

RESEARCH REPORT



Children and Youth in Homeless Families: Shelter Spaces and Services



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**Children and Youth in Homeless Families:
Shelter Spaces and Services**

December 14, 2000

**Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Ottawa, Ontario**

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN HOMELESS FAMILIES: SHELTER SPACES AND SERVICES

Executive Summary

Children and Youth in Homeless Families: Shelter Spaces and Services provides a snapshot of how local communities across Canada meet the needs of homeless children and youth and their parents or guardians.

This research study involved a review of existing data and literature and two surveys of Canadian shelters. After the first screening survey, the second survey was administered to 112 shelters from large urban areas in most regions of the country.

While the findings may not be statistically representative of geographical regions or type of shelter, they highlight many interesting facts about the homeless children and youth who live in shelters with their families. For example, at the time of the study, over half of the children and youth were under the age of five, and problems with self-esteem and a sense of well-being were common. Not surprisingly, the families who used the shelters had no earned income and many relied on social assistance to meet their everyday needs.

The survey also examined the availability and adequacy of the shelters and their services. Overcrowding was a common problem, while the ability to provide facilities and services such as study areas, indoor and outdoor recreation areas, childcare and counselling for children and youth depended on the type of shelter. More family violence shelters than general emergency or municipal shelters provided these facilities and services to their clientele.

The availability of services for parents such as job training, employment searches and on-site medical or legal services was also low in the general emergency shelters but higher in the family violence shelters and municipal programs.

The survey also asks where do homeless families go when they leave the shelters? The results indicate that most moved to their own apartment or house, while a much smaller number moved to another shelter, a rooming house or motel, or stayed with friends or moved to another city. Only a very small percentage lived on the streets.

Most of the families needed financial assistance and affordable housing to ensure a stable household for their children and youth. They also required counselling in life skills, childcare, and training and employment skills. Different shelters employed various strategies to meet these needs, ranging from home visits and follow-ups to help with budgeting and advocacy.

These are just a few of the insights obtained by this research study. But further research is recommended to provide a comprehensive inventory of the number, size and location of all the shelters serving homeless families with children and youth, and the types of services they provide. Also recommended for further study is an investigation of the health and long-term emotional effects that living in an emergency shelter has on children and youth.

PLACES ET SERVICES À L'INTENTION DES ENFANTS ET DES JEUNES DANS LES CENTRES D'HÉBERGEMENT POUR FAMILLES SANS-ABRI

Résumé

Le document intitulé : *Places et services à l'intention des enfants et des jeunes dans les centres d'hébergement pour familles sans-abri* constitue un aperçu de la façon dont les collectivités du Canada tout entier satisfont aux besoins des enfants et des jeunes sans abri et de leurs parents ou gardiens.

Cette étude de recherche comprend l'examen des données et de la documentation existantes ainsi que deux enquêtes réalisées dans les centres d'hébergement canadiens. Après la première enquête préliminaire, une deuxième enquête a été menée auprès de 112 centres d'hébergement dans des grands centres urbains de la plupart des régions du pays.

Même si les résultats ne représentent pas statistiquement les régions géographiques ou le type de centre d'hébergement, ils mettent en évidence de nombreux faits intéressants concernant les enfants et les jeunes qui vivent avec leur famille dans des centres d'hébergement. Ainsi, au moment de l'étude, plus de la moitié des enfants et des jeunes avaient moins de cinq ans, et ils éprouvaient bien souvent des problèmes d'estime de soi et de bien-être. Bien évidemment, les familles qui vivaient dans les centres d'hébergement n'avaient pas de revenu et elles étaient nombreuses à dépendre de l'aide sociale pour répondre à leurs besoins de la vie quotidienne.

Dans l'enquête, on a également examiné l'offre et la qualité des centres d'hébergement et des services. Le surpeuplement était fréquent et la capacité à offrir des installations et des services comme des endroits pour l'étude, des espaces récréatifs à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur, des garderies et des services d'orientation pour les enfants et les jeunes, dépendait du type de centre d'hébergement. Les centres accueillant les familles victimes de violence familiale offraient davantage d'installations et de services à leur clientèle que les centres d'hébergement ordinaires ou municipaux.

De même, dans les centres ordinaires, les parents recevaient peu de services comme la formation interne, la recherche d'emplois, ainsi que des services médicaux et juridiques sur place, tandis qu'on en trouvait davantage dans les centres d'hébergement pour victimes de violence familiale et des programmes municipaux.

Dans l'enquête on pose également la question de savoir où vont les familles lorsqu'elles quittent les centres d'hébergement. Selon les résultats, la plupart réintègrent leur appartement ou leur maison, tandis qu'un beaucoup plus petit nombre partent dans un autre centre d'hébergement, ou encore louent une chambre dans une maison de chambres, vivent dans un motel ou changent de ville. Seul un très petit pourcentage vivent dans les rues.

Il fallait à la plupart des familles de l'aide financière et un logement abordable pour offrir un foyer stable à leurs enfants et à leurs jeunes. Ils avaient également besoin de conseils pour affronter la vie active et acquérir des compétences en matière de garde d'enfants, de formation et d'emplois. Les stratégies visant à satisfaire ces besoins variaient selon les centres, comme des visites à domicile et de suivi, afin d'aider à établir un budget et concernant d'autres sujets.

Voilà quelques unes des informations que nous avons pu obtenir au cours de cette étude. Nous préconisons d'autres recherches pour connaître la liste détaillée du nombre, de la taille et l'emplacement de tous les centres d'hébergement recevant des familles sans-abri ayant des enfants et des jeunes et le type de services qu'ils offrent. On recommande également d'étudier ultérieurement les répercussions à long terme qu'un séjour dans un centre d'hébergement entraîne sur la santé et l'état émotionnel des enfants et des jeunes.



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1. Background

Previous Research: A number of municipal task forces on homelessness (Toronto, Ottawa, Peel Region, Waterloo, Calgary and Edmonton) were conducted in the late 1990's, but little was reported about the specific spatial and service needs of homeless families. One of the background reports for the Toronto Task Force on Homelessness noted an increase in shelter use by families between 1988 and 1996. In 1996, 5,300 children used shelters (Springer et al., 1998) and 1,681 parents and children stayed in Toronto shelters on a single day in September, 1998 (Golden et al., 1998).

