

Teacher

Support Classroom Access and Success of Students Experiencing Homelessness

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children who are homeless, such as attendance at several schools, poor hygiene, gaps in learning, attendance and transportation problems, poor health and nutrition, and a lack of preparedness for class.
- Assist other students in being sensitive to stereotypes of homeless people.
- Adjust assignments so children not living in permanent settings can complete them. (Such children may not have a place to perform a science experiment or the resources to cut out an article for current events.)
- 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.
- Communicate with the parents about school performance.
- Connect the child with tutoring and remediation services, if needed.
- If you have a snack break, keep a store of snacks for students who don't bring one.
- Do not take away possessions. Students may need their "stuff" nearby for security.
- Hold the child accountable for what she or he can control (e.g., behavior or attitude) not what is not in the child's control (e.g., inability to watch a news program or purchase a poster board for a project).
- Before you receive a new student
 - ⊙ Prepare a list of your class routines and procedures.
 - ⊙ Prepare a new student file with information for parents and guardians.
 - ⊙ Maintain a supply of materials for students to use at school.
 - ⊙ Prepare a "getting-to-know-you" activity available for the class to do when a new student arrives.
 - ⊙ Have the class schedule visible.



Teacher (continued)

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- When a student enters the class
 - ⊙ Introduce the student to the class.
 - ⊙ Assign a class buddy to assist with routines.
 - ⊙ Review the academic record and closely monitor the educational progress of the student.
- When a student leaves
 - ⊙ Support the class and the student by discussing the move and having classmates write letters to the departing student.
 - ⊙ Give the student a copy of the school's address so that letters can be written back either via e-mail or snail mail.
- 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.

