



SchoolHouse  
Connection



California DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

WestEd   
WestEd.org

# Going deeper: Responsive practices for early learning professionals of young children and their families experiencing homelessness

[Webinar] Wednesday, 6/24, 10AM PT/ 1PM ET



Pictures by Diane Nilan  
HEAR US Inc.  
<https://www.hearus.us/>

# Housekeeping

## HAVE A QUESTION?

This webinar is for you. Enter your questions in the questions pane and click 'Send'.

## RECORDING & HANDOUTS

An archive of this webinar and all materials will be posted [here](#).

If you've signed up for this webinar, you will receive a link to the recording in an email after the webinar is over.

# About SchoolHouse Connection



SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

- Website
- Federal and state policy advocacy
- Q&A from our inbox
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships

## About today's partners and presenters

### **Barbara Duffield and Grace Whitney**

SchoolHouse Connection

**Darius Brown**, MPA, Development Officer, Homeless Interventions and Solutions Division, San José, Manager of COVID-19 Emergency Shelter for Families and former Homeless Liaison in Santa Clara County

**Irenka Domínguez-Pareto**, PhD, Senior Program Associate

WestEd, Center for Child & Family Studies

**Bridget Lind**, Med, Early Childhood Education, Transitional Kindergarten Teacher, San Francisco Unified School District

**Julie Nicholson**, PhD, Professor of Practice

Mills College, School of Education

**Jenna Juarez Ornbaun**, MA, Family Support Specialist

Early Education Department, San Francisco Unified School District

**Lawanda Wesley**, EdD, Director of Quality Enhancement & Professional Development, ECE Department, Oakland Unified School District

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/earlyedhomelessness2020.pdf>



BEST PRACTICES FOR PLANNING CURRICULUM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



**Responsive Early Education**  
for **Young Children** and **Families**  
Experiencing Homelessness





**Children have a voice.....Hear them. See them.**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child  
(1989)

Children's Right to be Heard

Reframing "Challenging Behavior"

Trauma Responsive  
Housing-sensitive  
Practices



Adults' Need to Build  
and Strengthen:

Self-Awareness

Self-Regulation

Listening, Observing,  
Documentation,  
Reflection and  
Participate in  
Dialogue



Ms. Martin has already started a story-time activity at her preschool class when David arrives with his father. He is ushered in, given a quick good-bye before his father leaves. Ms. Martin feels frustrated because David is often late, she signals him to join the circle and to sit but David does not seem to want to and moves to the block area to play. Ms. Martin is worried that this will distract the other children and feels annoyed at the interruption.

Using a stern voice she says “David, I have told you to come and join us, this David a first warning” to which David responds with a loud “No!” and he begins throwing his blocks to the floor. Ms. Martin stops her reading, approaches David and firmly tells him “You are being naughty, this is enough!” and without a pause, she grabs his hand to walk him to the circle. David throws himself to the floor and starts kicking and crying.”



**How would you react to David's behavior if you were his teacher? Would you be reactive or stay calm and regulated?**

**If you think you would be reactive, how could you pause and try to learn what he is communicating about how he feels and what he needs?**



# Building Responsive Relationships

Normalizing

Offering information about resources and supports

Pride and challenge approach

Focus on shared goal: supporting the child

Being present. Bearing witness. Not “fixing” the problems





**Questions**

# Arranging Environments

Meet basic needs

Stable, predictable routines and visual schedules

Minimize transitions

Use outdoor environment

Choice and control

Opportunities to express fears and big emotions



# Connecting to Resources and Supports

Within the school or  
program context

In the community





Ronny was a friendly and enthusiastic 4 year old in our PreK class. Midway through the year Ronny's behavior began to shift in a troubling way. He became more prone to conflict in play, refused to share toys and would quickly become frustrated and give up. He would often tantrum and cry at school, especially when asked to come inside from outside time. He would fall asleep in the afternoon a few days a week. He also began arriving late and was absent a few times a week. After several weeks, the teacher spoke to the mom about his behavior and the school attendance policy. The mom apologized and rushed out the door.



