

Every Child and Family is Known (ECFIK)

The Current Challenge

Last year, over 119,000 students in NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) experienced housing insecurity, including 33,000 living in shelters run by the Department of Homeless Services (DHS). Housing insecurity is a major risk factor impacting success in school; children in shelters are twice as likely to experience chronic absenteeism and over three times more likely to drop out of high school. Students in grades 3-8 living in shelters scored at less than half the proficiency rate of permanently housed students on the 2022 New York State English Language Arts exam, and a quarter of the proficiency rate in math. Currently, one in four children in NYC is living at or below the poverty line.

A Groundbreaking Pilot

The Mayor's Office NYC Children's Cabinet convened, among others, New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), the Department of Homeless Services (DHS), the Department of Social Services (DSS) and New Visions for Public Schools to build a program that puts children and their families at the center. This groundbreaking collaboration, called Every Child and Family is Known (ECFIK), connects enrolled children and their families living in DHS shelters as part of an integrated and comprehensive support system that enables their well-being and educational success, nurtured and guided by one-on-one relationships with a caring adult in their school.

In its pilot year, ECFIK served over 730 students across 132 DHS shelters citywide and 63 Bronx schools. The Caring Adult's responsibilities include connecting with a caseload of 3 students and their families; checking in with their students daily; checking in with family weekly; logging information in the Portal by New Visions to document inventory of needs; and sharing information with other staff. These Caring Adults receive the following: stipend for overtime work, in-person training, a [Toolkit](#) and [Resources Folder](#), and ongoing support, including workshops, [self-paced trainings](#), and weekly newsletters.

Year One Impact

The pilot met our key targets of building relationships between families and Caring Adults, collecting an inventory of family needs, and developing a robust partnership among participant agencies. Caring Adults have successfully linked students and families to a range of services that are already improving their stability, such as food pantries, housing opportunities, and academic interventions. As of April 2024, ECFIK students with check-ins have a 3% decrease in Chronic Absenteeism, compared to a 1% increase for DHS students in non-ECFIK schools in the Bronx, and a 1.7% growth in YTD attendance compared to a slight 0.6% decline for DHS students in non-ECFIK schools in the Bronx.

Expansion of ECFIK in Year 2:

Considering the success of Year 1, in its second year, ECFIK is expanding to include one full district in NYCPS where there are the highest count of students in DHS shelter, District 9. District expansion allows the program to benefit from geographic proximity and natural NYCPS cross-district internal trainings and collaborations. This expansion nearly doubles our reach in seeking to expand to about 111 schools and 1600 children.