# 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.*