

Homelessness in the early years has serious negative effects on social emotional development and mental health.



BEFORE BIRTH: Homelessness during pregnancy exposes parents to trauma and emotional stress which directly impacts fetal development.



INFANTS: Homelessness during infancy interrupts responsiveness of parent-infant relationships needed for healthy attachment.



TODDLERS: Homelessness during toddlerhood prevents the regularity and predictability needed for mastery of self and immediate surroundings.



PRESCHOOLERS: Homelessness during the preschool years fosters fear and uncertainty which hinders learning and is often misunderstood creating further isolation.

At any age during the early years, children may present with irritability, avoidance, inability to soothe, or other emotional expressions and behaviors that can be difficult to understand. It is important to explore each child's experience of home to see if unsafe, unstable housing could be causing emotional distress.

With early and consistent intervention, young children can overcome many of the effects of poverty and homelessness.