

Exploring the Lived Experiences of Homeless Families with Young Children

Stephanie Hinton · Darlinda Cassel

Published online: 8 November 2012
© Springer Science+Business Media New York 2012

Abstract This study researched the experiences of homeless families with young children between the ages of four and eight. Many families experience homelessness every year; therefore, it is important for early childhood educators to have an understanding of how homelessness affects families with young children so that educators can effectively serve the needs of homeless families as they seek to find more permanent situations for themselves and their young children. Many early childhood educators may not understand how homelessness affects young learners. This research sought: (1) to understand reasons families with young children become homeless; (2) to become aware of beneficial resources available to families and their perceptions of the resources; (3) and to examine the developmental effects that homeless living situations can have on young children. The outcomes of this study will be used to inform early childhood educators about practices as they seek to serve young children ages four to eight living homeless. Research suggested common themes as to why and how parents and young children are affected by homelessness.

Keywords Homelessness · Young children · Parental perspectives · Early childhood

Homelessness is a reality in the United States for many families with young children. Though accurate and thorough accounts of the homeless population are difficult to assemble there are several telling statistics on homeless families with young children. The U.S. Conference of

Mayors reported in 2008, “At least 3.5 million people are likely to experience homelessness during a year...more than half of this group is women and children,” and 42 % of this population is reported to be under the age of 5 by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (2012, p. 1). Only a year later, U.S. cities saw “the sharpest increase in the demand for hunger assistance since 1991 and an increase in homeless families” (The U.S. Conference of Mayors 2009, p. 1). In 2011 U.S. cities saw on average a 6 % increase in homelessness and a 16 % increase among families with children experiencing homelessness (The U.S. Conference of Mayors 2011, p. 3). Young children subjected to experiencing homelessness are “twice as likely to experience learning disabilities and three times as likely to experience an emotional disturbance” compared to housed children (Shaw and Goode 2008, p. 6). The injustice of this life situation on our youngest, most vulnerable citizens was addressed by President Obama in his First Presidential Press Conference. President Obama stated: “It is not acceptable for children and families to be without a roof over their heads in a country as wealthy as ours” (Obama 2009).

In a review of the current literature on the issue of homeless families with young children, much of the research compiled sought to understand homelessness through the parents’ perspectives and attempted to provide ideas for resources and solutions to assist families of homelessness. “Housing only addresses the structural needs...which does not completely alleviate the often complex stresses associated” with being homeless (Karim et al. 2006, p. 455). Families living homeless are under overwhelming amounts of stress. Homelessness, by itself, is considered a powerful source of stress on parents with young children; however, two common themes throughout current research suggest that the major causes of stress

S. Hinton (✉) · D. Cassel
University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, OK, USA
e-mail: sbarton9@uco.edu

within families of homelessness are chemical dependency and family violence (Swick and Williams 2006). These two factors were not only noted as a cause of homelessness but also a reason for chronic homelessness (Vostains et al. 2001). Swick (2008) reported that homeless children and families experience a great deal of violence; while witnessing a violent act still produces negative effects on young children, creating an atmosphere of “high anxiety, distrust, and chaos within family dynamics” (p. 81).

Homeless families reported not feeling as “safe and secure” in their environment as compared to housed families (Swick 2005, p. 195). Living in shelters can cause families with young children to feel insecure and vulnerable. Shelter conditions can also hinder parents’ feelings of control and independence over one’s own life. Parents also reported a lack of enabling resources within shelters. Many resources that were supposed to help parents often prevented their ability to gain independence (Swick 2005). Other peripheral themes that emerged from the research included unstable relationships within the family and an abdication of parental responsibility (Morris and Butt 2003). Torquati (2002) also suggested that during “periods of stress, parents may be able to maintain some warmth and support in their relationships with their children, but they may be at higher risk for irritable parenting” (p. 481).

