

Administrator

You Can Support the Access and Success of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in School

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children who are homeless. Common signals are attendance at several schools, poor hygiene, gaps in learning, transportation problems, poor health and nutrition, and a lack of preparedness for class.
- Welcome the student and the family, and let them know that the school is a safe and secure place.
- Make sure the child enrolls in the free and reduced-price meal programs.
- Ensure that the student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for after-school activities and in-school programs.
- Let parents know of their child's educational rights.
- Know your attendance zone, visit shelters to make contact with the shelter director, and reinforce that students will find the school safe and supportive.
- Hold school meetings, such as the PTA meeting, in neighborhood centers to increase accessibility to school events.
- Provide city bus tokens to get parents to school for conferences, school events, or PTA meetings.
- Encourage parents to volunteer. Discuss their interests and offer suggestions that allow them to use their expertise. Many parents will help if invited to do so.
- Support the school staff as they work with the student.
- Contact the school district homeless liaison for additional support.
- Show that you care about the student!

This tip sheet was adapted from Illinois, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia Departments of Education and the National Center for Homeless Education documents.

