



WHEN FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN ARE HOMELESS

Relationships Between Parents and Children are Key

IDEAS FOR HOMELESS PROGRAM STAFF WHO ARE:
Supporting Families with Building Relationships Through Play

IT'S TIME TO PLAY:

Helping Families Build Relationships and Relieve Stress

What can you do to support play?

Play Friendly Thinking

- Begin with the understanding that play is the work of children. It helps them develop, helps them make sense of their world, and helps them build relationships. Children need to play every day.
- As you prepare to talk with parents about play
 - Think about an adult with whom you enjoyed playing with when you were a child: what did you do together.
 - Think about what you play with your own children.
 - Think about what makes little children laugh

Play Friendly Environment

- Establish a play room or area that is available for play at any time of the day (having both indoor and outdoor areas is ideal)
- Make toys, games, and other play equipment available to families in a friendly accessible room and/or portable activities they can take to their rooms.
- Schedule a family play night and/or a Mommy and Me or Together Time group so that parents can gain experience of playing with their children. (Some parents may have had very little opportunity to play as children)
- Create family fun activities such as holiday door decorating, family cooking, etc.

This Tip Sheet was developed by a Homeless Provider Work Group and was reviewed by parents experiencing homelessness. The Work Group included the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development, Adagio Healthy Start House, The YWCA, Bridge to Independence, Sojourner House, The Center for Victims, 4 Kids Early Learning Center, and Family Foundations Early Head Start.

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