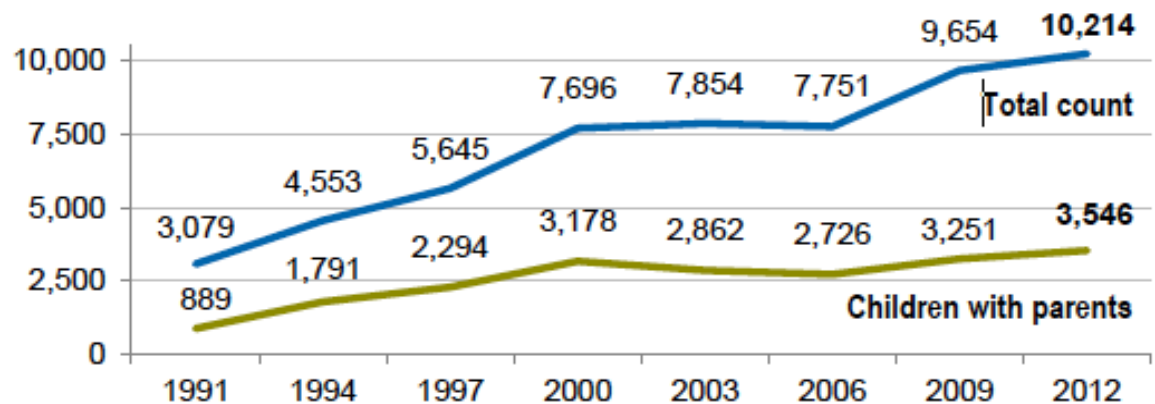
- ▶ *Who are homeless children with special emotional needs*
- ▶ *How are services defined for children through the McKinney-Vento Act and IDEA*
- ▶ *How does homelessness impact children emotionally*
- ▶ *How can classroom teachers and related personnel assist children with special emotional needs who are homeless*

# Who are the “homeless children” in MN

## Wilder MN Study: October, 2012

- Overall, 10,214 homeless adults, youth, and children were counted, up 6 percent over 2009
- Children and youth ages 21 and younger make up nearly half (46%) of all homeless persons, similar to 2009.
- Compared to their representation in the total Minnesota youth are the

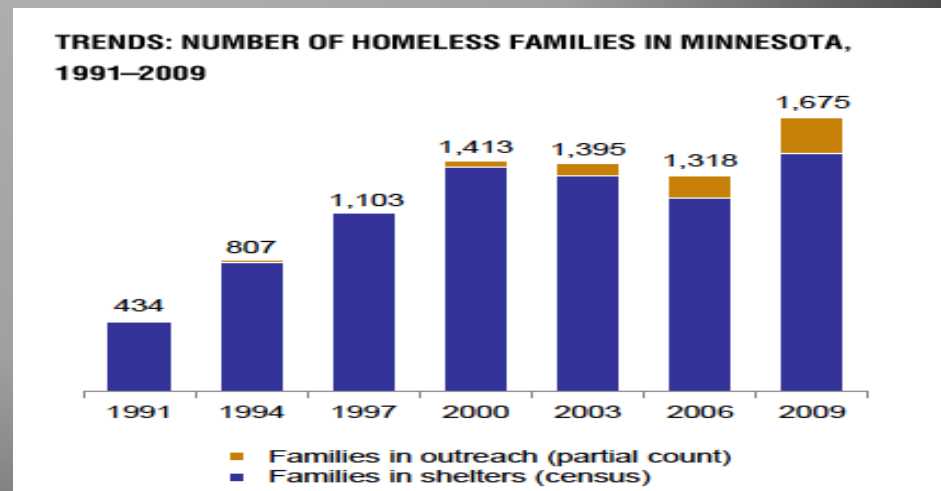
ONE-NIGHT STUDY COUNTS OF THE MINNESOTA HOMELESS POPULATION, 1991-2012



# Who are the “homeless children” in MN

- The number of homeless children with parents increased by 9% from 2009 to 2012.
- There was a slight increase (4%) in the total number of families experiencing homelessness, but a 22% increase in the number of two-parent homeless families.

Source: Wilder 2012 Homeless Study, March 2013



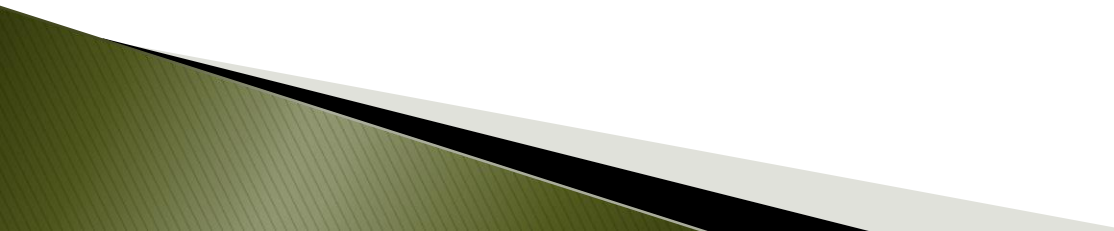
## *Who are homeless children with special emotional needs*

- Have higher rates of low birth weight and need special care right after birth four times as often as other children.
- Have twice as many ear infections, five times more diarrhea and stomach problems, and six times as many speech and stammering problems.
- Are four times more likely to be asthmatic.

