

Coordinating Services for Young Children and Their Families Experiencing Homelessness

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GoToWebinar Questions



Presenters

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Agenda



Purpose



Definition



Coordination Efforts



Overview of Shared Requirements



Strategies for Coordination



Highlights from the field



Next Steps



Why are we here?

Title 1 Preschool	Head Start	NC Homeless Education Program
<p>Title I preschool programs are designed to improve cognitive, health and social-emotional outcomes for eligible children below the grade at which an LEA (Local Education Agency) provides a free public elementary education. Children enrolled are provided with opportunities to prepare them with the prerequisite skills and dispositions for learning that will enable them to benefit from later school experiences.</p>	<p>Helps young children from low-income families prepare to succeed in school through local programs. Head Start and Early Head Start programs promote children's development through services that support early learning, health, and family well-being.</p>	<p>Ensures that all children and youth, including pre-k age children, experiencing homelessness have access to the public education to which they are entitled to under the Federal McKinney-Vento Act by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring state policies are in compliance with federal law • Providing technical assistance, training and meetings • Monitoring all LEA and charter school homeless education programs • Handling disputes as they relate to the McKinney-Vento Act • Collaborating on activities at the local, state, and national level



McKinney-Vento Act

Federal law designed to increase the school enrollment, attendance, and success of children and youth who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

Definition of Homelessness

Individuals who lack a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence:

Fixed residence: A residence that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change.

Regular residence: A residence that is used on a regular basis (i.e. nightly).

Adequate residence: A residence that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

