

Pennsylvania Homeless Children's Initiative

What are the facts?

Families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.



- The average age of a homeless person in the United States today?
- Answer: 9 YEARS

Today, one in 10 families lives in poverty

- Every 43 seconds a child is born into poverty in the United States.
- Every 53 minutes a child dies from causes related to poverty in the United States.
- Since 2000, the number of poor Americans has grown by more than 6 million to a total of 37 million.



More than 12 million children in the United States suffer from hunger.

- As many as 1 in 5 American children go to bed hungry
- Hungry children are more likely to be sick, and hunger makes it harder for them to concentrate and perform well in school (FTC, 2007).



In the United States today, an estimated 1.35 million children are likely to experience homelessness over the course of a year.

- This number represents two percent of all children in the United States, and ten percent of all poor children in the United States (The Institute for Children & Poverty, 2004).



The Department of Education's 2005 data estimates approximately 30,000 homeless children in Pennsylvania

- Region 5 of the Homeless Children's Initiative is made up of 10 rural Northwestern PA counties.
- How many homeless children were estimated to exist in Region 5 during the 2005-2006 school year?
- More than 2,300



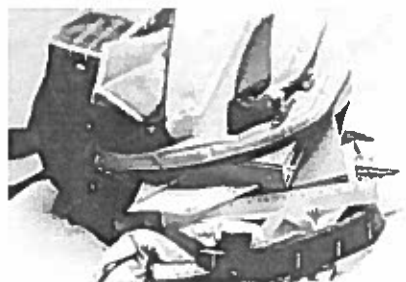
50% of homeless women and children in America are fleeing abuse.

- The average homeless family?
- A 27 year old single mother with 2 children under the age of 6.



Only 87% of all homeless youth are enrolled in school.

- Only 77% of enrolled homeless youth attend school regularly.



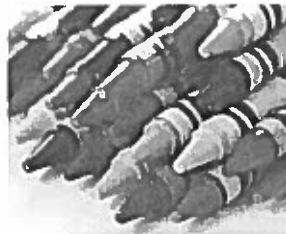
25% of foster youth state they have been homeless at least one night within 2.5 – 4 years after exiting foster care.

- 3 in 10 of the nation's homeless adults report foster care history (Roman & Wolfe, 1995).



51% of homeless students transferred schools twice or more.

- Every time a child has to change schools, his or her education is disrupted.
- According to some estimates, 3-6 months of education are lost with every move.



Homeless Children are at risk for falling behind in school due to their mobility.

- In a recent study of homeless children in New York City:
- 23% of homeless children repeated a grade
- 13% were placed in special education classes (Institute for Children & Poverty, 2003).



Less than 16% of eligible pre-school aged homeless children are enrolled in preschool programs.

- According to a recent survey conducted by the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 70% of all respondents (state coordinators and service providers) reported funding was inadequate to meet the preschool needs of homeless children.



80% of all public preschools have waiting lists from 30 days to more than 12 months.

- Findings from a 3 year Head Start Demonstration Project reveal numerous challenges in serving homeless children and families:
- Recruiting and enrolling
- Retaining students
- Involving homeless parents
- Meeting the unique needs of homeless children and parents



In Pennsylvania, the Fair Market Rent of a 1 bedroom apartment is \$556/month.

- There is no jurisdiction in the United States:
- Where a minimum-wage job provides enough income for a family to afford the Fair Market Rent for a 2 bedroom home (NLIHC, 2003).



What homeless children need the most is a home.

- While they are experiencing homelessness, however, children desperately need to remain in school. School is one of the few stable, secure places in the lives of homeless children and youth – a place where they can acquire the skills needed to escape poverty.



“The problems that exist in the world today cannot be solved by the level of thinking that created them.”

- Albert Einstein