Early childhood educators hold a position in which they can encourage and support homeless parents and young children; however, schools are often “ill equipped to combat the multifaceted problems associated with homelessness” (Gargiulo 2006, p. 360). Through authentic communication, early childhood educators can gather information about “families’ perceptions of needs, resources, and strengths,” build trusting relationships with homeless families, and connect parents to key supports for food and clothing (Swick and Bailey 2004, p. 212). It is important that homeless parents with young children are heard; homeless mothers “experience the needs of their children every minute of the day” (Swick 2010, p. 299). Swick found many parents wanted “to do a good job in parenting and family life...because of their problems, they often want to compensate by increasing their focus on their children” (2010, p. 301). In the same study, the clear and essential needs of most homeless mothers and fathers were listed by parents as supportive help, adequate and affordable housing, high quality child care so they can work or receive training, and education opportunities especially in parenting (Swick 2010). Early childhood educators can begin by “developing an awareness of the challenges and situations experienced by homeless children and families” (Powers-Costello and Swick 2008, p. 243). Educators can also engage “in service-learning roles with shelters and

other groups that serve” homeless children and families, through mentoring and tutoring opportunities educators can use their “liaison roles to weave together more supportive school and community settings,” and involve “community experts on various issues connected to homelessness” (Powers-Costello and Swick 2008, p. 244). Swick and Williams listed key strategies on how early childhood educators can build relationships and effectively support homeless families. These strategies include: (1) encouraging the family to access education and counseling to address the challenges of their situation; (2) support the family with resources and help that empowers them; and (3) involve family in learning ways to promote healthy life styles (2006). In a later study, Swick and Williams (2010) also pointed out that; since “single parent homeless mothers develop adaptive parenting strategies to accommodate the various contexts they experience...early childhood professionals need to better understand the problems faced by single parent homeless mothers” (p. 53). Their research concluded that early childhood educators and shelters serving homeless families needed to: (a) involve “faith-based groups more effectively in supporting and empowering homeless families, (b) seek to dispel the many negative and incorrect stereotypes about homeless mothers and their children, and (c) interact more with homeless mothers in supportive ways such as mentoring and one-on-one counseling” (Swick and Williams 2010, p. 54).

The research available on homeless families with young children lacks information on how young children experience homelessness and the importance of early childhood educators understanding the homeless experience and effectively providing care to families with young children through that experience. If early childhood educators are going to effectively serve homeless families with young children, research is needed that brings understanding to their life situation through their perspectives. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study is to explore the lived experiences of young children, ages four to eight, and their families who have experienced or are currently experiencing living in fixed, non-transient, homeless situation. Research will seek to understand common themes of the family dynamics and the development of young children who are homeless to help early childhood educators relate to these families and to support their children’s learning. The basis for conducting this research study is: (1) to understand reasons families with young children become homeless; (2) become aware of beneficial resources available to families and their perceptions of the resources; (3) and the developmental effects that homeless living situations can have on young children.

Methodology

Context for the Study

Participants in this study were homeless parents with young children living in a fixed, non-transient, urban downtown shelter in the southwestern United States. This shelter was selected for this study because the mission of the shelter complied with the research of Swick and Williams (2010) on meeting the needs of homeless families. The shelter is a faith-based program that seeks to dispel the many negative and incorrect stereotypes about homeless mothers and their children while interacting with homeless families in supportive ways. All the participants in this study were involved in a faith-based program provided by the shelter. On entering the shelter, any homeless individuals or families are limited to a 30 days stay. Within that 30 days time frame, the individual or family has the option of entering the program the shelter provides. The program offers a variety of classes for individuals and families and is specific to the needs of each individual or family. The classes offered to the residents include Bible study, parenting, marriage, job or skill related education, and GED test preparation. If a resident is married upon entering the shelter he or she is required to attend marriage classes. Likewise, if a resident is a parent, she or he is required to attend parenting classes. Family units lived together in apartment-like housing, fathers were permitted to live in family units if the father was a single parent or was married to the mother. With this exception to fathers, all other women and men were kept separate inside the shelter.

The program has four steps: anger management, spirituality, addiction control, and transition to life outside the shelter. The program's main goal is to educate and equip homeless individuals to be successful after leaving the shelter. Residents can move to a new step after receiving a counselor's approval. The majority of residents completed the entire program within 10 months to 1 year, yet some residents stayed in the program for multiple years. The residents of the shelter agreed to adhere to a specific schedule on entrance into the program. The schedule consisted of a morning wake-up call, periods of free time, three meals, devotions and church services, and work shifts. The shelter consists of common areas and private living areas for the families and individuals. The common areas include the lobby, gym, and dining hall. The living areas are separated according to families with children, individual men, and individual women.

