

# Head Start and Continuums of Care: Natural Partners



Friday, May 6, 2022

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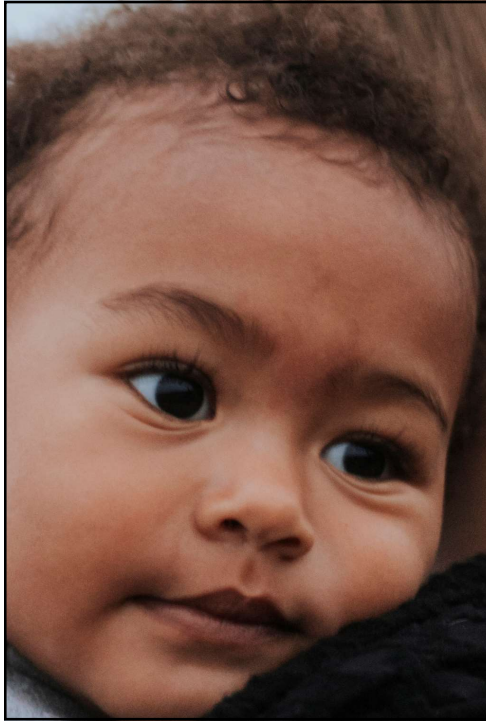
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## AGENDA

- I. "Why care about the kids?"
- II. Federal definitions used to determine eligibility
- III. Landscape of Early Childhood Services
- IV. Partnership Models in PA
- V. Connecting Continuum of Care and Head Start Data
- VI. Template for Connecting Local Data



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## Why Young Children?

- 1-point on CoC scoring rubric
- Growing numbers – need other systems to be involved
- Positive hand-off to another support system


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## Why Young Children?

- USICH encouraged ...
  - identify 'all' children
  - Fostering community connections
  - Benchmarks, apply to all families with children under the age of 18 experiencing homelessness and who meet any federal definition of homelessness.
- Policy Brief: [\*Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing Homelessness Fact Sheets\*](#)

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## Why Young Children?

- If you are an educator:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading and Math Scores
- If you are in Head Start / childcare / Home Visiting / Early Intervention
  - Federal requirements to outreach and enroll

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## Two Federal Definitions

**HUD Definition** – for individuals, families

**McKinney-Vento Education Subtitle** – **for children** and youth and uses the criteria of “*fixed, regular, and adequate*” housing

- **Fixed:** Securely placed; not subject to change or fluctuation. A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.
- **Regular:** Normal, standard. A regular residence is one which is used on a regular (i.e., nightly) basis.
- **Adequate:** Sufficient for a specific requirement; lawfully and reasonably sufficient. An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

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...and the McKinney-Vento Education Subtitle specifies that “*fixed, regular, and adequate*” housing includes:

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Living in hotels, motels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human being
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/decision-making-tool-family-homeless.pdf>

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## Two Federal Definitions

- Multiple definitions create confusion
- Confusion creates a barrier to access for services and benefits
- Difference prevents collaboration and partnering
- Important to use accurate benefit eligibility criteria
- Different criteria to access and blend services across federal and state programs should be used to better support families

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## Early Learning Landscape in PA

### **\*\*Early Learning Resource Centers**

#### **• Head Start and Early Head Start**

- PreK Counts
- Child Care
- Early Intervention



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## Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs)

- Childcare Subsidy – “Child Care Works” in PA
- Quality – Keystone STARS
- ***Child Care Resource and Referral***

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## Head Start and Early Head Start

- Federally funded program
- Two primary goals: break the cycle of poverty and improve school readiness
- Head Start created in 1965 as part of the “War on Poverty”
- Early Head Start created in 1995 to serve infants and toddlers
- Only a fraction of eligible children are served
- “Gold standard” early childhood program



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## Head Start and Early Head Start

### Eligibility:

- Early Head Start: children ages birth-3 and expectant parents
- Head Start: children ages 3-5
- Children experiencing homelessness regardless of income
- Foster children regardless of income
- Children whose families receive public assistance (TANF, SSI and now SNAP)
- Children whose families’ income is below the Federal Poverty Guidelines
- 10% of enrollment must be children with disabilities



Head Start &  
Early Head Start are  
FREE!