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of this research was to investigate the spaces and services available to children and youth and their parents/guardians who are residing in shelters or emergency housing for homeless families. The research was to :

- provide a summary of current literature on the spatial and service needs of homeless families;
- provide an overview of shelter services and spaces available to children and youth in homeless families in Canada; and
- assess the suitability of these spaces and services by comparing the needs of homeless families with the facilities and services currently available.

1.2 DEFINITIONS

CLIENTS

Children and Youth: For purposes of this study, children and youth are defined as being under the age of 18 years and accompanied by at least one parent.

Homeless person: A person who has no safe, affordable, permanent place to live.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

General emergency shelter: A facility which offers short term shelter for a wide population range, including facilities that serve only families and others that serve families along with other clientele.

Family violence shelter: A shelter whose primary mandate is to house women and children who have experienced family violence.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

A number of research activities were undertaken to complete this study of shelter spaces and services for children and youth and their homeless families. These activities included a review of existing data and literature from CMHC; Statistics Canada; academic literature; past studies on Canadian women's shelters (Project Haven data from CMHC and Transition Home Survey data from Statistics Canada); and two surveys of Canadian shelters conducted for this study.

1.3.1 First Survey: A Screening Survey

The purpose of the first survey was to identify shelters that provide housing to homeless families. A telephone survey was conducted of selected municipalities and shelters across the country in order to determine which shelters met the criteria for the study. Participants were asked if they would be willing to complete an in-depth questionnaire to provide more detailed information about their clients and the services offered them.

The original intent of this study was not to survey family violence shelters since they have already been extensively studied. (Results from existing literature on family violence shelters were simply to be integrated into the report.) However, several municipalities and shelter providers contacted in this first survey said that many family violence shelters in the community were providing services to homeless families and therefore suggested that these shelters be included in the study. As a result, family violence shelters were contacted during the first survey and those willing to participate were included in the second survey.

1.3.2 Second Survey

Coverage: This second survey (see Appendix A) was administered to 112 shelters and municipalities of which

- 33 were classified as general emergency shelters;

- 64 were family violence shelters;

- 15 were municipalities providing temporary shelter assistance to homeless families, usually in motels or similar temporary accommodation.

Limitations and Cautions: The results of this survey are descriptive of the clientele, and the services and spaces available to this clientele residing in the shelters surveyed. It was not the intent to attempt an inventory or a census of shelters serving families with children and youth. Responses were received from primarily large urban centres in most regions of Canada. The sample, therefore, may not be geographically representative, nor can it be assumed that it is representative of general emergency shelters, family shelters, family violence shelters,¹ or emergency housing programs serving homeless families. Therefore, neither regional nor provincial conclusions can be drawn nor are results used for statistical estimations. In addition, a number of questions did not apply to municipalities, such as those referring to on-site services. This means that the non-response rate for some questions was high.

¹ For example, this survey included 64 out of the 485 family violence shelters in Canada as of the 1998 Statistics Canada Transition Home Survey.

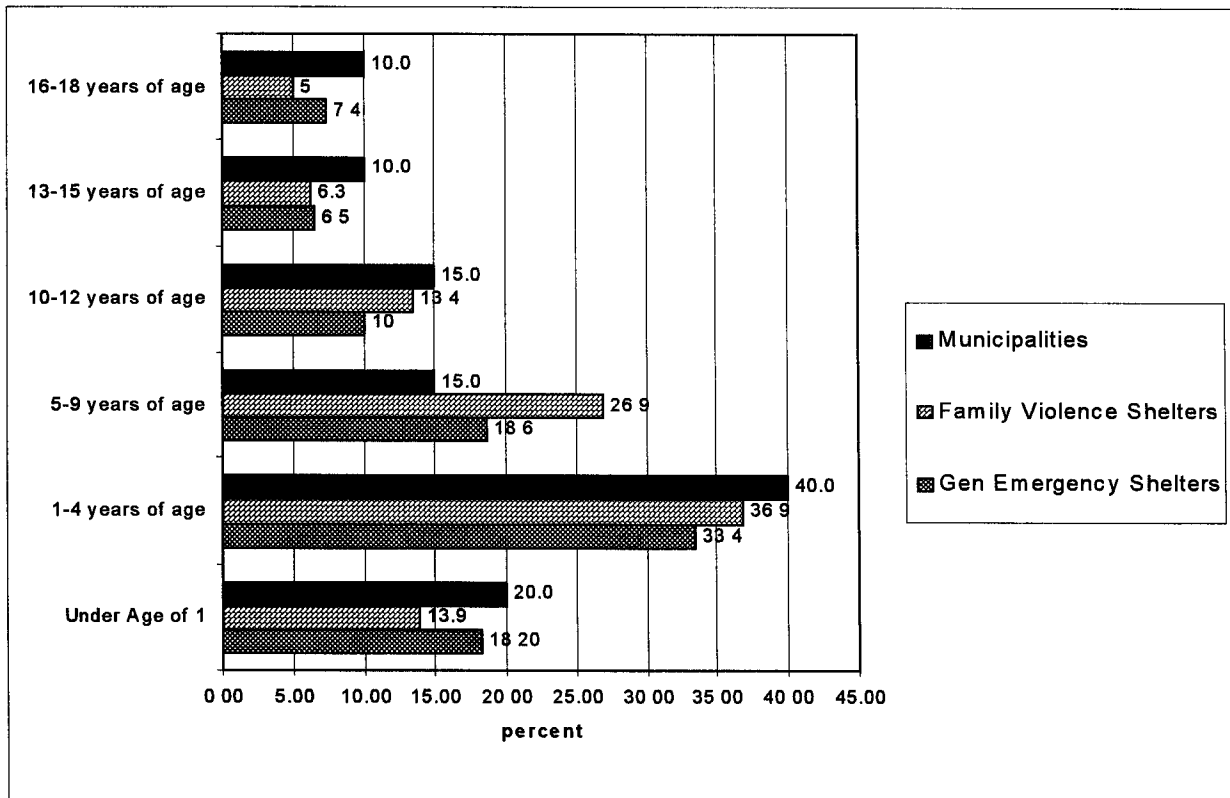
2. Survey Findings

The results of the (second) detailed survey provided a picture of the clientele, spaces, and services of the 112 shelters/municipalities that responded to the survey. It is emphasized that, because sampling was not random, the following findings may not be representative of geographical regions or of the type of shelter (general emergency shelters, family violence shelters, and emergency housing provided by municipalities).