The role of the researcher was that of a participant-observer. The researcher had participated in volunteer work with the children of the families living at the shelter before the research began. The researcher voluntarily participated with children in their activities. These activities were

educational and engaging for the children. As a volunteer in the program, the researcher had built relationships with the children and their parents through these interactions prior to the research.

Participants

Eight families who reside at the homeless shelter participated in the study. All parents and children involved in the study volunteered to participate. Each family participating had at least one child between the ages of four and eight. The average age of child participants was 5.4 years. The average number of children living with these families at the shelter was 2.8. All the participants in this study were jobless; four participants were working on completing their GED, three had received their GED, one had a few years of college work completed, and one was seeking a degree in higher education at the time of the study. At the time of the interview, the families had spent an average of 5.5 months at the shelter. The parents' ages ranged from 22 to 38 years old with the average age being 30.3 years old. The families were 25 % white, 50 % African American, and 25 % Hispanic. Only the mother was interviewed due to the fact that only three were married.

Procedures

The research study was a qualitative phenomenological study that was carried out from October 2011 until March 2012. Weekly interviews occurred in an office at the shelter on Friday after dinner, and observations occurred throughout the week at the shelter in the common areas of the foyer and the dining hall. Interviews lasted approximately 1 h for each family and observations occurred weekly until the completion of the study. After each interview, field notes were written on the details of the interviews.

The interviewer asked parents about their own childhood and what brought their family to living in the shelter, their child(ren)'s strengths and interests, their support system as a homeless family, the impact homelessness has had on their family, and their views on parenting. The children's interview questions focused on the children's favorite activity for fun and play, who they like to play with, their favorite thing about school, and what makes them happy and scared. An audiotape was used to help accurately record interviews; without the use of the audiotape important details of the participants' responses might have been missed. Families were observed interacting twice per week.

While conducting observations, the researcher focused on parent and child interactions and types of communication between the child(ren) and parent. During the

observations the researcher observed from the common areas during the residents' dinner time and their 2 h of free time in the evening. During free time the families were observed in the foyer, the dining hall, and the apartments. The researcher interacted with the participants while observing only when participants initiated an interaction with the researcher.

Data Collection

Reasons for Homelessness

Data were gathered into three themes: (1) reasons families with young children become homeless, (2) beneficial resources available to families and their perceptions of those resources, and (3) effects of homeless living situations on young children's development. The first category indicates reasons for homelessness. Table 1 details the reasons participants cited for being homeless.

During the interview, each participant explained multiple reasons for homelessness. An unhappy childhood was a common theme. They described growing up in poverty, stating that their basic needs were met, even though their childhood felt unstable. One of the participants talked about alcohol usage of caretakers, another participant described the early death of her parents, and seven participants discussed parental fights or the abandonment of parents. While an unhappy childhood was considered by seven participants as a reason for homelessness, these seven mothers further described their unhappy childhoods as being the source of their lack of resources and support system as an adult.

Teenage pregnancies were common with five participants. All of the participants in the study had at least two children. Teenage pregnancies and multiple children were cited as reasons for homelessness because it led many of

the participants to dropping out of high school. The participants who became pregnant as teenagers felt they could not juggle the responsibilities of a baby with the demands of high school. These parents also found it difficult to find affordable housing with minimum wage jobs. Five of the families who participated in the study also cited a lack of paternal involvement as a source of their homelessness, stating the difficulties of being a single mother. Multiple children increased the chances of a homeless lifestyle because of the increased financial responsibility.

All but two of the participants in the study dropped out of high school. At the time of the interviews three of the participants had obtained their GED and the other three were working to obtain their GED through courses the shelter provided. All participants were jobless before coming to the shelter. Thus a cycle formed; dropping out of high school causes a lack of job opportunities which in turn caused financial problems leading to homelessness.

Four of the participants cited that joblessness and the stress of having multiple children led to their drug usage. One participant explained that she had started using drugs at the age of 17 which led to her (1) drop out, (2) multiple children, and (3) jobless condition. Drugs were explained as being a reason for homelessness by participants because they could not leave their addiction without support. The shelter is a drug rehabilitation center; therefore, participants were able to receive the interventions needed to quit using drugs without the concern that their children might be taken from them.

