

Supporting Young Children Experiencing Homelessness

**Presentation at the 2021 PDG B-5 Convening
October 18, 2021**

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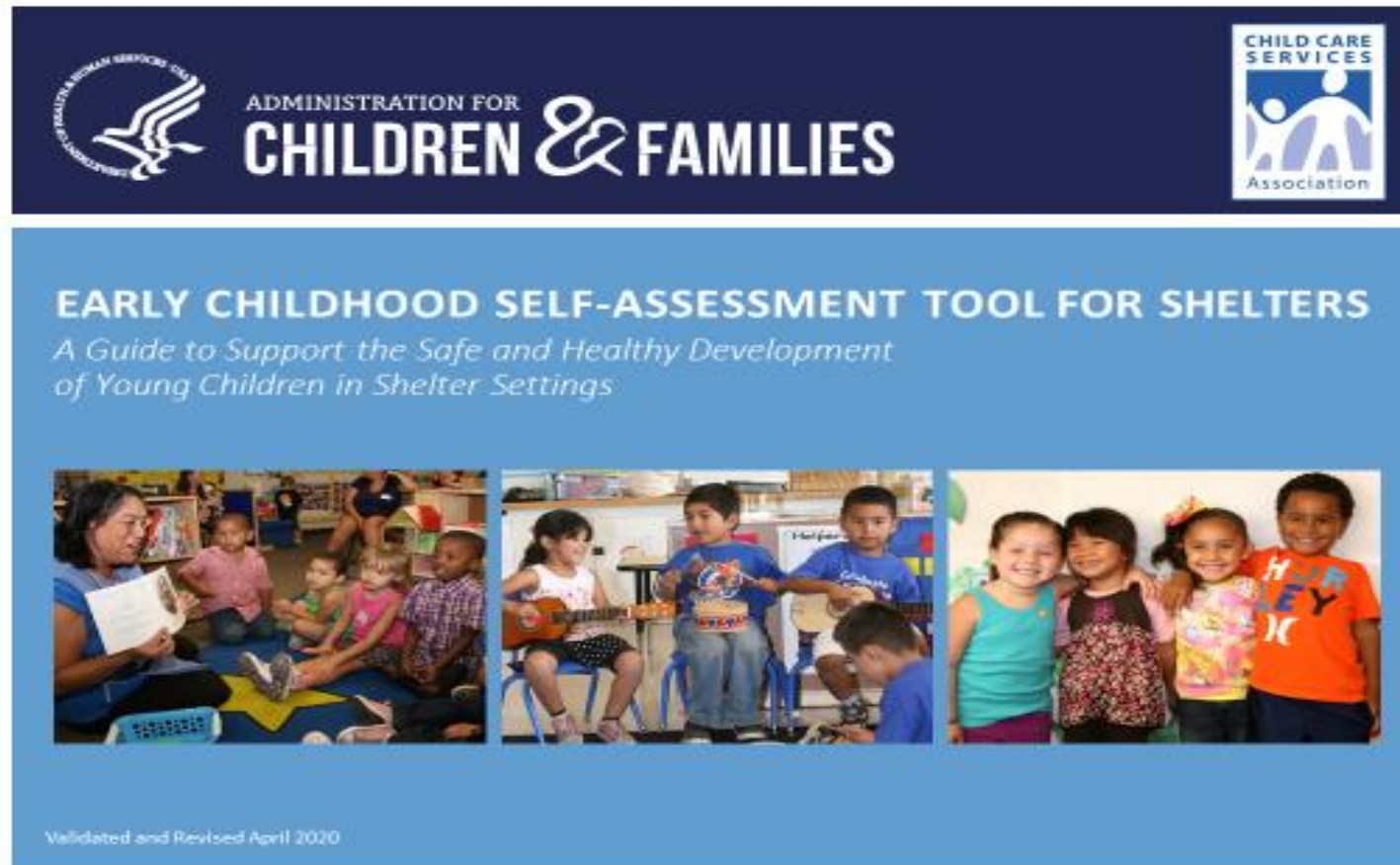


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- The US Department of Health and Human Services CFDA# 93.434, ESSA Preschool Development Grants Birth-Five, NC Department of Health and Human Services, North Carolina State University and Child Care Services Association.



Revised EC Self Assessment Tool for Shelters



History of the Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters

- Developed at the U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) - 2014.
- Created to provide resources and information to help shelters support families with young children.
- Validated by Sara Shaw, Ph.D., of ChildTrends, while completing her dissertation at the University of Delaware, under adviser Rena Hallam.
- In 2019, a focus group of early childhood experts reviewed Shaw's findings and recommended revisions.
- In early 2020, Child Care Services Association (CCSA) completed those revisions and worked with ACF to roll out the revised edition.



Design of the Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters

- Individuals or small groups in a shelter use the tool to assess:
 - Health & Safety
 - Wellness & Development
 - Programming
 - Workforce Standards & Training
 - Food & Nutrition
- Each section has multiple items to assess the environment and the program.
- Shelters then design action plans based on their findings.

| B.4. Enrolling Families in Early Learning Programs | We do not do this at this time. | We publicly post and/or provide families with enrollment information. | We refer families to this program. | We encourage families to enroll in this program and help address barriers to enrollment. | Action Needed: |
|---|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| B.4.1. We support families in connecting with child care subsidy programs (local, state, and federal programs that help low-income families pay their child care fees). | | | | | |
| We support families efforts to enroll in the following types of early learning programs: | | | | | |
| B.4.2. Head Start programs | | | | | |
| B.4.3. Early Head Start programs | | | | | |
| B.4.4. Child care programs | | | | | |
| B.4.5. Early Intervention services for young children with disabilities | | | | | |

When Young Children are in Shelters

- Challenges facing parents raising children in shelters
- Challenges for shelters when serving families with young children



POLL

- Are your community's shelters and early childhood programs working together in one or more ways to support young children and their families experiencing homelessness?
- Choices
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

Please Tell Us More

In the chat, please share any examples of early childhood and shelter organizations working together. (Please provide the name of the community and state if possible.)