2.1 A PROFILE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN HOMELESS FAMILIES

A wide age range of children and youth stay in the homeless shelters surveyed. Over 50% are children under the age of five, almost 30% are between five and twelve, and under 15% are teenagers.

Chart 1
Percent Distribution of Children/Youth in
Shelters/Emergency Housing by Age & Type of Facility (Q.22)

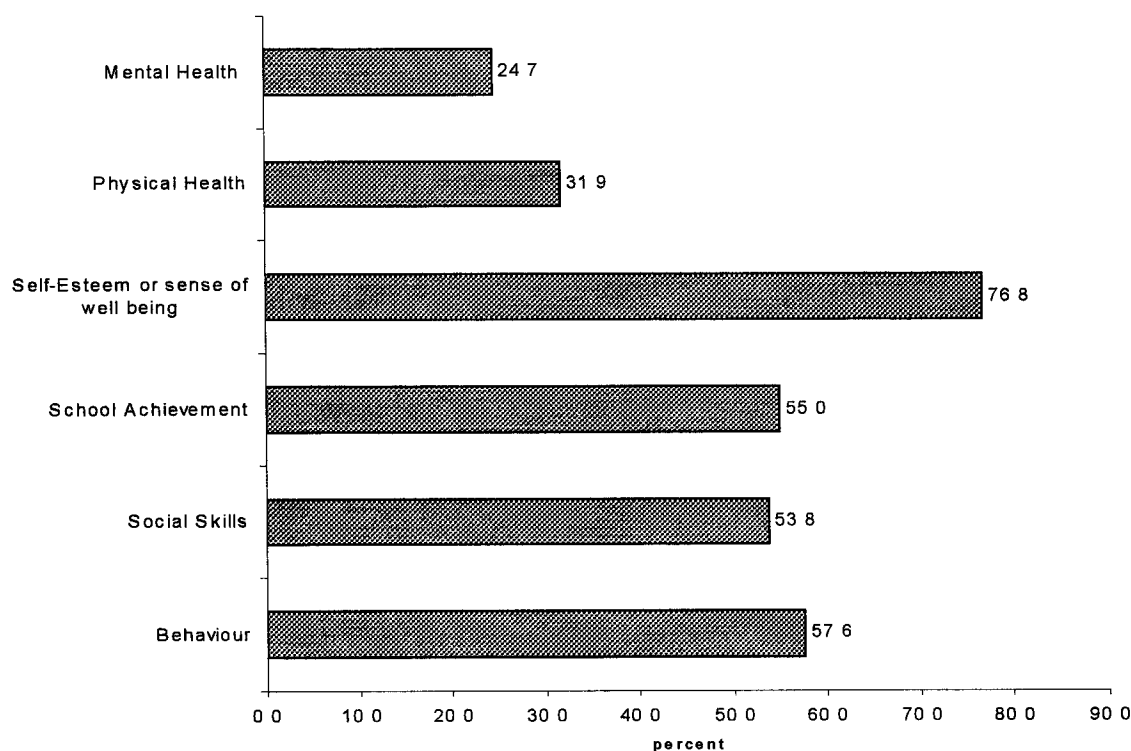


Number of valid cases for Q.22(a) to (g) ranged from 10 to 16/33 for general emergency shelters; 19 to 32/64 for family violence shelters, and 1 to 8/15 for municipalities

Shelters responding to questions about difficulties that children and youth face while staying in shelters and emergency housing identified self-esteem/a sense of well-being as the most common. Others included difficulties in school achievement, behavior, and social skills (Chart 2). However, more than one-third of shelters responding said that

children and youth usually continue to attend the same school while staying at the shelter (Appendix B, Table 1).

Chart 2
Percent Distribution of Difficulties Faced by Children/Youth Who Stay in Shelters/Emergency Housing (Q.31)



Number of valid cases for Q.31 (a) to (f) ranged from 13 to 19/33 for general emergency shelters and 20 to 29/64 for family violence shelters, data from municipalities was invalid

2.2 SOURCES OF INCOME IN HOMELESS FAMILIES

The children and youth staying in these shelters/emergency housing were generally not from working families. Shelters providers reported that only about 10 percent of families who come to their shelters have earned income. Most families rely on income support programs, child support payments or have no income. General emergency shelters reported that over 70 percent of families who come to their shelters have social assistance income (Chart 3).

Chart 3
Source of income upon arrival at the
shelter/emergency housing (Q.28)

	General Emergency Shelters	Family Violence Shelters
Paid employment	8 2%	10 4%
Employment Insurance	6 7	3 8
Social assistance	71 7	52 7
Child support	20 9	5 7
Other	5 3	8 9
No source of income	13 1	36 3

* Number of valid cases for Q 28(a) to (f) ranged from 11 to 23/33 for general emergency shelters, 27 to 44/64 for family violence shelters, and 2 to 5/15 for municipalities

2.3 SHELTER SPACES AND SERVICES

Shelters are often full or even overcrowded, with about one-third of shelters surveyed noting that families sometimes share bedroom or sleeping facilities and that children and/or youth may share bedrooms with children and/or youth from different families. Just under two-thirds of shelter providers indicated that families have adequate privacy in their shelters (Appendix B, Table 2).

Shelters for homeless families with children are typically located close to schools, stores, medical and legal services, hospitals, public transit and parks in the communities in which they are located (Appendix B, Table 3). Most shelters report having adequate cooking facilities, adequate plumbing and heating, and enough books, toys and games, and baby equipment. Half or more of the families using shelters include school-age children and youth. However, less than half of shelters surveyed indicated that they had adequate areas for school age children to study(Appendix B, Table 2).