Individuals participating in the shelter's rehabilitation process are encouraged to take responsibility for life decisions that led to their current situation. The interviews with homeless parents revealed similar themes among each family's reasons for being homeless. These factors included unhappy childhoods, young pregnancies, multiple children, failure to complete schooling, drug or substance abuse, paternal abandonment, and unemployment.

Table 1 Reasons for homelessness as stated by homeless parents

Participant in study	Reason for homelessness						
	Unhappy childhood	Teenage pregnancy	Multiple children	High school drop out	Drug use	Spouse (father) abandonment	Jobless
1	X	X	X	X			X
2	X	X	X	X		X	X
3	X	X	X	X		X	X
4	X	X	X	X	X		X
5	X		X	X	X	X	X
6			X	X	X	X	X
7	X		X	X	X	X	X
8	X	X	X		X	X	X

Resources and Perceptions of Resources

The second category analyzed participants' comments about available resources. The shelter provides clients with a four-step process to recovery from homelessness; these steps are anger management, spirituality, addiction control, and transition to life outside of the shelter. At each step a variety of resources are provided to the families. Resources that were used by the participating families include: mentoring, family and marriage counseling, drug rehabilitation, parenting classes, GED preparation courses, Bible study classes, and classes on finding and maintaining a job. Counselors at the shelter are responsible for evaluating clients and, together with the client, deciding what resources to use. Participants interviewed discussed which resources they used, which ones were most effective for their families, and ideas for resources that would potentially benefit them and their family.

Support from others; including counselors, mentors, or other homeless families, was viewed by seven of the participants as an important resource. Having these supports in place led participants to feel successful in the program. Seven of the participants were positive about life at the shelter. Some of the participants with a positive view of life at the shelter cited that other families living in the shelter were part of the needed support system. Participants also explained their positive experience came from the staff and the program itself. These parents explained the positive effect that the mandatory regular and predictable schedule had on their young children, as well as how this aspect of shelter life taught them how to maintain a normalcy in their family that they did not have before.

As a part of the shelter's program, clients are encouraged to plan for the future when they leave the shelter. Two of the participants discussed job plans. One participant wanted to be a nurse and was enrolled in college courses. Many participants explained how they would like to give back to the homeless community by becoming a resource to other homeless families. All of the participants expressed a desire to be stable and independent. The goal of the resources was to ensure their success in this area. Because of the shelter's decision to constantly discuss life beyond the shelter, participants were able to look ahead and plan for their next step; the resources that the shelter provides gave participants the opportunity to make their goals a reality.

The shelter provided tutoring and after school activities for school aged children. However, children up to age five, who were not in an outside program such as a child care facility, were required to stay with their parents. Children in prekindergarten, kindergarten, or Head Start were not engaged in any tutoring or after school activities. One parent described a need for more opportunities for the

younger children, she stated the shelter needs to get "...a class together for the kids" with more opportunities to learn. This resource could have the potential to use developmentally appropriate practices, such as engaging children in play with materials like water, sand, while also giving children early literacy opportunities. There is also a need for parenting classes to include what parents should expect at different developmental stages as well as ways that parents can promote learning in the home for their young child.

The interviews revealed that the parents felt positively about the resources provided by the shelter. The shelter provides individualized, specific resources matched to each client's needs and goals. However, there is a need to develop more engaging resources for the young children, resources that engage and promote learning.

Effects on Young Children

Data placed into the third category revealed information about the effects on young children. Parents were asked to describe how their child(ren)'s behavior had changed since moving to the shelter. Many parents who had described a positive experience also described their young child(ren) as being angry and emotional since arriving at the shelter. One parent described her 6-years-old as "getting more emotional and he has more issues going on with him cause he's able to see and know what's going on around him." Another parent stated "they like that there's a lot of other kids," while still another parent explained that; "sometimes it's rough on my kids" having other people around all the time. One parent felt that due to the stability and constant routine her children were "a lot happier" since moving into the shelter than when they were living on the streets. Each child reacted to the experience of moving to the shelter differently, but each of the participants stated that they saw a change in their child(ren).

In observations of parent and child interactions, behaviors of educational support, such as reading and completing homework, were not observed at any time. One parent did discuss listening to her child read. Four parents were active in their young child's play or engaged in play with the child; four parents were not observed playing with their child(ren) nor was there parental supervision of the child when playing was observed. At times when parents were required to be supervising their children, children were observed to be running around the common area, going in and out, and climbing on tables and chairs. During these observations children were seen interacting freely with others in the shelter. Lack of supervision had effects on the young child(ren)'s behavior; which led to negative behaviors displayed by the children throughout the shelter.

