Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

Housing and Health: Evidence to Act Now to Improve the Health of Children and Families

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Extensive, high-quality evidence has demonstrated the importance of housing as a fundamental determinant of child health and development. At the same time, housing has become more unaffordable in the US, such that one in three children lives in unaffordable housing, more children are at risk of eviction and homelessness, housing quality has not improved meaningfully, and wide disparities exist in neighborhood access to socioeconomic opportunity. This narrative review chronicles the impacts of housing on children's health via four pillars: affordability, stability, quality and safety, and neighborhood conditions. We 1) provide an overview of evidence linking each of these housing pillars to child health outcomes and 2) describe effective interventions to reinforce the housing pillar and promote health. Based on this evidence, we urge pediatricians to intervene and advocate at multiple levels in order to advance housing and health for children and families. This review aims to serve as a reference for pediatricians seeking to implement evidence-based housing interventions, across individual, clinical, systems, and policy levels.

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