Simone joined my classroom midway through the year. Shortly after she joined my class, her mom came to me and stated that she had left her boyfriend (not my student's father) because he had been physically abusive. As a result, they no longer had a place to live. Simone's parents shared custody. When she stayed with her mom, they moved from shelter to shelter, timing out of each one and stayed in their car a few nights. In the classroom, Simone was a loving child, but also frequently late or absent and had trouble connecting with the other students. She had trouble saying goodbye to either parent when she got dropped off. She was volatile and moody and often lashed out at other kids with very little provocation.



# Culturally Responsive Self-Care

*YOU CAN'T POUR FROM AN EMPTY  
CUP. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF  
FIRST. —UNKNOWN*



## Thoughts and Questions

# Resources on Homelessness

**SchoolHouse Connection's Early Childhood Resources:** <https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/learn/early-childhood/>

**HearUs:** Giving voice and visibility to homeless children and youth for videos and content on the experiences of homelessness by young children. <https://www.hearus.us/>

**Sesame Street in Communities -Traumatic Experiences**  
<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/traumatic-experiences/>

**Sesame Street in Communities - Family Homelessness**  
<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/family-homelessness/>

**Schoolhouse Connection Sesame Street Implementation Guides:**  
<https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/home-at-head-start-new-national-campaign-on-homelessness/>

# Resources on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Practice

Nicholson, J., Perez, L., & Kurtz, J. (2019). *Trauma-Informed Practices for Early Childhood Educators: Relationship-Based Approaches that Support Healing and Build Resilience in Young Children*. Routledge Press.

Nicholson, J., Driscoll, P., Kurtz, J., Wesley, L., & Benitez, D. (2019). *Culturally Responsive Self-Care Practices for Early Childhood Educators*. New York, NY: Routledge Press.

Sorrels, B. (2015). *Reaching and Teaching Children Exposed to Trauma*. Lewisville, NC: Gryphon House.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <https://www.nctsn.org/>

## Also see....

California Department of Education, Early Learning and Care Division: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/di/or/cdd.asp>

WestEd's Early Childhood Development and Learning work: [https://www.wested.org/area\\_of\\_work/early-childhood-development-learning/](https://www.wested.org/area_of_work/early-childhood-development-learning/)

## Contact Information

Darius Brown, MPA, Development  
Officer, Homeless Interventions and  
Solutions Division, San José  
Manager of COVID-19 Emergency Shelter  
for Families  
Former Homeless Liaison in Santa Clara  
County  
[dariusjamal08@yahoo.com](mailto:dariusjamal08@yahoo.com)

Irenka Domínguez-Pareto, PhD, Senior  
Program Associate  
WestEd, Center for Child & Family  
Studies  
[iding@wested.org](mailto:iding@wested.org)

Bridget Lind, Transitional Kindergarten  
Teacher, San Francisco Unified School  
District, [b.bossong@gmail.com](mailto:b.bossong@gmail.com)

Barbara Duffield, Executive Director,  
SchoolHouse Connection  
[barbara@schoolhouseconnection.org](mailto:barbara@schoolhouseconnection.org)

Julie Nicholson, PhD, Professor of  
Practice  
Mills College, School of Education  
[julie.m.nicholson@gmail.com](mailto:julie.m.nicholson@gmail.com)

Jenna Juarez Ornbaun, MA, Family  
Support Specialist  
Early Education Department, San  
Francisco Unified School District  
[jenna.ornbaun@gmail.com](mailto:jenna.ornbaun@gmail.com)

Lawanda Wesley, EdD, Director of  
Quality Enhancement & Professional  
Development, Early Childhood Education  
Department, Oakland Unified School  
District  
[lwesley77@gmail.com](mailto:lwesley77@gmail.com)

Grace Whitney, PhD, MPA, IMHE, Early  
Childhood Initiatives  
SchoolHouse Connection  
[grace@schoolhouseconnection.org](mailto:grace@schoolhouseconnection.org)