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## Head Start and Early Head Start

### Program Options:

- Center-based
  - Full day, part day, and child care collaboration schedules
- Home-based
  - Weekly home visits
  - Parent-child education groups
- Family childcare homes
- Other options include locally designed, combination, or mixed

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## Head Start and Early Head Start

### Comprehensive Services

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • Child development and education        | • Staff development                     |
| • Determination of child's health status | • Community connections                 |
| • Disabilities services                  | • Parent involvement in decision-making |
| • Nutritious meals                       | • Socialization                         |
| • Mental wellness                        | • Tracking and referrals                |
| • Parent education                       | • Male involvement                      |
| • Home visits                            | • Developmental screenings              |
| • Parent conferences                     | • Vision and hearing screenings         |

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## Head Start and Early Head Start “Program Services to Promote Family Outcomes”

- **Emergency/crisis intervention** (e.g., meeting immediate needs for food, clothing, **shelter**)
- **Housing assistance (e.g., subsidies, utilities, repairs)**
- Asset building services (financial education, debt counseling)
- Mental health services
- Substance misuse prevention
- Substance misuse treatment
- English as a Second Language (ESL) training
- Assistance in enrolling into an education or job training program
- Research-based parenting curriculum
- Involvement in discussing their child’s screening and assessment results and their child’s progress
- Supporting transitions between programs (i.e., EHS to HS, HS to kindergarten)
- Education on preventing medical and oral health
- Education on health and developmental consequences of tobacco product use
- Education on nutrition
- Education on postpartum care (e.g., breastfeeding support)
- Education on relationship/marriage
- Assistance to families of incarcerated individuals

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## Head Start and Early Head Start and Homelessness

Programs are required to:

- Use the McKinney-Vento definition of “homelessness”
- Identify and prioritize children experiencing homelessness for enrollment
- Take steps to coordinate with local “feeder schools” to:
  - establish ongoing communication with liaisons
  - develop a coordinated strategy for family support services

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## Head Start and Early Head Start and Homelessness

Programs are permitted to:

- Reserve slots for homeless children for a period of 30 days whenever a vacancy occurs
- Enroll **immediately** while required enrollment documents are obtained in a *reasonable* timeframe

Program Locator: [Program Map \(paheadstart.org\)](http://paheadstart.org)

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## PreK Counts (PA's Public PreK)

- PA State funding of preschool services for 3- and 4-year-olds
  - Offered by School Districts, Head Start grantees and Licensed Child Care Providers
  - Add some data
  - Follow some of the Head Start Program Performance Standards
  - Preschool Specialists

PreK Counts provides grants to providers and is FREE to families!

Program Locator: [Pre-K Counts Grants \(pa.gov\)](http://pa.gov)

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## Child Care

- Various settings: center-based; home-based; relative/family, friend & neighbor care
- Various hours: traditional work week, after school, weekends, overnight
- Rules for how child care is operated (ratios, group size, staff requirements, etc.) vary from state to state
- Can be for-profit or non-profit
- Can be regulated or not regulated (licensed vs. license-exempt)
- Ranges widely in regard to quality, cost, capacity, and availability
- Can apply to be 'quality rated' through the PA's Keystone STARS quality rating system.



Child care providers charge families a fee for their services.

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## Early Intervention

Educational services for children with delays and/or disabilities who are ages birth to 5.

- IDEA Part C – Infants and Toddlers
- IDEA Part B Section 619 – Preschool
- Automatic referral, evaluation and "Tracking" for children experiencing homelessness



Early Intervention services are FREE!