Source: National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH)



## *Who are homeless children with special emotional needs*

- ▶ It may take four to six months for a child to recover academically from a school transfer.
  - ▶ Highly mobile students are half as likely to graduate from high school.
  - ▶ Isolation after a move impacts school attendance and performance.
- 



## *Who are homeless children with special emotional needs*

- ▶ 21% of homeless children repeat a grade because of frequent absence from school, compared to 5% of other children.
- ▶ Have four times the average rate of delayed development.
- ▶ Are suspended twice as often as other children

Source: National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH)



- ▶ **Challenges for Children who are Homeless**
  - Inadequate or unstable housing
  - Inconsistent and inadequate health care
  - Inadequate nutrition
  - Adolescent mothers
  - Disrupted or limited family support
  - **Emotional stress or depression**

Source: Dr. Pat Popp, Project Hope, 2012

## *Who are homeless children with special emotional needs*

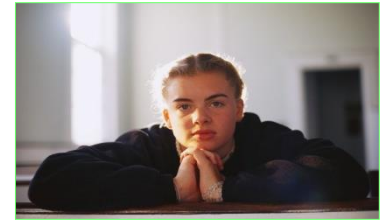
Every day, homeless children are confronted with stressful, often traumatic events.

- 74% of homeless children worry they will have no place to live.
- 58% worry they will have no place to sleep.
- 87% worry that something bad will happen to their family.

Source: National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH)



*Who are homeless children with special emotional needs*



- ▶ Half of school-age homeless children experience anxiety, depression, or withdrawal
- ▶ By the time homeless children are eight years old, one in three has a major mental disorder.

Source: National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH)

## *Who are homeless children with special emotional needs*

### Among young homeless children:

- One out of five (between three and six years of age) have emotional problems serious enough to require professional care
- 16% of homeless preschoolers have behavior problems including severe aggression and hostility

### Among school-age homeless children:

- 47% have problems such as anxiety, depression, and withdrawal, compared to 18% of other school-age children
- 36 % manifest delinquent or aggressive behavior, compared to 17% of other school-age



Source: National Center on Family Homelessness (NCFH)

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- ▶ Homelessness is usually not a *solo trauma*
- ▶ **Precedents of homelessness often include**
  - Domestic violence
  - Family chaos
  - Economic disruptions and loss
  - Parental illness (physical, mental)
  - Isolation and lack of social supports
  - Patterns of high mobility
  - AND preoccupations that preclude reliable parental attention and awareness of children's needs

# McKinney–Vento and IDEA Intersection

As educators we should be able to bring to bear the full range of both laws in order to optimize the access and success of all children.

Source: National Center for Homeless Education

## *Who are homeless children with special emotional needs*

- ▶ **Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**
  - **Sharing the housing of others** due to loss of housing
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations
  - Living in emergency or **transitional shelters**
  - Abandoned in hospitals
  - **Awaiting foster care** placement
  - Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing
  - Migratory children who qualify as homeless
  - **Unaccompanied youth** who are living in situations described above

**McKinney–Vento Act, Title X, Part C of ESEA, 2001**



## **McKinney–Vento Provisions Specific to Children**

- ▶ Homeless children are entitled to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children, including special education
- ▶ Local liaisons must ensure that homeless children receive educational services for which they are eligible, including special education
- ▶ State Coordinators must coordinate with other agencies for services to homeless students with special needs

Source: Dr. Pat Popp, Project Hope, 2012

*How are services defined for children through the McKinney-Vento Act*

- ▶ Every state has a State Coordinator for homeless education
- ▶ Every school district has a Local Liaison
  - Identifies homeless children and youth
  - Assists with enrollment and services, including special education
  - Helps parents be meaningfully involved
  - Collaborates with programs within the school district
  - Collaborates with agencies and service providers

Source: Dr. Pat Popp, Project Hope, 2012

*How are services defined for children through the McKinney-Vento Act and IDEA*

IDEA now contains a definition of homeless children to include any children or youth considered homeless under McKinney-Vento (MV)

Source: Dr. Pat Popp, Project Hope, 2012

## *How are services defined for children through the McKinney-Vento Act and IDEA*

- ▶ All students with disabilities who need special education are identified, located, and evaluated; applies to students experiencing homelessness, including infants and toddlers (Child Find)
- ▶ Evaluation timelines when children move (Part B)
- ▶ Early intervention (EI) and early childhood special education (ECSE) services must be provided
- ▶ Surrogate parents and temporary surrogates
- ▶ State Advisory Panel and State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) representation

Source: Dr. Pat Popp, Project Hope, 2012

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*How can classroom teachers and  
related personnel assist children  
with special emotional needs  
who are homeless*

How vulnerable are  
**you**  
to becoming homeless?



