

FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

DEFINING HOMELESSNESS

The [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act's](#) definition of “homeless” includes the following living situations for children:

- Sharing housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- Living in motels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Living in cars, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or train stations
- Lacking a nighttime residence that is fixed, regular, or adequate (*accessible to individual needs and without worry of eviction*)
- Primary nighttime residence that is public or private place not designed for human beings

FEDERAL REGULATIONS

“The lead agency, as part of the child find system, must ensure that all infants and toddlers with disabilities who are eligible for early intervention services under this part are identified, located, and evaluated, including Infants and toddlers with disabilities who are homeless.”

[34 CFR 303.302\(b\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#)

RESOURCES FOR STAFF

- [Serving Homeless Families in in Early Care and Education Programs Tool Kit](#)
- Wisconsin Balance of State [interactive map](#): local coalitions of housing providers throughout 69 counties. Provides an interactive map to locate services and contact information for local homeless and housing services.
- [Self-assessment tool](#) for early childhood programs serving families experiencing homelessness

MAIN BARRIERS TO ACCESSING THE BIRTH TO 3 PROGRAM

- Lack of awareness
- High mobility
- Transportation
- Lack of documents

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- 1 Fostering staff awareness of the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act and recognize common signs of homelessness.
- 2 Use interactive map to locate housing providers in your area to disseminate child find materials and build relationships.
- 3 Conduct visits and outreach at sites where families experiencing homelessness spend their time and/or reside to increase awareness of the Birth to 3 Program.
- 4 Provide a sensitive approach in communicating with families experiencing homelessness by adjusting language to reduce fears or stigmas.