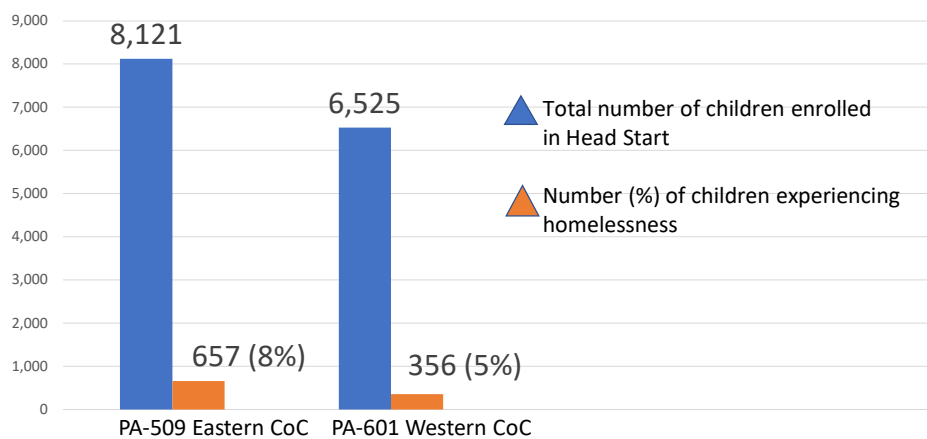
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## Key Education Partners

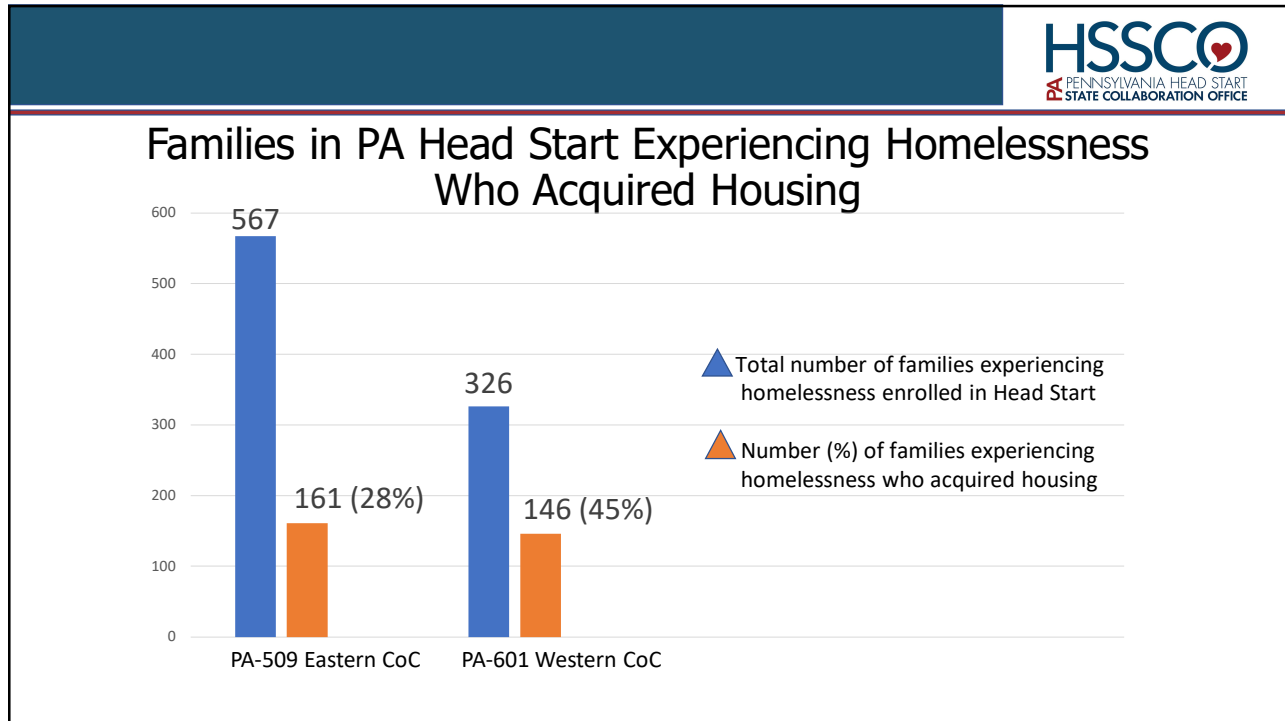
- Preschool/Elementary/Secondary Education:
  - PA Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) State and Regional Coordinators [map and contact info](#)
  - [Local Education Agency \(LEA\) or School District Liaisons Directory](#)
  - Tracy Duarte – PA HSSCO [tradua@pakeys.org](mailto:tradua@pakeys.org)