Families were required to eat meals together while the children were not in school. Regular observations were made of seven of the families eating dinner together. Observations included family communication and affection, especially between parent and child. Three of the parents spent time having conversations with their child(ren); while five of the parents communicated through short verbal directions or did not communicate with their child(ren). Parents were also observed yelling and making negative comments towards the young child(ren). Affection, such as hugs and kisses, was observed frequently in three of the families. Restrictions, harsh tones, and general disapproval were observed with five of the families. Verbal and nonverbal communication affected the young children living in the shelter. When interviewing the young children, single word responses to questions were common with all but two of the children. During observations, single word responses were also common from child to parent. In interviews with the young children, all the children stated an interest in learning. Nine children were interviewed. Three of the nine attended school, another three participated in an early childhood program, and the last three children stayed at the shelter. All of the children exhibited an inability to engage in conversation during the interview questions and they all were easily distracted.

Through interviews and observations, research verified that moving into the homeless shelter affected the young children participating in this study. Parents interviewed described behavioral changes that occurred with their children; issues of anger and anxiety were raised as a result of being homeless. A behavior change was noticed by all participating parents. Observations and interviews on parent–child interactions and communication revealed effects on homeless children’s behavior and vocabulary.

Conclusion

The basis for conducting this study was: (1) to understand reasons families with young children become homeless; (2) become aware of beneficial resources available to families and their perceptions of the resources; (3) and the developmental effects that homeless living situations can have on young children. Conclusions were assembled based on themes that emerged from the observations and the interviews conducted for the research study. Reasons for homelessness that emerged from the parent interviews; themes included: unhappy childhoods, young pregnancies, multiple children, failure to complete schooling, drug or substance abuse, paternal abandonment, and unemployment. These factors were considered to be the cause of homelessness and reasons for continual homelessness resulting in an inability to leave a homeless lifestyle. These

factors are consistent with research conducted by Swick (2008).

By interviewing the parents and observing the family interactions it became apparent that particular resources were beneficial to the families with young children. Overall the interviews revealed that the parents felt positively about the resources the shelter provided. The shelter provided very individual and specific resources to the clients thus ensuring their clients’ needs and goals were met. However, there were some resources lacking. There is a need to develop more resources that engage young children in learning. Another needed resource is educational support for parents with young children.

Interviews with the parents and children as well as observations of family interactions and their ways of communicating revealed that moving into the homeless shelter affected the young children. Parents described behavioral changes in their children; such as anger and anxiety. Observations and interviews also revealed that homeless children’s vocabulary is underdeveloped. Living in the shelter affected the development of the young children.

In conclusion, common themes emerged from the families that participated in this study, participants shared similarities in understanding the circumstances that led to homelessness and to the shelter as well as expressing responsibility for the actions that led them to homelessness. Other similarities involved setting goals and reporting a strong support system. However, observations proved that families still struggled in understanding the basic needs of their children. It also seemed that parents did not fully understand the importance of early education and intervention. The study validates the importance of educating families of young children who are homeless as well as the importance of early childhood educators developing an awareness of ways to support children in a homeless situation (Powers-Costello and Swick 2008).

Implications

Research suggested that parents and young children were affected by homelessness and found common themes which occurred throughout the parents’ reasons for being homeless, their perception of resources, and their perceptions of themselves and their children. Early childhood educators know the value of understanding the young child’s background story and know the importance of providing care and support to the entire family. By knowing why families with young children become homeless, the early childhood educator becomes aware of the families circumstances. This information can only help the early childhood educator in supporting the family as well as educating the whole child while meeting his or her needs.

Not all homeless families are part of a working program. Many homeless families with young children are unaccounted for and available resources are limited. Swick and Williams suggested three key strategies for early childhood educators to remember when working with homeless families, no matter their current location: (1) encourage the family to access education and counseling to address the challenges of their situation; (2) support the family with resources and help empower them; and (3) involve the family in learning ways to promote healthy lifestyles (2006). Any early childhood educator who is aware of the family with young children's situation can be essential in ensuring that the family feels supported and empowered.

