

## School Nurses

### 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](http://www.serve.org/nche/nche_web/warning.php).
- Verify immunization records and, if necessary, refer the student to the local health department for any needed immunizations.
- Observe and alert the principal to any serious medical concern.
- Ask about glasses; the child may need them but not have any.
- 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](http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_other.php).
- Assist parents with the completion of medical records.
- Remember that sending a sick student "home" may not be a safe or stable place for a child or youth who is experiencing homelessness. Help families determine options for their children, should they become ill.
- Contact the school district's local homeless education liaison so that additional services can be coordinated.
- Follow-up with students sent to obtain immunizations or physicals.
- Contact the parent or shelter if a student is absent for three or more days.
- Develop reliable, accessible resources for medical, dental, and eye care.
- Sponsor a PTA health night.
- 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>.*