



Tips for Teachers of Children Who Are Homeless

Before the Student arrives:

- Maintain a short written list of classroom rules and procedures
- Keep routines simple and relaxed
- Reserve an area in the room for children to display artwork
- Designate a "home base": (i.e., rug or person) for a child to reconnect with something familiar when s/he feels overwhelmed
- Maintain homework/school supply kits. Title I School-Home Liaisons will provide a backpack and basic school supplies. If you use extra supplies beyond the basics, have some available for homeless students
- Make a "New Student Box." Include name tags, precut contact paper or roll of tape to affix names to desk and/or locker, marking pen to label possessions, extra labels for classroom charts (job charts, student of week projects, birthday charts, etc.)
- Make a New Student File..." Include: things to go home to parents (classroom and school rules, supply list, extra set of supplies for those who can't afford them, copies of general letters to parents, class schedule including prep classes, activity ideas for home)
- Maintain materials for the child to use at school (quick interest survey for the older child to complete "All About Me" for the primary child, get acquainted form or project, classroom and school rules, classroom procedures)
- Create a checklist for teacher management (update locker assignment chart, update seating chart, update classroom list, update lunch list
- Keep reserve snacks for any students who forget them
- Post a class schedule so students will know what is going to happen next
- Develop short assessments for reading, writing, and mathematics in case records are delayed (e.g., curriculum-based tasks, reading inventories, current unit pretests)
- Make extra copies of materials for review when new students arrive without prior notice
Create learning packets of background information and activities for "catch up" if students arrive mid-unit
- Contact people (older students, faculty, support staff, parents, etc to students who are homeless

When the Student Enters the Class:

- Give a personal welcome to new student, introduce the student to the class, and make time to chat with them
- Introduce the student to others who arrived late and are succeeding
- Assign a buddy for recess, lunch, etc
- Arrange for an orientation during lunch or after school
- Nurture social skills with structured activities
- Use a play telephone/play microphone to "tell" a friend how their day is going
- Give new students an opportunity to talk about themselves (e.g., interviews, story writing)
- Provide activities that develop problem-solving abilities
- Take an individual picture on the child's first day and a picture of the child with the class. If possible, send one home for the parent(s)
- Review academic record when it arrives
- Start a journal describing the child's day to send home (often families have limited access to phone service)
- Start a file for the child to take when they leave
- Use tutors/volunteers/ mentors to provide one-on-one support. Closely monitor the educational progress of students with three or more previous school moves

- Plan accommodations for homework. Students may not have access to computers, encyclopedias and other tools needed to complete assignments

When the Student Leaves Your School (if you are aware that child is moving):

- Invite classmates write letters to their departing peer.
- Maintain a departure file with sample work that the student can take to the new school.
- Place letters for the student who has left in his/her cum file so that they can be sent to the new school
- Prepare a "Goodbye Book." It can be simple or elaborate. Have students autograph the book and brainstorm memories they had with the child. Include a picture of the class.
- Place a letter written by the teacher introducing that student to the new teacher
- Place self-addressed stamped envelopes to your school and class plus stationery for the student to write back to the school from which he/she moved
- Explore the possibility of e-mail correspondence with the new class

Ideas to Assist Parents

- Invite parent/guardian to visit the school for a getting acquainted time conference
 - Provide newsletters or other communication (school and grade level)
 - Hold parent- teacher conferences at neighborhood centers or the shelter
 - Make home visits with welcome information about the neighborhood.
 - Develop a parent booklet encouraging families to limit transfers, when possible, and include tips for easing transitions when transfers must occur.
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