

The Impact of Housing Instability on Families with Young Children

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Healthy + Active
Before 5



Mission

To end homelessness by providing *permanent, affordable housing* with *vital supportive services* to homeless and at-risk individuals and families in Contra Costa County.

Values

We strive to be *inclusive, compassionate,* and *responsive* to community needs. Our work is accomplished by maintaining *integrity, accountability, gratitude, and faith.*



What is Permanent and Affordable Housing?



Permanent Housing

- Residents
 - Lease holders with rights & responsibilities
 - Pay a set % of annual income to rent
- Range of affordability
- No time limit

Permanent housing with the appropriate level of service is the long term solution.



Affordable Housing with Support Services

Offering housing and/or services to more than 1,100 residents

- On-site services
- Self sufficiency and employment
- Case management
- Afterschool programs
- Youth enrichment
- Youth mental health program
- Parenting courses/support
- Eviction prevention



Families in Affordable & Supportive Housing

in Pleasant Hill, Concord, Pittsburg & Bay Point & in Scattered Housing

- 295 Households (842 residents)
 - 197 Families with children
 - 331 children (82 are birth-5)
 - 64 Households with special needs
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- Families with trauma histories
 - Youth significantly behind peers, both academically & socially



Families with Young Children Experiencing Poverty & Homelessness

- *In 2015 in the United States*
- More than 1.2 million children under 6 were homeless
 - Infants comprised 10 percent of children served by federally-funded homeless shelter
 - Half of sheltered children were under 6
- *In 2016 in California*
- Almost 2.5 million children under 5 were living in poverty
 - 74% of whom are children of color
 - 10% of these children live in extreme poverty



Why Does Stable Housing Matter?

- Early childhood is the time of greatest brain development
- Brain development is experience-dependent
- Social environment has more effect on brain development than physical environment



Brain development occurs within the **Attachment Relationship**

- Sense of Security
 - Am I safe?
- Sense of Self
 - Am I lovable?
- Sense of Other
 - How do I engage with others?
- Sense of their World
 - Is the world a safe place?



Homelessness Interferes with Parent's Ability to Parent

- **Parents in high distress**

- Are less available to their children, physically and emotionally
- When that stressor is chronic, so is their lack of availability

- **Children in high distress**

- Respond in unexpected ways, sometimes with difficult to read cues, leading to difficulty in meeting the child's needs



Hierarchy of Needs: Level I

Essential needs for survival and well-being

- Food
- Shelter
- Protection
- Medical care
- Minimal nurturance



➤ Do parents have sufficient resources to provide for basic needs?



Hierarchy of Needs: Level II

Family structure & organization



- Limits
 - Safety
- Do parents have sufficient authority to provide minimal structure?



Hierarchy of Needs: Level III

Boundaries

- Boundaries
- Physical space (privacy)
- Emotional space
- Relational space



➤ Are parents able to maintain clear and appropriate boundaries?

*Family

*Individual

*Generational



Hierarchy of Needs: Level IV

Self-discovery

- Inner conflict
- Intimacy
- Self-actualization
- Insight
- Spiritual yearnings



- When other needs are met, parents can support their families in self-discovery & personal/relational growth



Families in Safe and Stable Housing



When basic needs are met, when parents have the basic resources they need to care for their children:

- **Parents can**
 - Feel more competent to care for their children
 - Direct physical & emotional attention to their children
- **Children can**
 - Develop a sense of security
 - See themselves as worthy
 - Develop trust in others and their world





“Never doubt
that a small group
of thoughtful,
committed citizens
can change the world;
indeed, it's the only
thing that ever has.”

-Margaret Mead