North Carolina Data

**Children under the age
of six**

732,927

**Children under the age
of six experiencing
homelessness**

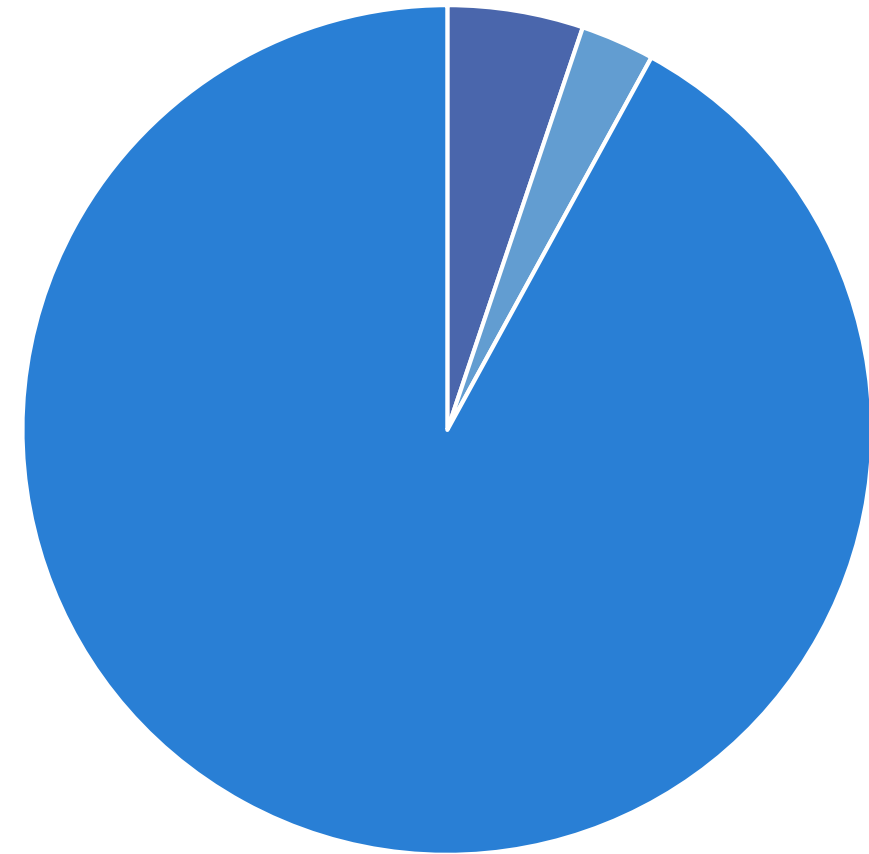
27,989

NC Early Childhood Education Program Enrollment

788 LEA McKinney-Vento Programs

1,448 Head Start / Early Head Start

25,753 Unserved



■ Head Start/Early Head Start ■ LEA ■ Unserved

Local Coordination and Collaboration

- **Built awareness** on the early learning requirements and opportunities in ESSA, how early learning supports district goals, and how to engage the early learning community in district plan development.
- **Convened regional meetings of community teams.** The meetings delved deeper into available early learning strategies, shared best practices, highlighted using early childhood data to make informed-decisions, and provided time and support for working together on plans.
- **Provided ongoing support** for working together, meeting early learning requirements in ESSA and developing aligned strategic plans.
- **Developed** materials to support collaboration.
 - Early learning language recommendations for districts to include in CCIP and local plans
 - Webinar and guidance document on developing agreements
 - Series of agendas for continued collaboration and aligning strategic plans

Coordination Requirements

- Data and Records Sharing
- Coordinating Services and Communication
- Transition
- Professional Development
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Family Engagement
- Facilities and Transportation

LEA Coordination with Head Start and Other Early Childhood Programs

Each LEA receiving *Title I* funds, regardless of whether it operates a Title I preschool program, **must develop agreements** and carry out the following coordination activities with Head Start and, if feasible, other early childhood programs:

- ✓ Developing and implementing a systematic procedure for receiving records of preschool children
- ✓ Establishing channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts to facilitate coordination
- ✓ Conducting meetings involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers, and Head Start teachers to discuss the developmental and other needs of children
- ✓ Organizing and participating in joint transition-related training of school, Head Start, and where appropriate, other early childhood education program staff
- ✓ Linking the educational services provided by the LEA with those provided by Head Start agencies

See ESEA Section 1119



ESSA Title I, Part A and Head Start Act LEA (Local Education Agency)/Head Start Coordination Guidance

The ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires LEAs receiving Title I funds to develop agreements with Head Start and, if feasible, other early childhood development programs, such as Exceptional Children, NC Pre-K, and private childcare, to increase coordination. The Head Start Act also requires Head Start programs to enter into agreements with LEAs and other early childhood providers. The goal of this coordination is to provide higher quality learning experiences and a more seamless transition to kindergarten.

Agreements should be tailored to suit the community's unique needs and consider a comprehensive approach, rooted in best practices. The following activities must be addressed in a formal agreement between the LEA and Head Start.

Requirements:

Check to indicate that each activity, referred to under Section 1119 of ESSA and Section 642 of the Head Start Act regarding coordination requirements, has been addressed in a formal agreement:

Data and Records Sharing

- ☐ Developing and implementing a systematic procedure for transferring records, with parental consent, from a Head Start program and/or other early childhood program to the LEA.

Coordinating Services/Communication

- ☐ Designating leaders responsible for the oversight and implementation of the agreement.
- ☐ Establishing regular channels of communication between school staff and their counterparts (including teachers, administrators, social workers, and health staff) in Head Start agencies or other early childhood education programs, as appropriate, to facilitate coordination of programs.
- ☐ Sharing information on selection priorities for eligible children to be served by programs.
- ☐ Sharing information on program service areas.
- ☐ Coordinating public information dissemination and access to programs for families.
- ☐ Coordinating the provision of additional services to meet the needs of working parents (such as before and after school care).
- ☐ Coordinating the provision and use of facilities, transportation or other programs.

Transition

- ☐ Establishing comprehensive transition policies and procedures that support children transitioning to school, which could address sharing formative assessment data and summer enrollment programs.
- ☐ Conducting meetings involving families, preschool/kindergarten/elementary school teachers, and Head Start teachers or, if appropriate, teachers from other early childhood education programs, to discuss the developmental and other needs of individual children.