Respondents were asked about services available for homeless families in shelters (either on-site or elsewhere):

more than half of general emergency shelters (55%) and the vast majority of family violence shelters surveyed (90%) reported having indoor recreation spaces for children/youth(Appendix B ,Table 4) Outdoor spaces were available at 64 percent and 88 percent of facilities respectively

childcare was available at nearly two thirds of family violence shelters, but at less than one-third of general emergency shelters (Table 4)

33 percent of general emergency shelters, 80 percent of family violence shelters surveyed, and 22 percent of municipalities that responded to the survey reported that counselling for children/youth was available either on-site or elsewhere (Table 4)

Respondents were also asked about services provided for parents such as job training, employment search, medical or legal services on-site(Appendix B, Table 5). Responses showed:

that the availability of such services was generally low in general emergency shelters with the exception of housing referrals

availability of such services were generally higher at family violence and municipal programs albeit some service categories were minimally offered; housing referrals rated high

All types of facilities were very active in referring clients to other services

When providing information on services to families and children, most shelters noted that if the facility did not provide them directly, these services were usually available elsewhere in the community.

Comments made by shelter staff replying to the survey suggest that developing strong links and partnerships with the community and with other community agencies is a key priority. For example, homeless families are particularly helped if the shelter staff are able to provide referrals to community agencies such as rental property registries and housing authorities to help families find housing; if the shelter partners with agencies to provide services such as counselling; and if families are directed to other appropriate resources.

Shelters for homeless families are generally administered and operated by paid staff, with most shelters having at least one staff person who is readily in touch with or available to clients, and who is aware of the activities and needs of both parents and children. Based on their responses to the survey, family violence shelters are more likely to have at least one designated child support worker.

Many shelters conduct needs assessments for children and youth when they are admitted to the shelter. Survey results show that about one-half of family violence shelters surveyed and one-fifth of general emergency shelters and municipal emergency housing programs conduct such assessments.

Assessment activities may include, for example, general evaluations of children made during their stay at the shelter; discussion of their needs with a parent and family development worker; determination of needs for counselling, and anger management.

While some shelters have eligibility criteria and rules and regulations, about 50 percent of shelters surveyed said they have no specific rules and regulation for children and youth. A widely reported shelter rule concerns the acceptance of male youth into family violence shelters, with male youth over the age limit for shelter admittance often having to go and stay with friends or family or to a single men's shelter.

2.4 WHEN FAMILIES LEAVE THE SHELTER

Respondents to the survey were asked to identify where homeless families generally go when they leave the shelter or emergency housing facility. Close to two-thirds of shelter respondents estimated that, on average, 75 to 100% of families staying in general emergency shelters or family violence shelters move to their own apartment or house after leaving the shelter. In general, a smaller percentage of clients (10% or less) move to another shelter, rooming house, motel, stay with friends or move to another city; while a very small percentage live on the street.

2.5 MEETING THE NEEDS OF HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

People who are homeless understandably have a variety of needs, and this is also true for families with children and youth. From the shelters' perception of working with these families, the primary needs of homeless families in leaving the shelter are financial assistance and affordable housing. For example, a number of shelters noted that the lack of the first and last month's rent was one of the reasons why families are not able to access more permanent housing.

Shelter staff estimated that more than half of homeless families require some level of special support services in order to maintain a stable household for their children and youth. These needs include financial help, affordable housing, counselling in life skills, child care, and training and employment skills. Two-thirds of general emergency shelters indicated that one-fourth or less of homeless families return to a shelter within a year of leaving the shelter.

Shelters reported that strategies which helped to meet these needs included outreach programs, home visits and follow-ups, and supportive counselling. Shelters also reported a number of other approaches as having been successful in helping homeless families. These include having non-judgemental staff who are sensitive to the needs of homeless families and staff who promote "self-help" attitudes within the shelter to encourage parents to find their own solutions to their particular problems. It was noted that respectful, practical problem-solving assistance was most needed by families in shelters.

Such programs as the *New Beginnings Family Program*, which helps women and children set up on their own independently and provides support from a coordinator on a weekly basis, were noted as being important and useful supports for homeless families.

Shelter staff also note that providing referral services is one of the most effective support services that can be offered. By giving or directing parents to the services that they need, families may end up with the tools and support services that they require to take responsibility for themselves. By empowering the family in this way, shelters suggested that families are able to seek solutions in consultation with, and benefit from direction