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# Characteristics of Effective Teachers of Homeless and Highly Mobile Children

- Well educated
  - High verbal ability
  - Expert content knowledge
  - Knowledge of effective teaching practices
  - Able to use a variety of teaching methods and materials
  - Cultural awareness
  - Ability to speak a second language
- Teaching Experience



# Effective Teachers of Homeless Children

- ▶ Watch for warning signs of homelessness
- ▶ Make sure the student enrolls in your school's free meal program
- ▶ Do not take away possessions. Students may need their "stuff" nearby for security.
- ▶ Hold the student accountable for what she or he can control (e.g., behavior or attitude) not what is not under the student's control



*How can classroom teachers and related personnel assist children with special emotional needs who are homeless*

## Effective Teachers of Homeless Children

- ▶ Before you receive a new student:
  - Prepare a list of your class routines and procedures.
  - Prepare a new student file with information for parents and guardians.
  - Maintain a supply of materials for students to use at school.
  - Prepare a “getting-to-know-you” activity for the class to do when a new student arrives.
  - Have the class schedule visible.

# Effective Teachers of Children who are Homeless



- ▶ Help children acquire a beloved object...And help them keep it.
- ▶ Aren't uncertain about curtailing aggressive play and imagination-
- ▶ Know learning and school inclusion matter enormously to children who are homeless.
- ▶ Start with what the child knows - and then build.
- ▶ Pay attention to homework.
  - Children often don't have access to resources or space to properly do homework.



# Effective Teachers of Children who are Homeless

- ▶ Watch for warning signs of homelessness
- ▶ Make sure the student enrolls in your school's free meal program
- ▶ Keep a supply of healthy snacks and extra school supplies ( even clothes or personal products)
- ▶ Do not take away possessions. Students may need their "stuff" nearby for security.
- ▶ Hold the student accountable for what she or he can control (e.g., behavior or attitude) not what is not under the student's control
- ▶ Discuss concerns with the Homeless Liaison Person, guidance counselor, school social worker, school nurse

# Effective Teachers of Homeless Children

- ▶ Discuss concerns with the guidance counselor, school social worker, school nurse
- ▶ Collaborate with Homeless Liaison Person
  - Consider Critical Privacy Issues

*How can classroom teachers and related personnel assist children with special emotional needs who are homeless*

## **Privacy Issues with Children who are Homeless**

- ▶ **Disclosure (FERPA)**
  - Who has a right to know
  - Have parents be informed of rights
  - What kind of records must the school keep
- ▶ **Personal attention to privacy**

*How can classroom teachers and related personnel assist children with special emotional needs who are homeless*

## Collaborating with Homeless Liaison Person.

- ▶ Stable Plan
  - Transportation
  - Food–Nutrition
  - Education
  - Supportive services

## Strategies for Facilitation between Mental Health Resources & Homeless Liaisons

- ▶ Provide enrollment personnel with a **checklist** of questions to ask upon enrollment,
  - Identify potential homelessness and eligibility for special education, along with contact information for the McKinney-Vento liaison and special education
  - **Make sure release of information signed** .
- ▶ Maintain records of homeless students and provide parents with immediate access, including special education records, when they withdraw their children so services can follow the student

# Strategies for Facilitation between Mental Health Resources & Homeless Liaisons

- ▶ Learn about the services each program provides.
  - Develop a fact sheet about the services your program offers and the children, youth, and families who are eligible for them.
- ▶ Step into each other's worlds.
  - Invite early intervention and special education staff to visit shelters, low-income motels, campgrounds, or other areas where homeless families in your community live.
  - Explain the evaluation and assessment process and the considerations involved in drafting IFSPs and IEPs.



*How can classroom teachers and related personnel assist children with special emotional needs who are homeless*

## Effective Teachers of Homeless Children Enhance Peer Understanding

- ▶ Use literature to help students develop empathy for persons who are homeless
- ▶ Use Homeless Education Online Lessons
  - Homelessness Resource Guide K-12-  
<http://www.wmpenn.edu/PennWeb/LTP/Reference/Teach/ResGuideK-12.html>
  - Shedding Light on an Invisible Problem-  
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20020325monday.html>

*How can classroom teachers and related personnel assist children with special emotional needs who are homeless*

## Effective Teachers of Homeless Children

### ▶ When a student leaves:

- Support the class and the student by discussing the move and having classmates write letters to the departing student.
- Give the student a copy of the school's contact information so that letters can be written back either via e-mail or traditional mail and/or
- Have farewell letters inserted in the student's records for forwarding to his or her new school

*“My house is  
crying today  
because we  
won’t be  
coming home  
tonight”*



# Closing Thought

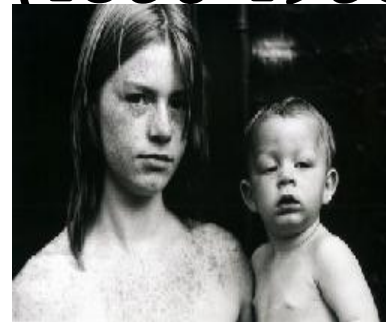
The reasonable man adapts  
himself to the world;  
the unreasonable one  
persists  
to adapt the world to  
himself.



# Closing Thought

Therefore all progress  
depends on the  
unreasonable man.

*George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)*



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*Thanks for sharing with us! 😊*