Professional Development

- ☐ Coordinating, organizing and participating in joint training of staff, including transition-related training of school staff, Head Start program staff, and, where appropriate, other early childhood education program staff. Other topics could include academic content standards, instructional methods, curricula and formative assessment, social and emotional development, and racial equity and implicit bias.
- ☐ Coordinating program technical assistance (such as shared opportunities for preschool pyramid model coaching).

Curriculum and Instruction

- ☐ Linking the educational services provided by the LEA and by local Head Start agencies.
- ☐ Coordinating educational activities, curricular objectives, instruction, and formative assessment.

Services for Children with Disabilities

- ☐ Developing coordinated procedures for:
 - ☐ Referral and evaluation processes
 - ☐ Service coordination
 - ☐ Least restrictive environment/reduction of dual enrollment
 - ☐ Transition services, including from early intervention and to kindergarten
 - ☐ Participation in the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP)
 - ☐ Implementation of the IEP

Family Engagement

- ☐ Developing and implementing a family outreach and support program to enhance the continuity of family engagement between Head Start and schools and ensure families understand the importance of involvement in their children's academic success.

Practices Supporting Coordination:

Activities to Support Effective Agreements	Characteristics of a Strong Agreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct a local level self-assessment on coordination practices (See Toolkit in Resources list, below)• Engage a broad coalition of local stakeholders<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ LEA, including principals and teachers◦ Head Start◦ Smart Start◦ NC Pre-K◦ Private child care◦ Exceptional Children◦ McKinney Vento (for homeless children and youths)◦ Foster Care◦ Health care providers◦ Families◦ Other community stakeholders (literacy programs, CCR&R, before and after school programs, etc.)• Discuss coordination at agency board meetings or local advisory councils• Draft coordination agreements• Review and update annually, or more often as needed• Include evaluation or measures of success to inform needed changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies the LEA, Head Start, and early childhood programs covered by the MOU• Includes a vision, goals and/or purpose of the MOU (the why)• Outlines the major activities to meet the coordination requirements• Describes the roles and responsibilities of each agency• Describes the methods of communication• Provides a realistic timeline for implementing the activities• Includes implementation and oversight• Describes the length or term of the agreement

Resources:

[Toolkit: New Early Childhood Coordination Requirements in ESSA](#)
[Coordination Requirements in Head Start Act and ESSA](#)

For more information contact:

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10/19

NC Early Learning Coordination Guidance

POLL

Does your current Head Start agreement or program needs assessment address young children and families experiencing homelessness?



NC Early Learning Coordination Guidance: Homelessness



Early Learning Coordination Guidance: Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness (a companion to NC's LEA/Head Start Coordination Guidance for Developing MOUs)

The ESEA, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), reauthorized the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youths program, which protects and serves homeless students. The amended McKinney-Vento Act adds protections for preschool children and equips local partners with an essential tool for implementing the new provisions in ESSA.

ESSA and Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) share the McKinney Vento [definition](#) of homeless children and require LEAs and Head Start programs to coordinate and establish collaborative relationships and partnerships with community organizations. Children are automatically eligible for Head Start and Title 1 Preschool and Head Start programs are able to [reserve](#) slots for pregnant women and children experiencing homelessness when a vacancy occurs. Coordination to determine eligibility and to identify and enroll children consistently across programs, as well as coordinate referrals for services, is necessary to improve education and other outcomes for children and their families.

Agreements should be tailored to suit the community's unique needs and reflect a comprehensive approach, rooted in best practice. The following Head Start and ESSA requirements relate specifically to the coordination of services for children experiencing homelessness and are aligned with the [NC's LEA/Head Start Coordination Guidance](#) document. LEAs, Head Start, and other early learning partners should use the following activities to coordinate services for children and families experiencing homelessness.