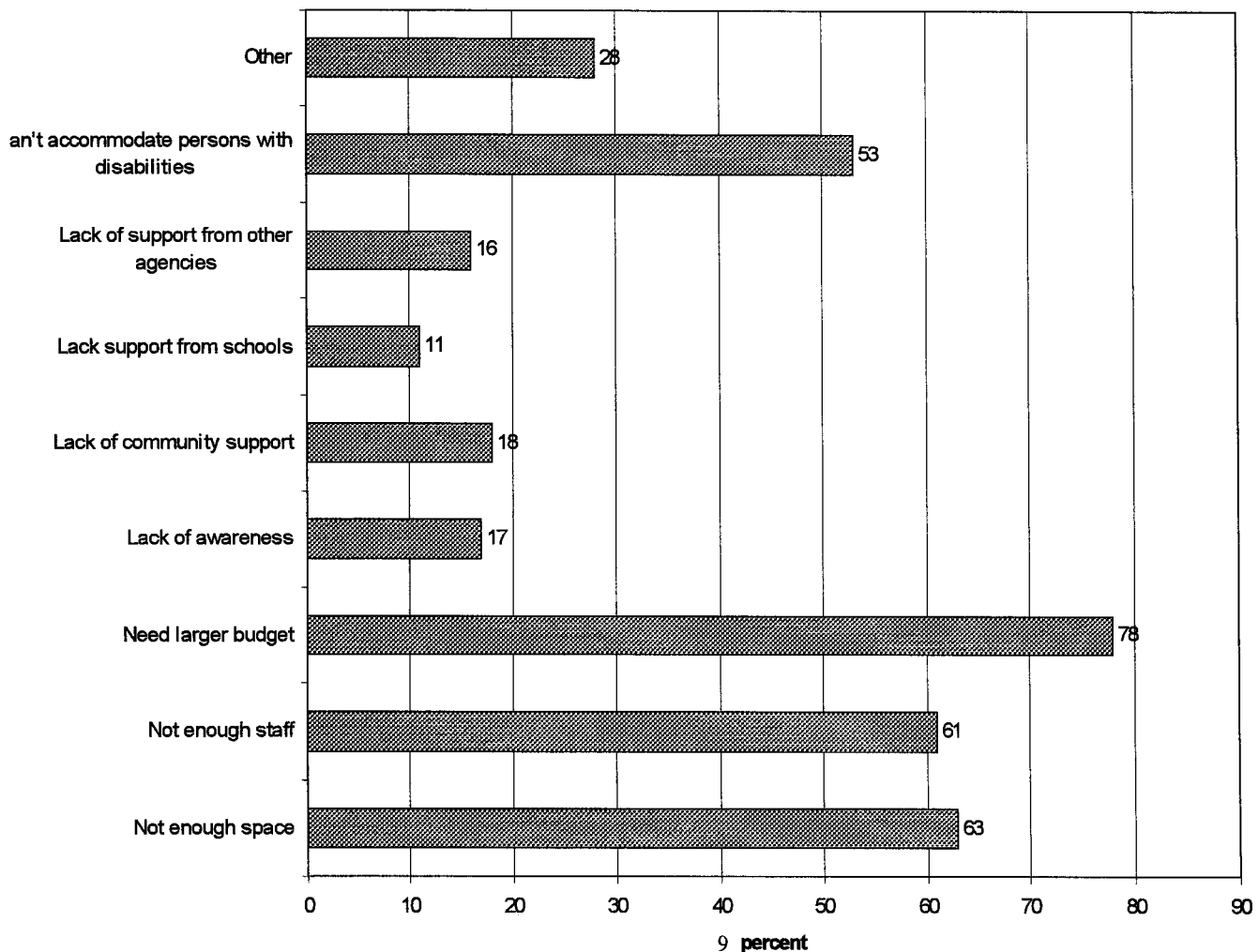
from shelter staff.

Some Canadian shelters do provide successful follow-up support to families who have left the shelter facility, including such activities as phone follow-ups, home visits, counselling and help with budgeting. In some cases, outreach counsellors combine home-visits and telephone support and advocacy for a period of 3-6 months or so after families have left the shelter. Also, former residents are encouraged to keep in touch by telephone and to participate in outreach programs for both one-on-one and group support.

Close to two-thirds of general emergency shelters and family violence shelters surveyed and one-half of municipal programs indicated that their greatest difficulties in providing services to homeless families are due to limited budgets/resources, space, and staff. Additionally, about half of shelters reported that they had difficulty accommodating persons with disabilities in their facilities. Chart 4 shows the percentage of total respondents from all shelter types who identified a particular type of problem or difficulty in providing services.

Chart 4

**Percent of Total Respondents Expressing Difficulties in Providing Services
By Type of Difficulty**



3. Conclusions

This study provides a picture of the clientele, spaces, and services of the 112 shelters/municipal emergency housing programs that responded to the survey concerning shelter spaces and services for children and youth in homeless families. Although findings may not be statistically representative of geographical regions, or of the type of shelter (general emergency shelters, family violence shelters, and emergency housing provided by municipalities), some observations are interesting. Some of these highlights are as follows:

- Shelters reported that over half of children/youth staying in shelters are under the age of 5.
- Problems with self-esteem/a sense of well-being were commonly reported.
- Just under 2/3 of shelters reported that families have adequate privacy in their shelters.
- Half of shelters surveyed reported difficulty accommodating persons with disabilities.
- Shelters reported that the primary needs of homeless families to be financial assistance and housing affordability.
- Shelters reported that families can be empowered by providing them with the support services they need, such as counselling programs.
- Housing referral services were reported to be provided by more than 2/3 of shelters responding to the survey.
- Most of the shelters surveyed reported their greatest difficulties in serving homeless families are due to limited budgets/resources, space, and staff.

This study provides only a glimpse into the experiences of homeless children and youth who stay in shelters with their families, and the many gaps in services which make service delivery a challenge. More research needs to be conducted in this area in order to provide a more complete picture of spaces and services for children and youth residing in shelters and emergency housing facilities.

4. Recommendations for Further Research

There are several areas in which the lack of Canadian research limits the scope of an assessment of spatial and service needs of children and youth in homeless families staying in emergency shelters:

- **spaces and services inventory information:** The only national data on spaces and types of services available for children and youth in shelters for homeless families refers to designated family violence shelters.² There is no comprehensive documentation on the number, size, or location of other shelters serving homeless families with children, nor on the types of services they provide to children and youth. It is impossible to assess the basic adequacy of shelter services for children and youth without at least a descriptive inventory of all shelter services and a systematic assessment of service use by community or region.³
- **information on the health status of children and youth staying in emergency shelters for homeless families:** A number of studies have examined the health status of American children in emergency shelters, but little or no research has been done on Canadian children and youth.
- **long-term effects of homelessness on children and youth in shelters:** In no country have longitudinal studies been conducted to investigate the long-term impacts of shelter stays on children and youth.

² The Statistics Canada Transitional Home Survey of family violence shelters in Canada is conducted every two years.

³ The information that will be collected from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) may be useful in the assessment of spaces and services for children and youth in homeless families

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Survey on Spaces and Services for Children and Youth in Emergency Housing and Shelters for Homeless Families

c/o SPR Associates Inc , 45 Granby Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1H8, Tel 1-800-363-0832, FAX (416) 977-7747

INTRODUCTION: This is a survey of municipalities and agencies which provide emergency housing for children and youth in homeless families. The survey is designed to provide a picture of how local communities meet the needs of children and youth and their homeless families. Your assistance in completing this survey will aid CMHC greatly in understanding these needs.