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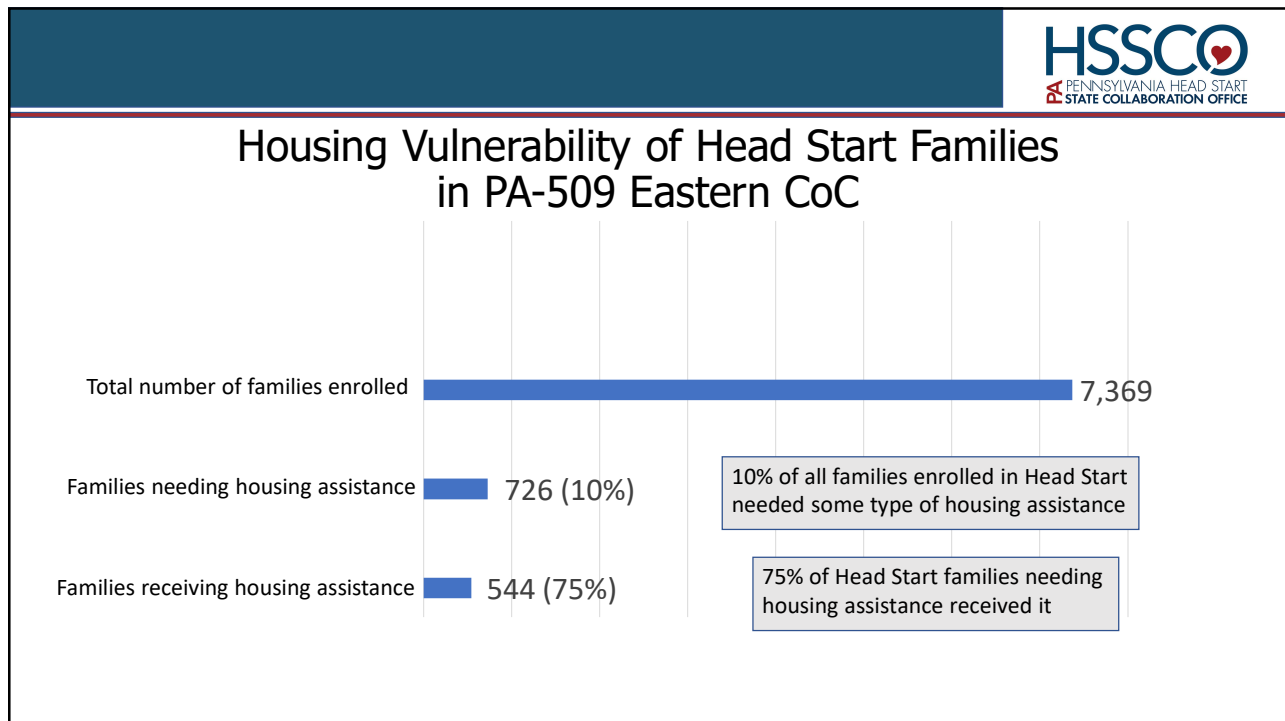
## Children Enrolled in PA Head Start Programs



