



The Kid Angle

Kid-focused news from First Focus on Children

Update "homeless" definition to better serve children March 24, 2022

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Homelessness advocates called on the government this week to adopt a broader definition of “homelessness” and to implement measures that prevent future homelessness.

“Families who have been in hotels are not seen as homeless because they’re not physically in the streets and in the elements,” said Katrina Bostick, executive director at Family Promise of the Coastal Empire during [First Focus on Children’s Kids & COVID conversation](#) on homelessness and eviction. “That’s a huge gap for families. We need to look at how those federal barriers are adding to homelessness and how they can come down.”

Families and youth experiencing homelessness often live doubled up with friends, in hotels, cars or on public transportation. The Department of Education considers these families “homeless.” The Department of Housing and Urban Development — which distributes aid to people experiencing homelessness — does not. For that reason — and because they often do not have landlords or leases to identify them as housing insecure — these families, children, and youth on their own missed out on much of the emergency pandemic aid Congress set aside for them.

Among the recommendations presented by the panelists to address existing homelessness and prevent it in the future:

- Implement a more inclusive definition of homelessness, and reform homeless assistance to reflect the way families and youth actually

experience it

- Help families maintain housing once they receive it, for instance, by increasing the minimum wage, and by placing housing where families have access to child care and transportation
- Break the intergenerational cycle of homelessness by ensuring that families who experience the trauma of homelessness receive adequate mental health care

[Read a full recap or watch the recorded session at this link](#)

COMING UP: *Kids & Covid: Child Welfare and Youth Justice*

In the next installment of our [Kids & COVID Conversation Series](#), our expert panel will review some of the innovations, challenges and successes that occurred in the child welfare and youth justice systems during the COVID-19 pandemic and propose steps to meet the needs of children and youth in these systems. Join us:

3/30 Wed 3pm ET | [Child Welfare and Youth Justice](#)

- Allison Green (*National Association of Counsel for Children*)
- James Dold (*Human Rights for Kids*)
- Jennifer Rodriguez (*Youth Law Center*)
- Joshua Rovner (*The Sentencing Project*)
- Shereen White (*Children's Rights*)
- Tony Parsons (*Youth Villages*)

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