


ANNOUNCEMENT: EI 14-#01

Effective Date: November 21, 2014

SUBJECT: At-Risk Tracking for Infants and Toddlers Experiencing Homelessness

TO: Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Intervention Program Leadership

FROM: Barbara G. Minzenberg, Ph.D. 
Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development and Early Learning

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this announcement is to provide information about the passage of recent legislation adding homelessness as an at-risk tracking category for the infant/toddler early intervention (EI) program.

BACKGROUND:

Act 143 of 2014 was signed by Governor Corbett on October 14, 2014. Act 143 amends the Act 212 of 1990(P.L. 1372, No. 212), known as the Early Intervention Services System Act.

Children who experience homelessness are now eligible for at-risk tracking

- Birth weight under 1,500 grams
- Cared for in a neonatal intensive care unit
- Born to chemically dependent mothers and referred by a physician, health care provider or parent
- Abused or neglected, as substantiated and referred by the county children and youth agency under Child Protective Services Law
- Confirmed dangerous levels of lead poisoning as set by the Department of Health
- Experiencing homelessness

A child is considered homeless if he or she is living in one of the following situations:

- Doubled-up (e.g., sharing the housing of other persons due to economic hardship, loss of housing, or other reasons - such as domestic violence)
- Hotel/Motel
- Shelter (includes shelters, transitional housing, and/or awaiting foster care)
- Unsheltered (cars, parks, campgrounds, temporary trailers including FEMA trailers, substandard housing, or abandoned buildings)

An unaccompanied youth is a young child not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, but living with a caregiver, and living in a situation that is not fixed, regular, and adequate.

For more information, refer to the announcements “Children Experiencing Homelessness (OCDEL-13#01)” and “Childfind System Including Children who are Wards of the State, Children Living in Residential Facilities Children Who Were Abused and Children who are Homeless (EI-09#13).” The announcements provide information and resources on identifying and serving children experiencing homelessness. In addition, please refer to OCDEL’s webinar titled, “Young Children and their Families Experiencing Homelessness” located at: www.eita-pa.org. The webinar describes the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act and other important information.

NEXT STEPS:

- Local EI programs shall:
 - Revise local tracking procedures
 - Review and revise child find, screening and evaluation procedures as required
 - Disseminate information regarding Act 143 and other resources regarding children and families experiencing homelessness to the Local Interagency Coordinating Council, shelters and other agencies addressing homelessness, and other community stakeholders.

Comments and questions should be directed to the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Bureau of Early Learning Services at: 717-346-9320 or ra-ocdintervention@pa.gov.