THIS SURVEY follows an initial contact which we made with your organization earlier this year, when a representative of your organization indicated that such services are provided on at least an occasional basis to homeless families. At that time, your representative indicated a readiness to provide additional in-depth information. This survey contains those in-depth questions.

COMPLETING THE SURVEY: You can complete the survey by simply filling in the answers and FAXING it back to us at (416) 977-7747, or by calling our survey office to arrange a telephone interview. The survey should be completed by the person(s) with the most knowledge about the families you assist.

Please check the appropriate boxes or write in your answers. If you do not collect certain information about clients or do not know the answer, *the box "cannot estimate" should be checked. For some sections, there is also a box at the beginning of the section which can be checked if the information is not available or if staff do not have this type of information.* If you have any questions about the survey, please feel free to telephone our survey office, toll-free, at 1-800-363-0832.

HOW LONG WILL THE SURVEY TAKE? The survey should take 20-30 minutes to complete, or a little longer if you have many comments. Staff of municipalities and agencies providing only occasional assistance to families in need of emergency housing will find the survey easy to complete, as some sections do not apply, and some sections are skipped if you have limited staff contact with or knowledge about the families you house. Note also, that municipalities do not have to respond on behalf of shelters they fund to provide emergency housing, as those shelters will be surveyed directly.

Staff of shelters providing regular service to homeless families are requested to answer all of the questions. Your answers will be extremely important to CMHC in understanding the needs of these families and the agencies which serve them.

IF YOU OPERATE MORE THAN ONE PROGRAM: If you have two or more distinct programs, for example, a shelter program and also a program which places families in motels or other satellite accommodation, please complete a separate form for each program.

Your response within the next two weeks is greatly appreciated.

DEFINITIONS USED IN THE SURVEY

Shelter is used to refer to emergency housing services where an organization provides a number of families with emergency housing in a special facility or building, where the agency has staff, provides meals or services, etc.

Emergency housing refers to municipalities or other agencies providing "non-shelter" emergency housing services for families, such as temporary housing in motels.

A family is defined here as children or youth (up to 18 years old) accompanied by at least one related adult or guardian.

Family violence shelter refers to a shelter whose primary mandate is service for women who have experienced family violence.

Visible minority refers to non-Caucasian, non-Aboriginal people.

A. SHELTER/EMERGENCY HOUSING FACILITIES

1.(a) What is the name of your shelter program? _____

1.(b) Do you operate more than one site or shelter or emergency housing program? ☐ Yes ⇒ How many? _____
☐ No

1 (c) How many survey forms are you completing? _____ (please complete one form for each site or program)

1 (d) Please indicate which of the following best describes the shelter or emergency housing program to which this form applies: (CHECK ONLY ONE BOX)

- ☐ A family violence shelter which only aids families who are homeless for reasons of family violence
- ☐ A family violence shelter which sometimes aids families who are homeless for reasons other than family violence
- ☐ A shelter exclusively for homeless families
- ☐ A shelter that includes, but is not exclusively for, homeless families
- ☐ An agency that uses satellite units for homeless families (motel rooms, volunteered space)
- ☐ A municipality which houses homeless families in motel rooms or other emergency housing

1.(e) If your facility is not clearly described by the above categories, please describe it in your own words:

2. Altogether, approximately how many homeless families with children/youth do you house in the course of a year? (PLEASE ESTIMATE IF NECESSARY)

_____ ⇒ Is this number: ☐ From records, or
☐ An estimate

3. Over the course of a year, approximately how many children and youth accompany these families?

4. Approximately what percentage of these families are homeless for reasons of family violence?

_____ %
☐ Cannot Estimate

5. How many homeless families were you unable to house over the course of a year because of lack of accommodation?

_____ #
☐ Cannot Estimate

6. How many staff and volunteers operate this program on average?

_____ # staff

_____ # volunteers

- 7.(a) Do you have one or more staff member(s) who is/are readily in touch with or available to your clients, who is aware of their activities and needs, including the activities and needs of children and youth?

☐ Yes
☐ No

- 7.(b) Do you have one or more designated child support workers?

☐ Yes
☐ No

- 8 What is the main source of funding for your program? (CHECK ONLY ONE BOX)

☐ Municipal funds
☐ Provincial funds
☐ United Way, foundations, corporations
☐ Individual donations
☐ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): _____

IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS A NON-SHELTER AGENCY (E.G. A MUNICIPALITY OR OTHER AGENCY WHICH PROVIDES EMERGENCY HOUSING IN MOTELS, ETC.), GO TO Q.15

9. What is the full capacity of your facility, i.e., the number of beds and/or bedroom rooms? (by 'bed' we mean a bed in a common sleeping area)

_____ # beds

_____ # bedrooms

- 10.(a) How many of these beds or bedrooms, if any, are designated for homeless families only?

- 10.(b) What is the maximum number of persons which can be accommodated?

11. How many bathrooms are there in your shelter? _____

12. Do families ever share a bedroom/sleeping area with another family?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

13. Do children or youth ever share a bedroom with children or youth of a different family?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

14. In your opinion, does your shelter/emergency housing have: (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH OF (a) TO (i))

	Yes	No
(a) Adequate cooking facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Adequate plumbing and heating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Adequate indoor play areas for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Adequate outdoor play areas for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Adequate areas for school-age children and youth to study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Enough baby equipment, furniture (e.g. cribs, playpens, highchairs, strollers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Enough books, toys, games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h) Good accessibility for people with physical disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(i) Adequate privacy for families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. SHELTER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

15. Do you have one or more staff members who are able to describe the services provided to and/or used by homeless families you house, particularly services for children and youth?