Supporting Young Children Experiencing Homelessness -- A Pilot Project

CCSA and Partners for Impact (PFI) are collaborating to provide assistance to shelters completing the ***Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters*** and to connect them with early childhood programs, in support of young children and families experiencing homelessness.



Project Goals

- To make the validated ***Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters*** accessible to shelters across the United States.
- To support community building and collaboration between early childhood and housing/homelessness practitioners.
- To strengthen and enhance environments to create child-friendly spaces for young children and families in shelters.
- Enroll children who are experiencing homelessness in high quality early care and education programs.

Project Activities

- Provide training and technical assistance to shelters and transitional housing programs serving families with children ages 0-5.
- Use the ***Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters*** to help shelters create environments that promote the development of young children.
- Encourage shelters and local early childhood programs to collaborate so that children can enroll in high quality early care and education.



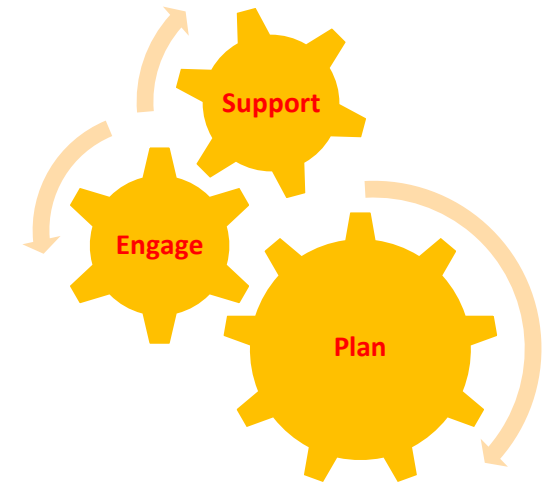
Shelters in the 2021 Pilot

- Two cohorts of two shelters each
- Three family shelters and one domestic violence shelter
- Western, Northwest, Central and Eastern North Carolina
- Rural, urban, and semi-urban



Year One Planning

- Several steps were needed to launch the pilot project:
 - A logic model
 - Applications, MOUs, and other forms
 - Marketing Materials
 - “Pre-test” and “post-test”
 - Incentives
 - Structure for meetings, interviews and self-assessment process



Phase One – Getting Started

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| • Initial conversations | ➡ | Explore Interest |
| • MOU | ➡ | Shared expectations |
| • \$500 payment | ➡ | Incentive |
| • Document review | ➡ | Learn about the shelter |
| • Onboarding interview | ➡ | Key personnel |
| • Design meeting | ➡ | Timelines, goals etc. |

Start

Phase Two – Completing the Assessment

- Introductory Meeting → Project & tool information
- Pretest → Focus on training, and views
- Self-Assessment → *Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters*



Phase Three - Planning & Engaging

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|
| • Improvement Plan | ➡ | Id specific action steps |
| • Monthly meetings | ➡ | TA, check-in, track & assess progress |
| • Training | ➡ | As needed based on assessment & improvement plan |
| • Mini-grant | ➡ | Based on self-assessment |



Phase Four – Follow Up & Support

- Connections with ECE → Increase collaboration
- Cohort Meetings → Share information across sites
- Post-test → Data gathering on project impact & assessing pilot

Start

Assess

Engage

Support

Lessons Learned

- Recognize and honor the history, values, priorities, and capacities of each shelter
- Be flexible – work at the speed of the shelter
- Determine how to provide the benefit without increasing the burden
- Incentives matter, even small amounts of money
- The impact can go beyond the immediate improvements
- Celebrate the wins

Answer in the Chat

What power do you have to help young children experiencing homelessness?



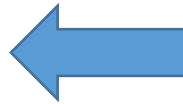
Children's Spaces at Families Moving Forward



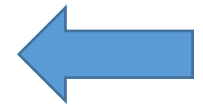
Pictures of Change in a Shelter



From this



To this



Reflection

What actions can you take in your community to strengthen connections between shelters serving families experiencing homelessness and the early childhood system?

**WILL YOU
ANSWER THE
CALL?**

Early Childhood Homelessness Resources

- **Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness Modules:**
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-support-well-being/article/supporting-children-families-experiencing-homelessness>
- **Early Care and Education Supports for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness:**
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/early-care-and-education-supports-young-children-experiencing-homelessness>
- **Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters:**
<https://www.childcareservices.org/programs/early-childhood-homelessness/>
- **An Invisible Crisis: Early Childhood Homelessness – A Primer:**
<https://www.childcareservices.org/programs/early-childhood-homelessness/>

The Link for the Slide Deck

You can find the slides for today's presentation at:

<https://bit.ly/2X5Os62>

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THANK YOU

We appreciate your participation in today's session
Supporting Young Children Experiencing Homelessness

- www.childcareservices.org
- www.fmfnc.org
- www.partnersforimpact.org
- www.ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov

