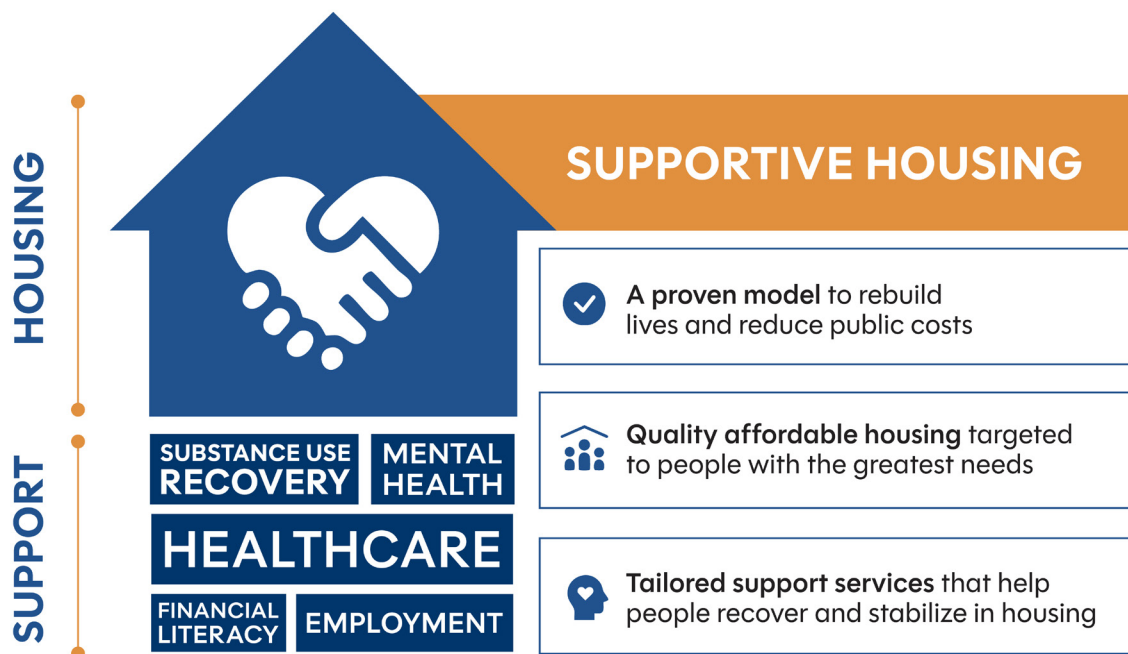




SUPPORTIVE HOUSING EVIDENCE BRIEFS FAMILIES, CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND YOUNG ADULTS

Supportive housing is a model of affordable housing that is designed specifically for people who need services to recover and thrive in their community. It serves people who are facing complex physical and behavioral health challenges while also experiencing homelessness, institutionalization, or housing instability. People in supportive housing pay 30% of their income toward rent and are accountable to a lease with all the rights and responsibilities of tenancy.

The services people receive in supportive housing are intensive and delivered using a low staff-to-client ratio. Services are personalized but typically address mental health and addiction recovery, employment and income, and physical healthcare.



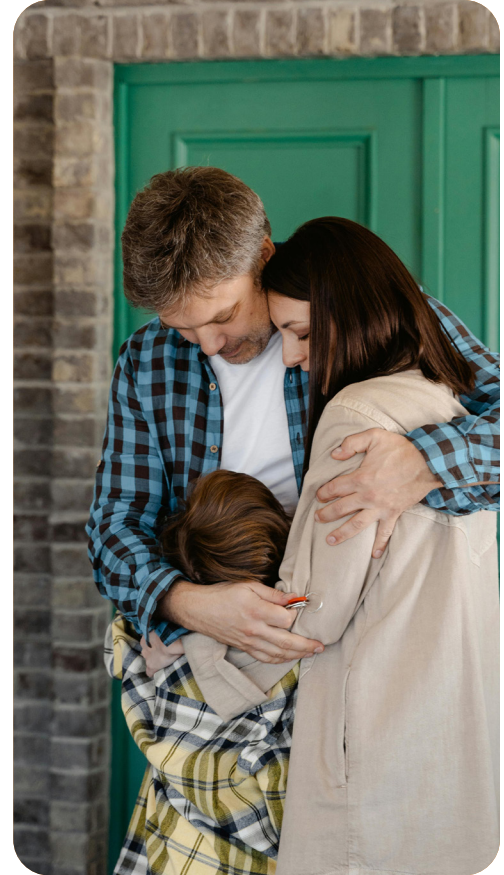
Nearly one-third of people experiencing homelessness in the U.S. are families with children or households led by youth under 25. These families often face repeated homelessness, child welfare involvement, mental health challenges, domestic violence, and trauma—affecting both housing stability and child well-being. Supportive housing provides stability, promotes healing, and strengthens family and youth outcomes.

This brief highlights key evidence on supportive housing for these families and youth-headed households.



Supportive housing increases reunifications for families with child welfare involvement.

- ✓ In a [randomized control trial of a five-site demonstration](#) of supportive housing for families with child welfare involvement, **20% more children were reunited with their families** than in the comparison group.
- ✓ A [randomized control trial in Connecticut](#) found **41% of families in supportive housing were reunited with a child**, compared to 16% of families in the control group.
- ✓ In Washington, a [comparative outcome analysis](#) found families in supportive housing were significantly **more likely to reunify with children** than a matched group in emergency shelter.
- ✓ A [program evaluation](#) spanning nine years and over 1,000 families in New Jersey found **70% of families with a case goal of reunification were reunited within two years of enrollment in supportive housing**.



Supportive housing increases stability and reduces out-of-home placements for families with child welfare involvement.

- ✓ A [follow-up study to a five-site demonstration](#) found children whose families received supportive housing were more likely to be at home after five years than children in the control group, spending an **average of 108 more days at home**.
- ✓ A [program evaluation](#) in New Jersey found that for families with a goal of stabilization (preventing out-of-home placement), **only 3% experienced a removal** within one year of enrollment in supportive housing.
- ✓ A [randomized control trial in Connecticut](#) found that after two years, among families in need of housing to prevent out-of-home placement of children, **only 11% of families in supportive housing had a child removed**, compared to 40% of families in the control group.



Supportive housing improves health and wellness for families.

- ✓ A [randomized control trial](#) in Boston, Massachusetts found that after six months, the **percentage of children in supportive housing with good or excellent health increased significantly**, while the percentage of children in the control group with good or excellent health decreased.
- ✓ An [evaluation of a program in New York City](#) found the heads of households of families in supportive housing had a **lower rate of preventable emergency department visits** than those who remained unstably housed.
- ✓ A [mid-project report](#) on the Strong Families Fund, a 10-year pay-for-performance initiative combining affordable housing with Resident Service Coordination services, tenants have **higher rates of health insurance and connection to a primary care doctor** than comparable populations nationally.

Supportive housing improves health and wellness for young adults.

- ✓ A program evaluation of youth supportive housing in Los Angeles found that after one year, out of 47 tenants surveyed, **71% were less bothered by their mental health symptoms than at baseline**, **75% reported that their physical health had improved**, and 95% said that their current housing contributed to their well-being.
- ✓ [An evaluation](#) of a supportive housing program in New York City found evidence to support the role of supportive housing in **reducing STI transmission rates** in young adults aging out of foster care.
- ✓ [A program evaluation of supportive housing](#) in Calgary, Canada noted that 94% of young adults aged 18 to 24 and 84% of youth aged 16 to 17 reported **the program supported them in accessing community resources**, and **50% of participants accessed mental health and addictions supports** within the last year.
- ✓ A [study in California](#) showed that spending on mental health outpatient services was more than **2.4 times higher for young adults in supportive housing** than before their entry to the program, demonstrating the success of supportive housing in connecting young adults to critical outpatient care for mental health.





Supportive housing and affordable housing have a positive impact on education.

- ✓ A [randomized control trial of a five-site demonstration](#) found that families in supportive housing participated in and completed education and training programs at higher rates than those in the comparison group.
- ✓ A [longitudinal study in Minnesota](#) comparing children in supportive housing to children experiencing homelessness or housing noted the positive impact of supportive housing, including higher attendance and math proficiency rates and lower school mobility rates for most cohorts.
- ✓ A [longitudinal, multi-method evaluation](#) of a program for community college students experiencing homelessness or housing instability in Washington found that, after three years, students who moved into affordable housing through the program earned more college credits, had higher GPAs, and graduated at higher rates than students who applied but did not receive housing.
- ✓ A [study of data](#) on national consumer spending found that among families with incomes below 200% of the poverty line, children in households that spent about 30% of their income on housing (a benchmark for affordability) had the best performance on measures of cognitive development.





CONCLUSION

Supportive housing is a proven intervention that provides housing stability for families with children and youth young adult-headed households. It keeps families together by reducing child welfare involvement and supports people in improving health and educational outcomes.

Read more from the supportive housing evidence brief series

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

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HEALTH

[READ MORE →](#)



SUBSTANCE USE

[READ MORE →](#)



JUSTICE SYSTEM

[READ MORE →](#)



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