- ☐ Yes ⇒ THAT STAFF MEMBER SHOULD COMPLETE THE REST OF SECTION B
☐ No ⇒ (GO TO SECTION C)

16. Are any of the following services available for the homeless families which you serve? (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH OF (a) TO (e))

	Provided by the program on-site	Provided by the program elsewhere	Provided by other agencies	None provided
(a) Indoor recreation spaces for children/youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Outdoor recreation spaces for children/youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Counselling for children/youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 17 Are any of the following services provided for parents in your homeless families?
(CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH OF (a) TO (h))

	Provided by the program on-site	Provided by the program elsewhere	Provided by other agencies	None provided
(a) Family counselling programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Job training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Employment search	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Medical services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Legal services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Housing referral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Life skills training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h) Referrals to other services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 18 Is your shelter/emergency housing close enough to the following facilities for homeless families to meet their needs? (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH OF (a) TO (i))

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable
(a) Elementary schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Secondary schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Grocery stores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Other stores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Medical services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(f) Legal services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(g) Hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(h) Public transit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(i) Parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. CLIENTELE

19. Do you have one or more staff member(s) who is(are) able to describe your clientele, including characteristics of children and youth in these homeless families?

- ☐ Yes ⇒ THAT STAFF MEMBER SHOULD COMPLETE THE REST OF SECTION C
☐ No ⇒ (GO TO SECTION D)

- 20.(a) Approximately what percentage of the families that use your shelter were in another shelter immediately before they came to you?

_____ %
☐ Cannot Estimate

20.(b) Please provide below, the typical PROFILE of families that use your shelter/emergency housing. (PROVIDE YOUR BEST ESTIMATE, BASED ON CASES IN THE PAST YEAR)

(i) What is the approximate percentage of one- and two-parent families? _____ %
(One-parent families)

_____%
(Two-parent families)

☐ Cannot Estimate

(ii) What is the percentage of families with one child/youth? _____ %
☐ Cannot Estimate

(iii) What is the percentage of families with 2 children/youth? _____ %
☐ Cannot Estimate

(iv) What is the percentage of families with 3 children/youth? _____ %
☐ Cannot Estimate

(v) What is the percentage of families with 4 or more children/youth? _____ %
☐ Cannot Estimate

21. What is the largest family that stayed in your shelter or emergency housing in the past year? _____ (# PERSONS)
☐ Cannot Recall

22. What is the approximate percentage of children/youth in each of the following age groups that you have housed in the past year?

%
_____% Under 1
_____% 1-4 years
_____% 5-9 years
_____% 10-12 years
_____% 13-15 years
_____% 16-18 years

☐ Cannot Estimate

23. What is the approximate percentage of female and male among children/youth in homeless families you serve?

_____% Female _____ % Male ☐ Cannot Estimate

24.(a) Does your facility have an age limit for accepting male youth?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No ⇒ (GO TO Q.25(a))
☐ Not Applicable ⇒ (GO TO Q.25(a))

24.(b) (IF YES) What is the age limit? _____

24.(c) If families come to the shelter with male youth over the age limit, where do these youth go?

25.(a) What percentage of families are not accompanied by _____% (IF 100%, GO TO Q.26)
 their entire family (e.g. when a father cannot accompany
☐ Cannot Estimate
 his family to a shelter for women and children only,
 or where any children stay with relatives)?

25.(b) Where does the rest of the family stay?

26. How frequently do homeless families using the shelter/emergency housing have the following characteristics? (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH OF (a) TO (e))

	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Cannot Estimate
(a) Refugee status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Landed immigrant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) New to the city/town	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Visible minority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

27. In the past year, approximately what percentage of your homeless family members have had disabilities or a chronic illness? (INDICATE PERCENTAGE FOR EACH OF (a) TO (e))

	% of Parents	% of Children
(a) Physical mobility impairments	_____	_____
(b) Visual disabilities (other than nearsighted)	_____	_____
(c) Hearing impairment	_____	_____
(d) Learning disabilities	_____	_____
(e) Chronic illness	_____	_____
Cannot Estimate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28. Typically, over the course of a year, what percentage of homeless families who come to your shelter have the following sources of income? (PLEASE PROVIDE BEST ESTIMATE)

	When Families Arrive	When Families Leave
(a) Paid employment	_____%	_____%
(b) Employment insurance	_____	_____
(c) Social assistance	_____	_____
(d) Child support	_____	_____
(e) Other	_____	_____
(f) No source of income	_____	_____
Cannot Estimate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D. WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN/YOUTH IN SHELTERS/EMERGENCY HOUSING

29. Do you have one or more staff member(s) who is/are able to describe the activities and behaviour of children and youth of the homeless families you house?

☐ Yes ⇒ (THAT STAFF MEMBER SHOULD COMPLETE THE REST OF SECTION D)
☐ No ⇒ (GO TO SECTION E)

30. How regularly are children/youth of homeless families involved in the following activities while staying at your shelter? (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH OF (a) TO (e))

	Always	Usually	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Cannot Estimate
(a) Attending the same school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Attending a different school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Don't attend school regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Contacting old friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(e) Making new friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

31. In your opinion, what percentage of children and youth in your homeless families that stay in your shelter have difficulty with the following:

%

_____ Behaviour
_____ Social skills
_____ School achievement
_____ Self-esteem or sense of well-being
_____ Physical health
_____ Mental health

☐ Cannot Estimate

E. SHELTER ADMINISTRATION

32. What are the eligibility criteria for families to use your facility?

- 33 (a) Do children and youth undergo a needs assessment on admittance at your facility?

☐ Yes
☐ No ⇒ (GO TO Q.34)

- 33.(b) What does the assessment entail?

34. Are there specific shelter/emergency housing rules and regulations for children and youth?

☐ Yes (PLEASE ATTACH COPIES)
☐ No

35. How full is your shelter at the following different times of the year and week? (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH OF (a) TO (d))

	Over Capacity	Filled	More than Half-filled	Less than Half-filled
(a) Winter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) Summer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Weekdays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(d) Weekends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

F. TRANSITION OF FAMILIES TO OTHER HOUSING

36.(a) Where do homeless families typically go when they leave your shelter/emergency housing?
(PLEASE ESTIMATE PERCENTAGE FOR EACH)

To their own, self-contained
apartment or house _____%

To another shelter _____%

To a rooming house _____%

To a motel/hotel _____%

To live with family/relatives _____%

To live on the street _____%

To another city _____%

Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) _____%

☐ Cannot Estimate

36.(b) What barriers do families face when leaving the shelter/emergency housing for permanent housing?