Enrollment/Eligibility

- Maintain educational placement, regardless of whether the family or child moves, if it is in the child's best interest.
- Provide for transition and immediate enrollment to a preschool or Head Start program with openings if remaining in the preschool of origin is not in the child's best interest.
- Review and revise practices, or policies that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, and success of preschool children, such as requiring birth certificates and mailing addresses to complete enrollment.

Data and Records Sharing

- Conduct a community needs assessment including current data, data analysis, analysis of major strategies, and current needs, including information about children and families experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness.
- Develop a process for sharing student records and additional relevant information.

Coordinating Services/Communication

- Provide services and activities to improve the identification of homeless children, including preschool-aged homeless children.
- Ensure homeless children have access to early childhood services, including child care subsidy, home visiting, and parenting support programs, Head Start and Early Head Start, Title 1 Preschool, NC Pre-K, as well as early intervention and special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Establish ongoing channels of communication to facilitate coordination between Head Start, McKinney-Vento Liaisons, and other partners, including a point of contact among programs.
- Establish collaborative relationships and partnerships with community organizations to facilitate access for families to community services and referrals to health care, dental, housing, mental health and substance abuse, and other appropriate services.
- Provide information on the education rights of homeless children in all programs.
- Develop a program and community resource directory for assisting families in accessing services.

Transition

- Establish policies and procedures, such as developing forms and communication tools in a variety of languages and methods for direct family engagement, for transition and immediate enrollment to a preschool or Head Start program with openings if remaining in the preschool of origin is not in the child's best interest.

Professional Development

- Conduct joint training in programs for the staff to understand the McKinney-Vento Act and strategies for understanding the needs and rights of children and families experiencing homelessness as well as supporting the educational needs of young children experiencing homelessness.

Family Engagement

- Develop and implement a family outreach and support program.
- Conduct joint activities to provide meaningful opportunities for families to engage in their child's learning and to be informed of available educational and related opportunities to support their child's success in school.

Facilities and Transportation

- Ensure transportation is offered by the LEA to and from the preschool of origin at a parent/guardian's request comparable to those provided to other children.
- Ensure Head Start uses community resources, where possible, to provide transportation if a child experiencing homelessness is unable to attend regularly because the family does not have transportation.

Activities to Support Coordination and Collaboration

- Conduct a [self-assessment](#).
- Include homelessness in current MOUs or create a coordination agreement to address services for children and families experiencing homelessness.
- Develop collaborative plans for supporting children and families experiencing homelessness, including enrollment in an early childhood program where space is available.
- Develop joint procedures to simplify and expedite referrals.
- Offer screening and Child Find activities in shelters and other community settings.
- Simplify enrollment practices such as developing a common application across programs or assisting families in obtaining documentation.
- Differentiate instruction to meet the unique needs of children experiencing homelessness.
- Transition into and out of programs and schools is supported by Homeless Liaisons.
- Include housing providers in coordination activities.
- Provide joint training, including trauma-informed approaches.
- Ensure homeless representatives participate on early education task forces.
- Address the needs of children and families experiencing homelessness in extended closure plans.

Resources

[NC Homeless Education Program-Local Liaisons](#)
[Engaging Community Partners to Strengthen Family Services](#)
[Caring for the Health and Wellness of Children Experiencing Homelessness](#)
[Give Every Child a Home at Head Start flyer](#)
[Building Partnerships to Support Homelessness](#)
[National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youths: Early Childhood](#)
[ECE Crosswalk](#)



For more information contact:

