

For Nurses

WHAT A SCHOOL NURSE CAN DO TO HELP HOMELESS STUDENTS

Immediate Assistance

- Assist parents with the completion of all necessary medical records. Some parents may lack sufficient skills in comprehension, reading and writing.
- Contact the previous school in order to obtain immunization records and health records.
- Ask parents if they know the name of clinics where their child has received medical attention. Assist parents in obtaining child's medical information from clinics.
- Alert principal, counselor and teachers of any serious medical condition of the child. Teamwork and sharing of information is very important, especially if the child's stay in the school is short.
- A parent may not be at home in the shelter during the day, so assist in contacting the shelter staff or your School District Homeless Liaison to make arrangements should a sick child need to leave the school.
- When the student is ill and must be sent "home", remember that the place he or she may be going to may not be stable or quiet.
- Be familiar with the common characteristics of homeless children, so that you may recognize and assist them without delay.
- Contact your School District Homeless Liaison and the student's teacher(s) when you identify a homeless student in the school, so that other services (lunch program, tutoring, etc.) may be made available without delay.
- Be familiar with the requirements of the ***Illinois Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act*** and the ***Illinois State Board of***

Opening Doors – Statewide Access to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

Adult Learning Resource Center, 2626 S. Clearbrook Drive, Arlington Heights, IL 60005
ROE #26 – Hancock/McDonough, 130 S. Lafayette - Suite 200, Macomb, IL
<http://homelessed.net>



Education Policy on the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. Be able to explain these requirements to other school staff.

Continuing Care

- Follow-up on all children who have been excluded from school due to incomplete immunizations and suspected communicable illnesses. The law requires that students be admitted regardless of immunization history. Work with parent and school personnel to get student into school and to a resource for free or low-cost health services.
- Contact parent and/or shelter staff if child is absent for three or more days to find out if assistance is needed. Often, the parent is not motivated to send the child to school, especially if family is not in a supervised shelter setting.
- Offer the child emotional support and reassurance that homelessness is a temporary condition and that the family will find stable housing. *Reassure the child that this situation is not his fault.*
- Be available, accessible and compassionate to the concerns, needs and feelings of the homeless families. Try to boost the self-esteem of these children and their parents by conveying concern, respect, kindness and compassion. Be a good listener and be empathetic.

Expanding Outreach

- Develop reliable, accessible sources of medical and dental care for the homeless families. Share your discoveries with the School District Homeless Liaison.
- Serve as a contact person for referrals to help homeless families. Get to know the best resources to connect families for things like housing, counseling, food, and transportation.
- Make personal visits to local shelter(s). Stress importance of school attendance with parents and shelter staff. Help to set up workshops for parents and shelter staff on such topics as nutrition, stress, and general health needs.

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