

School Administrators

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children and youth 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. For more information, visit http://www.serve.org/nche/nche_web/warning.php.
- Welcome the student and the family and let them know that the school is a safe and secure place.
- Make sure the student enrolls in your school's free meal program. Homeless students are automatically eligible for free school meals. For more information, visit http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_other.php.
- Ensure that the student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for participation in after-school activities and in-school programs.
- Inform parents about 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 of homeless parents to school events.
- Provide city bus tokens or other transportation assistance 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's local homeless education liaison for additional support.
- Show that you care about the student!



This tip sheet was adapted from materials from the Illinois, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia Departments of Education, and the National Center for Homeless Education. For more information about helping homeless students succeed in school, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at <http://www.serve.org/nche>.