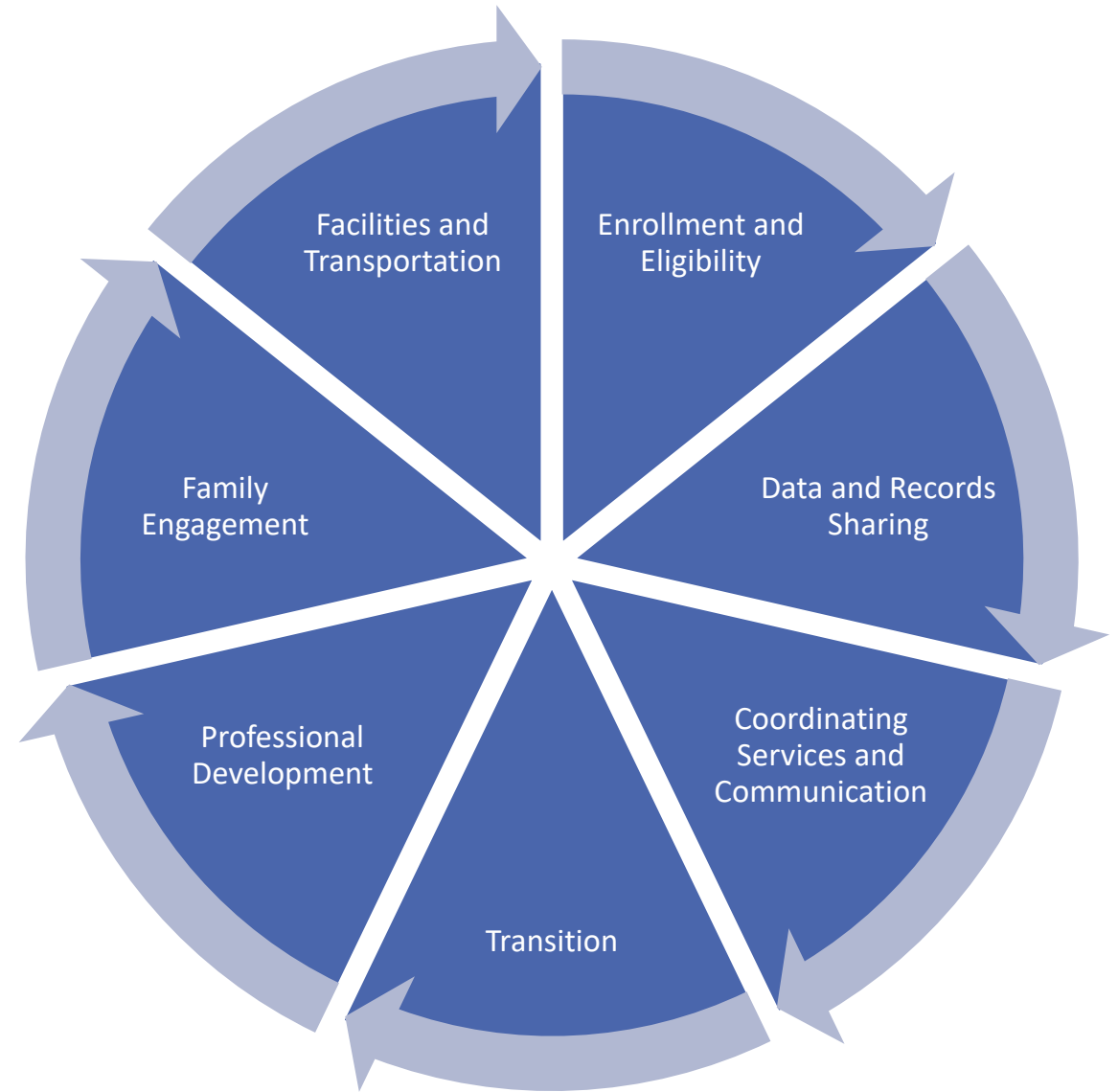
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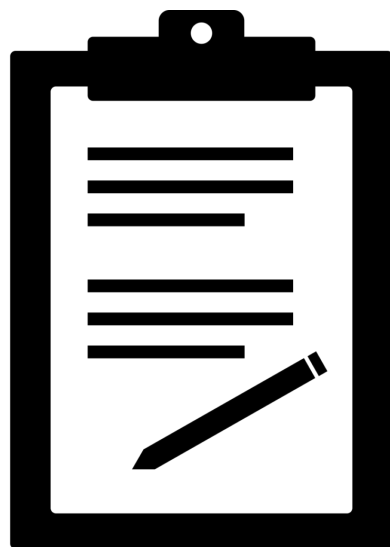
Refer to [NC's guidance](#) document for additional coordination requirements related to serving all children, including children and families experiencing homelessness.

