

# Project Sprout: Assessment of Training Efficacy through Qualitative Analysis

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# Introduction to and Rationale for Project Sprout

#### Homelessness

- Homelessness is a major issue that impacts different groups, including families and children, in every society.
- Homelessness is caused by increasing prices in the cost of living, violence, and health issues.
- Homeless families experience mental health problems, economic instability, and physical health problems.
   Children who are homeless also experience negative impacts on their physical and mental health, development, and education.

# **Community Need**

- 39% increase between 2023 and 2024 of individuals who experienced homelessness in families with children in the United States
- Families with children under the age of 18 account for 36% of the homeless population in the state of Virginia

#### Student Opportunities

- Connection to community
- Application of information learned in courses
- Development of Interprofessional collaboration
- Professional development

# **Project Implementation**

This project focused on the training of Radford University (RU) students to participate in a program that addresses the needs of homeless families with children from birth to five years old in the New River Valley.

Project Sprout timeline

- 2012-2019: Project Sprout was created and implemented; more than 100 families were served by 60+ RU students
- 2023-2024: Project Sprout training materials were updated with evidence-based content and practices
- 2024-2025: New student advocates were recruited and trained

# Training Outcomes by Theme

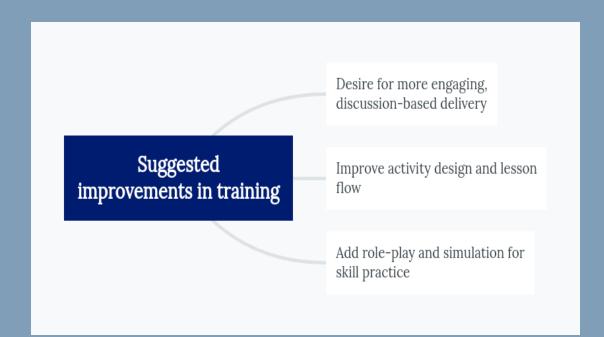
# Recalled Content from Training Session Recalled Associations of Poverty Perceived Educational and Developmental Effects on Children











# **Student Reflections**

- "I like how this project is trying to help us address a problem, I think that's meaningful."
- "This experience has contributed to learning about myself by telling me I might end up enjoying working with younger kids."
- "Project Sprout is here to help families and children by reassuring them and providing resources for development to close these gaps."

# Methods and Discussion

### **Training Methods**

- Full-day, in person training session
- 2 graduate students & 1 undergraduate (Honors) student provided the training
- 9 undergraduate volunteers completed the training

### **Training Modules**

- Module 1: Demographics of Homelessness and Poverty
- Module 2: Responsibilities of Advocates
- Module 3: Key Areas of Child Development
- Module 4: Early Childhood Milestones and Expectations
- Module 5: Overview of Lessons and Referral Process
- Module 6: Role Play Activities for Delivering Services

# Data Analysis

Post-training student reflections were coded using NVivo

- Each reflection was coded
- Codes were used to identify themes
- Mindmaps were created

#### Discussion

Based on the analysis of the survey results, Project Sprout provided effective training to students in the following areas:

- Preparation to participate in the service-learning program
- Increased knowledge about homelessness and important information necessary to engage and support families in natural environments
- Creation of connections between students and content in their fields of study

Outcomes indicated a need for the training to include more hands-on activities and open-ended discussions to aid in students' learning.

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