It is vital that early childhood educators are aware that homelessness affects young children and their development. Developmental delays, such as below average vocabulary, an inability to focus, or issues of anger and resentment towards life may be present. Early childhood educators can play a crucial role in providing support to these young children as they transition into a public school environment. Therefore, it is important for early childhood educators to be unbiasedly aware of the reasons families with young children become homeless, the resources that are available to these families as well as ways that an educator can be a liaison to resources, and understand the effects that homelessness can have on young children.

Further research should consider looking into the family structures of homelessness and the benefits of engaging activities for young children who are homeless. Research should look into the differences between families with young children who are transient and ones who are not and are living a fixed location, such as a shelter. Early childhood educators also need to be informed on the dynamics of life that lead homeless families into their current predicament, as well as the developmental needs of young children. This information is valuable to help families navigate their own way back out of their homelessness.

References

- Gargiulo, R. M. (2006). Homeless and disabled: Rights, responsibilities, and recommendations for serving young children with special needs. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 33(5), 357–362. doi:10.1007/s10643-006-0067-1.
- Karim, K., Tishcler, V., Gregory, P., & Vostanis, P. (2006). Homeless children and parents: Short-term mental health outcome. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 52(5), 447–458. doi:10.1177/0020764006066830.
- Morris, R. I., & Butt, R. A. (2003). Parents' perspectives on homelessness and its effects on the educational development of their children. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 19(1), 43–50. doi:10.1177/10598405030190010701.
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty. (2012). *Some facts on homelessness, housing, and violence against women*. Retrieved from www.nlchp.org.
- Obama, B. (2009). *First Presidential press conference*. The East Room: The White House Washington D.C.
- Powers-Costello, E., & Swick, K. J. (2008). Exploring the dynamics of teacher perceptions of homeless children and families during the early years. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36, 241–245. doi:10.1007/s10643-008-0249-0.
- Shaw, E., & Goode, S. (2008). Fact sheet: Vulnerable young children. *The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center*. Retrieved from http://www.nectac.org/~pdfs/pubs/nectacfactsheet_vulnerableyoungchildren.pdf.
- Swick, K. J. (2005). Helping homeless families overcome barriers to successful functioning. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 33(3), 195–199. doi:10.1007/s10643-005-0044-0.
- Swick, K. J. (2008). The dynamics of violence and homelessness among young families. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 36, 81–85. doi:10.1007/s10643-007-0220-5.
- Swick, K. J. (2010). Responding to the voices of homeless preschool children and their families. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 38, 299–304. doi:10.1007/s10643-010-0404-2.
- Swick, K. J., & Bailey, L. B. (2004). Working with families: Communicating effectively with parents and families who are homeless. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 32(3), 211–214.
- Swick, K. J., & Williams, R. D. (2006). An analysis of Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological perspective for early childhood educators: Implications for working with families experiencing stress. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 33(5), 371–378. doi:10.1007/s10643-006-0078-y.
- Swick, K. J., & Williams, R. (2010). The voices of single parent mothers who are homeless: Implications for early childhood professionals. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 38, 49–55. doi:10.1007/s10643-010-0378-0.
- The United States Conference of Mayors. (2008). *Hunger and homelessness survey: A status report on hunger and homelessness in America's cities*. Retrieved from http://www.usmayors.org/pressreleases/documentshungerhomelessnessreport_121208.pdf.
- The United States Conference of Mayors. (2009). *U.S. cities see sharp increases in the need for food assistance; decreases in individual homelessness: Mayors issue annual report on hunger, homelessness in cities*. Retrieved from: <http://www.usmayors.org/pressreleases/uploads/RELEASEHUNGERHOMELESSNESS2009FINALRevised.pdf>.
- The United States Conference of Mayors. (2011). *Hunger and homelessness survey: A status report of hunger and homelessness in America's cities*. Retrieved from: <http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/uploads/2011-hhreport.pdf>.
- Torquati, J. C. (2002). Personal and social resources as predictors of parenting in homeless families. *Journal of Family Issues*, 23(4), 463–485. doi:10.177/0192513X02023004001.
- Vostanis, P., Tischler, V., Cumella, S., & Bellerby, T. (2001). Mental health problems and social supports among homeless mothers and children victims of domestic and community violence. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 47(4), 30–40. doi:10.1177/002076400104700403.