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.