37.(a) What special needs do homeless families have that would require support services to maintain a stable household?

37.(b) Approximately what percentage of families have these specific needs?

- ☐ 0-10%
- ☐ 11-25%
- ☐ 26-50%
- ☐ Over 50%
- ☐ Cannot Estimate

38 Does your organization have a follow-up process after families leave the shelter/emergency housing?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No ⇒ (GO TO Q.40)

39. (IF YES) What is the follow-up process?

40. Over the past year, approximately what percentage of the homeless families that you served, returned to your shelter or went to another shelter?

☐ 0% - 10%

☐ 26% - 50%

☐ Cannot Estimate

☐ 11% - 25%

☐ Over 50%

41. Over the past year, approximately what percentage of homeless families you house have been homeless for:

%

_____ 2-6 months

_____ 7-12 months

_____ More than one year

☐ Cannot Estimate

G. SERVICE NEEDS

42. What are the difficulties (if any) in providing needed services for homeless families at your shelter? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

☐ Having enough spaces to accommodate families (beds, bedrooms)

☐ Having an adequate number of staff

☐ Having an adequate budget/resources

☐ Lack of awareness of shelter services among those who are homeless

☐ Lack of community support

☐ Lack of liaison/support from schools

☐ Support from other agencies

☐ Ability to accommodate people with disabilities

☐ Other (PLEASE SPECIFY): _____

☐ No difficulties exist

43. What improvements could be made to your existing services to better meet the needs of homeless families:

At your shelter: _____

In the community: _____

44. Is there anything you do at your agency/shelter which you feel is particularly successful in helping homeless families (sometimes called 'best practices')?

45. Do you have any additional comments about meeting the needs of homeless families with children and youth?

Name and telephone number of person who can be contacted (if necessary) regarding the survey responses provided above:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE. Please FAX your survey to: (416) 977-7747.

Appendix B: Tables of Selected Survey Responses

Table 1*
**Percentage of children/youth who are involved in the following activities
while staying in shelters/emergency housing (Q.30)**

	Always	Usually	Occa- sionally	Rarely	Never
General Homeless Shelters					
(a) Attending the same school	0 0%	34 5%	37 9%	24 1%	0 0%
(b) Attending a different school	3.4	37.9	37 9	13 8	3 4
(c) Don't attend school regularly	0 0	17 2	51 7	13 8	13 8
(d) Contacting old friends	6 9	24 1	37.9	20 7	3 4
(e) Making new friends	13 8	27 6	41 4	6 9	3.4
Family Violence Shelters					
(a) Attending the same school	8 8%	31 6%	35 1%	15 8%	5.3%
(b) Attending a different school	8 8	49 1	24 6	10 5	3 5
(c) Don't attend school regularly	0.0	12 7	20 0	49.1	12 7
(d) Contacting old friends	0 0	19.0	36 2	29 3	1.7
(e) Making new friends	13 8	48 3	25 9	5 2	0 0
N/A for Municipalities					

* Number of valid cases for Q 30(a) to (e) ranged from 29/33 for general emergency shelters, and 55 to 58/64 for family violence shelters.

Table 2*
Reports of Facilities/Amenities (Q.14)

	General Emergency Shelters	Family Violence Shelters	N/A for Municipalities
Adequate cooking facilities	92 6%	96 7%	
Adequate plumbing and heating	85.2	82 3	
Adequate indoor play areas for children	40 7	69 4	
Adequate outdoor play areas for children	59 3	73 8	
Adequate areas for school-age children to study	37 0	43 5	
Enough baby equipment	61 5	82 3	
Enough books, toy, games	70 4	83 1	
Good accessibility for people with physical disabilities	40 7	36 1	
Adequate privacy for families	64 0	55 4	

* Number of valid cases for Q 14(a) to 14(i) ranged from 26 to 27/33 for general emergency shelters; and 61 to 62/64 for family violence shelters

Table 3*
Shelters'/emergency housing reports of facilities
close enough to meet clients' needs (Q.18)

	General Emergency Shelters	Family Violence Shelters	Municipalities
Elementary schools	90 9%	98 4%	77.8%
Secondary schools	87 9	88 7	88 9
Grocery stores	69 7	87 1	77 8
Other stores	81 8	95.0	87 5
Medical services	84.8	95.2	88.9
Legal services	81 8	85 2	66 7
Hospital	87 9	85.0	88 9
Public transit	87 5	83 1	88 9
Parks	90 6	98 3	88 9

* Number of valid cases for Q 18(a) to (i) ranged from 32 to 33/33 for general emergency shelters, 59 to 62/64 for family violence shelters, and 8 to 9/15 for municipalities

Table 4*
Programs provided on-site and elsewhere (Q.16)

	General Emergency Shelters	Family Violence Shelters	Municipalities
Indoor recreation spaces for children/youth	54 6%	90 0%	33 3%
Outdoor recreation spaces for children/youth	63 6	88 3	22 2
Counselling for children/youth	33 3	79 7	25 0
Childcare	21 2	62 7	11.1
Tutoring	12 1	40.0	11.1

* Number of valid cases for Q 16(a) to (e) were. 33/33 for general emergency shelters; and ranged from 59 to 60/64 for family violence shelters; and 8 to 9/15 for municipalities

Table 5*
Services provided to parents by shelters/emergency housing (Q.17)

	General Emergency Shelters	Family Violence Shelters	Municipalities
(a) Family counselling programs	37.5%	59.3%	55.5%
(b) Job training	12.6	11.9	44.4
(c) Employment search	18.7	8.5	44.4
(d) Medical services	9.4	23.3	25.0
(e) Legal services	10.0	26.3	11.1
(f) Housing referral	66.7	83.1	66.6
(g) Life skills training	37.5	57.9	42.9
(h) Referrals to other services	97.0	100.0	77.8

* Number of valid cases for Q 17(a) to (h) ranged from 30 to 33/33 for general emergency shelters, 57 to 60/64 for family violence shelters, and 7 to 9/15 for municipalities