

From PEC BELL NEWSLETTER, February 11, 2021
February Brings Events You Will ❤️



BELL NEWSLETTER



Report Released on the Roundtable Discussion: Supporting Early Childhood Education for Children Experiencing Homelessness

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Decades of research demonstrate that high quality early childhood education can help break the cycle of poverty by helping young children learn and grow.

For Philadelphia's families residing in shelter, it is challenging to find a home and a place for their children to learn. This can feel overwhelming.

People's Emergency Center (PEC) has been working with families, shelters, and early childhood education centers since 2016 to improve social and educational outcomes for children in shelter through Building Early Links for Learning (BELL).

Steady progress was made enrolling children in high quality education programs, until many early learning programs shuttered as a result of the spread of COVID-19 last year.

We have released the report from our 'Roundtable Discussion' with Congressperson Dwight Evans and 16 experts who discussed the promise of early childhood education for young children experiencing homelessness. We held this event last fall, and more than 435 people participated in the discussion. Read the report at <https://bit.ly/3pr42BX>

These experts, from the homeless services and early childhood education sectors identified more than 50 recommendations, which we have summarized into four key themes:

- Improvements in coordination through partnerships: Continue and expand partnerships with stakeholders like parents, education centers, and housing providers.
- Data: Develop a more effective data system so that we can target specific support to each of the child in shelter.
- Increase and maintain enrollment: There is a need to locate and enroll more children experiencing homelessness into high quality programming and the need to maintain these enrollments as families' circumstances change, especially during the COVID19 pandemic.
- Strengthen the safety net: Advocate that HUD expand its definition/criteria for funding to include early childhood supports, bolster existing and develop new resources to ensure that families experiencing homelessness are served.

Watch the video of the discussion at <http://bit.ly/2YkE9rN>.

Take Action: Regional Agenda for Supporting Young Children Experiencing Homelessness

Our next steps include working with local, state, and national organizations to take action on the recommendations of the stakeholders involved in last Fall's discussion. For instance, one recommendation is passing the Emergency Family Stabilization Act, S. 3293. US Senator Robert Casey is now co-sponsoring this important proposal.

S. 3293 establishes a competitive grant program within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for family stabilization agencies to provide emergency relief to children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness. These agencies include current ACF grantees or sub-grantees, tribes and tribal organizations, and other organizations with expertise providing direct services to those experiencing homelessness. Recipients may use grant funds for, among other purposes, personnel costs, personal protective equipment, and other supplies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (i.e., coronavirus disease 2019), as well as payments for security deposits and other housing-related needs. [Learn more about the bill here.](#)



Two Action Steps:

1. Thank **Senator Robert Casey**. Feel free to use this simple message: "Thank you for sponsoring S. 3293, the Family Emergency Stabilization Act." [Email him here.](#)
2. Urge **Senator Patrick Toomey to sponsor the bill.** [Email him here.](#) Feel free to use this message "I urge you to sponsor S. 3293, the Family Emergency Stabilization Act."

February Children's Work Group Early Childhood Conference

BELL hosted a **Lunch and Learn Conversation** on the topic of Domestic Violence last month. During the webinar **Women Against Abuse** and **BELL staff** engaged early childhood and housing staff in small group conversations around four questions. What emerged were authentic responses participants either struggle with or have concerns about regarding those who face domestic abuse/intimate partner violence.

BELL will continue the conversation. **Join us on February 19th** as panelists from the field of domestic violence share their challenges, realities, and strategies when helping survivors create safety. Two Youth Prevention programs will also share their models and experiences in creating safety during the pandemic.

When: Friday, February 19
Time: 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM
How: **Register today for your Zoom link!**



Parents As Teachers One to One Parenting Education Dedicated to Families in Shelter for the First Time!

Parents as Teachers (PAT) evidenced based home visiting curriculum is now available to parents in Philadelphia shelters who have children younger than age five. PAT is being brought to them by the team at People's Emergency Center who developed BELL in 2017. Our next enrollment event is on 2/26 at Noon. **[Register here.](#)**

Families are paired with their very own parent educator to provide activities to strengthen: parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting and family well-being. Also included in one on one visits are health and developmental screenings, parent group connections, and parent and child resources.

Contact program manager Sylvania Burnett at **sburnett@pec-cares.org** or 215-251-6139 to talk about enrolling families today, or sign up for one of our enrollment events **[here.](#)**

Home Visiting and Equity: Hear the Conversation

Did you miss January's Children's Workgroup Conference? We asked ourselves: ***what is the role of racial equity in determining who receives home visiting services? How can we overcome disparities of service delivery?***

[Listen to the recording here.](#)

Our discussion was led by **Malkia Singleton Ofori-Agyekum of Parent Child +** and co-chair of the CWGEC Conference. She was joined by **Julia Reeves** of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, **Sylania Burnett** of the People's Emergency Center's Parents as Teachers program, and **Toscha Blalock** of the Maternity Care Coalition.