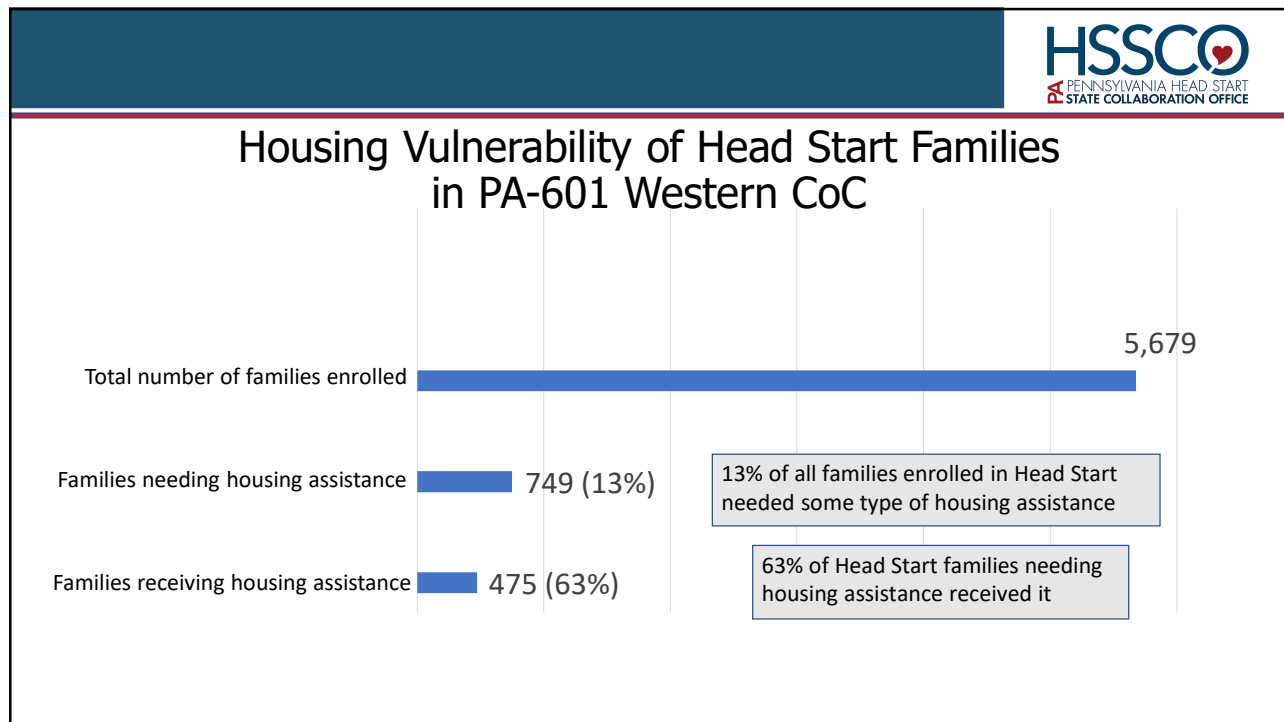
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## Connecting Local Data:

The **number of young children served by housing programs, including:**

- Emergency shelters
- Supportive and transitional housing
- Rapid rehousing/diversion programs
- Hotels/ motels
- Domestic violence shelters
- Recovery/treatment residential programs
- Faith-based shelters
- Others?

➤ Assure accurate use of definitions

➤ Use data to identify needs, set goals, monitor progress, and assure equitable access

➤ Make data available to housing and early learning systems leaders, providers, planners, etc.

The **number of education programs serving young children experiencing homelessness, including:**

- Head Start/Early Head Start
- Child Care Works
- PreK Counts
- Early intervention
- Home visiting
- Private child care
- Family child care
- Unlicensed child care
- Others?

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*Questions?*

*Comments?*

*Discussion?*

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*Thank You*

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