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Shared Homelessness Requirements

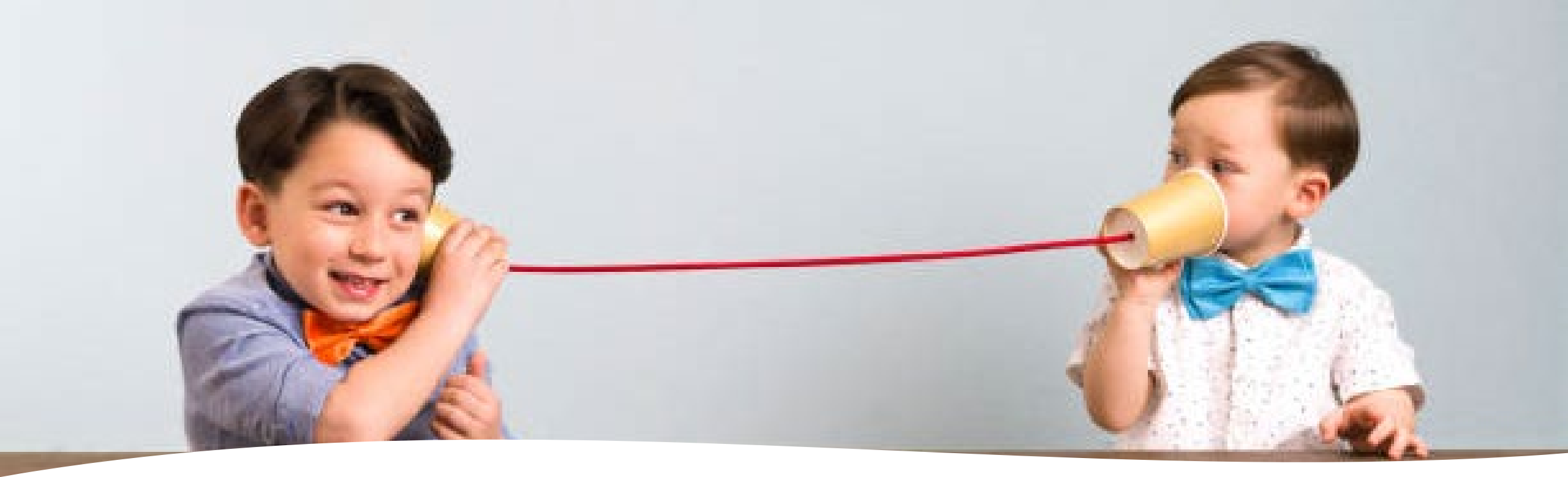




Enrollment and Eligibility

Data and Records Sharing





Coordinating Services and Communication



Transition





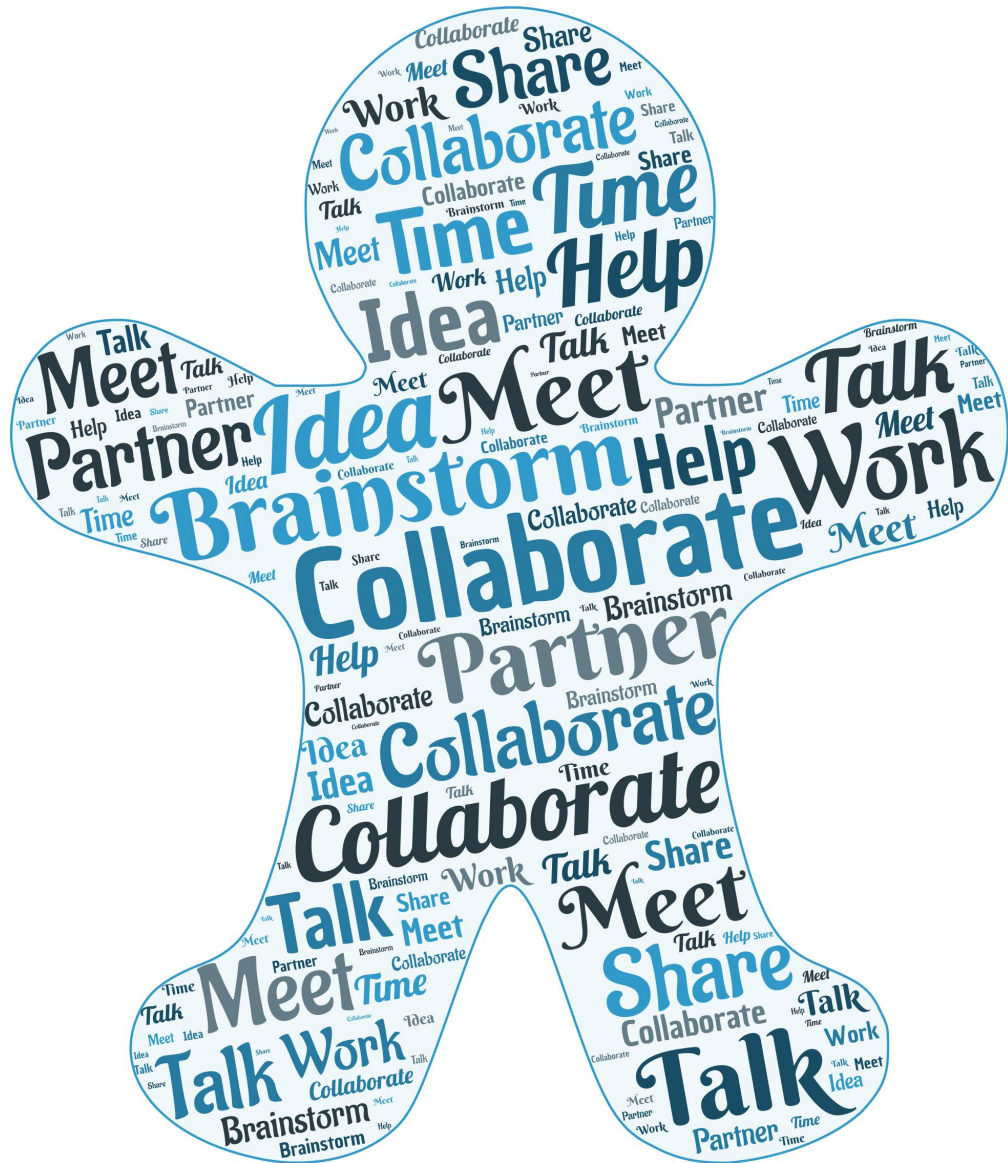
Professional Development

Family Engagement





Facilities and Transportation



Activities to Support Coordination and Collaboration



Highlights from the Field





Next Steps

- Know your partners
- Head Start and McKinney-Vento Liaisons meet
- Review program assessments and develop agreements
- Plan strategies for coordination
- Work with other early learning partners and homeless service providers

Resources

- [NC Homeless Education Program](#)
- [National Center for Homeless Education: Early Childhood](#)
- [US Department of Education: Education for Homeless Children and Youths Grants for State and Local Activities](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection](#)
- [OHS Serving Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Give Every Child a Home at Head Start Flyer](#)
- [Reserving Slots in Head Start Programs for Children Experiencing Homelessness](#)

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