

BELL Newsletter:

- National Thinking, Acting Locally
- Tracy Duarte to Join CWGEC
- ACTION ALERT: *Emergency Family Stabilization Act*
- Thank Governor Wolf and General Assembly
- This work is getting virtual!!



June 2020

National Thinking, Local Action

Two new national reports highlight local action.

Facilitating Access to Early Care and Education for Children Experiencing Homelessness

Aside from the glaring fact that most all child care programs are closed due to the pandemic, what are the **barriers** that parents of homeless young children face when **trying** to access care?

And how have **local communities responded**?

While the BELL project answers these questions for Philadelphia, now there is a report by the United States Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) and **ChildTrends** to cast light on the national situation.

The purpose of this report is to: (1) **discuss the barriers to accessing ECE among families experiencing homelessness**, and (2) **describe ways in which states and communities support the enrollment of children experiencing homelessness in ECE.**

The report includes a **summary of resources and laws** strengthening a community's ability to increase access to early learning.

In addition, the report recommends activities that BELL currently addresses: provides **relationship building** between the homeless housing and ECE systems; provides **professional development** opportunities; assists Head Start/Early Head Start with **fulfilling federal mandates**; and **leverages data.**

[Read the report](#)

Newly Validated Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters Released

A **tool** that the BELL team uses to assess a shelter's environment that relates to child development has been updated.

BELL is pleased to share the release of the validated and revised [Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters.](#)



The Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Family Shelters was originally designed by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in 2014. It was implemented by BELL in 2016.

In 2018, the original self-assessment tool was validated by [Dr. Sara Shaw](#) (a PEC Visiting Scholar) as part of her dissertation. Dr. Shaw's research resulted in a redesign of the tool to include input from housing providers that represented the diversity of providers across the country.

In 2019, a focus group made up of early childhood professionals, designers of the original instrument, and Dr. Shaw met at **Child Care Services Association** in Chapel Hill, NC to review the revised tool and complete this version of the self-assessment. The validated and revised Early Childhood Self-Assessment Tool for Shelters is specifically designed to help shelter staff members create shelter environments that are safe and developmentally appropriate for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. In this tool, you will find recommendations and information on how your shelter environment, programming, policies, and staff can support early childhood safety and development. Similar tools have been developed and implemented with much success in child care, early learning, and early childhood development settings.



Big shout out to [Marsha Basloe](#), President of the **Child Care Services Association** of North Carolina, and [Grace Whitney](#) of the **SchoolHouse Connection** for their tireless advocacy that led to the self-assessment.



[Report the report.](#)

PA Head Start Collaboration's Tracy Duarte to Headline CWGEC

Tracy Duarte will lead a discussion on how Head Start/Early Head Start will manage during the COVID 19 pandemic at the Children's Work Group Early Childhood meeting.

She will be joined by national early learning expert Dr. Grace Whitney of SchoolHouse Connection to discuss the McKinney Vento requirements on charter schools.

The Discussion is on **Friday, June 19**, 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM, via Zoom.

[Join the Zoom meeting by registering here.](#) (if another name appears, just type over)



ACTION ALERT: Support the Emergency Family Stabilization Act

Important new proposal for families and youth who experience homelessness!

U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Joe Manchin (D-WV), and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)

introduced the **Emergency Family Stabilization Act (EFSA)**, S.3923, on June 9, 2020



The proposal creates a **new** emergency funding stream through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to **provide flexible funding for community-based organizations** to meet the unique needs of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness (as defined by the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act) in the wake of

the coronavirus.

Local agencies that currently receive ACF grants **or** have experience in **servicing children, families, and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness** would be eligible to receive funds, including local educational agencies, and community-based, faith-based, tribal, and culturally - specific organizations.

Special consideration is given to **pregnant women, pregnant and parenting youth, children under age 6, children with disabilities, families experiencing domestic violence**, survivors of sexual assault or human trafficking, and **historically marginalized** and underserved communities of color.

Funds may be used for a wide range of housing, health, education, and safety-related activities.

2 ACTION NEEDED NOW :

One, urge your U.S. Senators to **join as cosponsors** of the Emergency Family Stabilization Act.

Senator Robert Casey:

BY EMAIL: <https://www.casey.senate.gov/contact/>

By Telephone: (202) 224-6324

By Twitter: @SenRobCasey

Senator Patrick Toomey:

By EMAIL: <https://www.toomey.senate.gov/contact/>

By Telephone: (202) 224-4254

By Twitter: @SenToomey

Two, have your organize endorse the campaign. [Add your organization's name here.](#)

PEC thanks the [SchoolHouse Connection](#) for content to this article.

Send a Thank You to Governor Wolf and the General Assembly!

Start Strong PA and Pre-K for PA supporters sent over 20,000 emails urging our elected officials to *Save Early Learning!* They heard us!

Senate and House voted **unanimously** on May 28th to pass the stimulus bill authorizing the spending of the majority of the \$3.9 billion in federal CARES Act funding. The bill includes \$116 million to stabilize child care providers and \$9 million to help stabilize Pre-K and Head Start providers, including offering summer programs if it is safe to do so. On May 29th, the Governor signed it!

[Thank the Governor and General Assembly here.](#)

BELL thanks [First Up](#) for content to this article.

This work is getting virtual!!

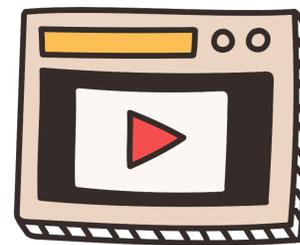
School District's New Video on Homeless Education Support

This is a video (created by Kevin Lofton) for families



in Philadelphia to understand their rights under the **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**. This ensures immediate **enrollment** and **educational stability** for students experiencing homelessness.

[View the video.](#)



POSTED
A VIDEO

BELL Podcasts

BELL's three podcasts are [available here](#).

Subjects discussed include Pennsylvania's child care system's response to COVID 19, new home visiting intake system in Philadelphia, and a round-table discussion by front line staff and leaders in home visiting programs.



BELL is supported by grants from the Vanguard Strong Start for Kids Program and the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey

The Vanguard Strong Start for Kids Program™ is dedicated to helping provide young children the opportunity to grow, thrive and learn in communities near each of Vanguard's major U.S. sites. The initiative is funded through a combination of Vanguard corporate gifts and Vanguard employee gifts from the company's annual giving campaign.

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