# STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS

* Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
* Make the classroom a welcoming place for homeless students.
  + Assure the student that you care.
  + Connect a newly enrolled student with other students, such as a lunch buddy.
  + Inform the student of extracurricular activities that may be of interest, and arrange participation.
  + Do not hold homeless students accountable for situations over which they have no control, such as not having a place to do homework or not being able to pay fines.

**STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS**

* + Do not disclose the student’s living situation.
* Encourage the student, and hold him or her to high expectations.
* Discuss with the homeless student what his or her school challenges are and connect the student with services or make appropriate accommodations.
  + Adjust assignments so students not living in permanent settings can complete them. (A student living in a hotel room or who has limited supplies may not be able to carry out science activities or bring in newspaper articles or information from the Internet.)
  + Provide a time and place before, during, or after school for a student to complete assignments.
  + Arrange tutoring, supplemental instruction, or counseling expeditiously because many homeless students will be in your school for only a short period of time.
* Assist other students in understanding family homelessness and treating their peers with kindness and respect.
* Look for any signs that other students are teasing or bullying a student who may be experiencing homelessness, and intervene or report the students to the principal.
* Assess students frequently so that you can determine progress even if the student is in your class only a short time.
* Communicate with a student’s parents or guardians about their concerns or ways to help their child or youth be more successful in school.
  + Contact the parent or guardian if the student is absent or exhibits concerning behaviors.
  + Personal contact (in person or by phone) is often more effective than sending a letter or email.
* Do not take away students’ possessions; homeless students may need the security of having their belongings nearby.
* Before you receive a new student:
  + Prepare a list of your class rules and routines, and post the class schedule.
  + Prepare a new student folder with information for parents and guardians.
  + Maintain a supply of materials for students.
  + Prepare a “get-to-know-you” activity when a new student arrives.

**STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS**

**RESOURCES**

* NCHE “Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Elementary Teachers of At-Risk and Highly Mobile Students” <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/eff_teach_elem.pdf>
* NCHE “Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Middle Level and High School Teachers of At-Risk and Highly Mobile Students” <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/eff_teach_mh.pdf>
* NCHE *Students on the Move: Reaching and Teaching Highly Mobile Children and Youth* <http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/st_move.php>



# STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

**STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

* Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
* Build trust with students as a caring adult; listen carefully to their wishes and concerns.
* Contact the local liaison to make referrals for the student or family for needed services within the LEA and in the community.
* Examine a student’s school record for missing credits, and arrange for the student to recover credit for work partially completed.
* Ask the student what his or her interests are, in what extracurricular activities he or she participated in his or her former school, and then connect the student to appropriate activities.
* Work with the student from a trauma-informed perspective, and link the student to counseling and other supports, as necessary.
* Be aware of risky and unsafe situations in which a youth might be involved; look especially for signs that an unaccompanied homeless youth is being trafficked or is in a dangerous relationship.
* Offer support for a student’s physiological needs (food, clothing), as well as his or her social/emotional needs (safety, security, and belonging).
* Help older students with life skills, such as financial literacy and healthy choices.
* Encourage the student and build hope for the future.
* Encourage students to plan to attend college.
  + Make sure they enroll in college preparatory classes.
  + Arrange for them to visit a college campus.
  + Help older youth with the college search, application, and financial aid process, including completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which allows unaccompanied homeless youth to apply for aid as independent students.

**RESOURCES**

* NCHE “Maximizing Credit Accrual and Recovery for Homeless Students” <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/credit.pdf>
* NCHE “Ensuring Full Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities for Students Experiencing Homelessness” <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/extra_curr.pdf>

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* NAEHCY *College Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness: A Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers* <http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/dl/toolkit.pdf>



# STRATEGIES FOR SECRETARIES, REGISTRARS, CLERKS, AND

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS**

* Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.

**STRATEGIES FOR SECRETARIES, REGISTRARS, CLERKS, AND**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS**

* + Learn to identify indicators of possible homelessness during the enrollment process, such as
    - a lack of records, such as a birth certificate, immunization records, school and preschool records, address verification;
    - parents who do not know the last school their child attended;
    - attendance at multiple schools;
    - a low-cost motel/hotel address on an enrollment form;
    - statements such as, “it’s a new address; I can’t remember it;” or “we’ve been having a hard time lately;” or “we move a lot and are staying with friends until we find a place.”
  + Include a housing intake form with enrollment materials with a check-off for types of living situations that would indicate homelessness.
  + Ask the family if there are preschool-aged children and include this information in your referral to the local liaison.
* Provide a welcoming environment for families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness.
  + Ensure that posters with the educational rights of homeless children and youth are posted visibly in the registration area and brochures are readily available.
  + Have sensitive conversations in a private area; allow the family or youth to fill out forms in a private area.
  + Inform homeless families, children, and youth that homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin, if in their best interest, and receive transportation to and from the school of origin; providing this information is required by law;
  + Discuss a child’s or youth’s possible homelessness with him or her and with parents or guardians in a discrete, respectful way, avoiding using the word “homeless.” You should use terms like “living in a temporary situation” or “not having a stable place to live.”
  + Discuss with the parent, child, or youth school policies and routines; provide a tour of the school.
* Enroll the child or unaccompanied youth immediately.
  + Ensure that the child or youth is placed in class on the day of arrival, and follow up with the local liaison, child nutrition staff, and pupil transportation department so that services are arranged without delay.

**STRATEGIES FOR SECRETARIES, REGISTRARS, CLERKS, AND**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS**

* + You don’t have to understand or agree with the reasons why an unaccompanied youth left home; youth often will not share the full details of their home situation. Enroll an unaccompanied homeless youth, as any other homeless child or youth.
* Provide a backpack with age-appropriate school supplies and clothing, if needed.
* Contact the parent or guardian when a homeless student is absent (or contact the unaccompanied youth) to identify any challenges with attendance.
* Before a student withdraws, prepare a parent pack with photocopies of the student’s records (e.g., academic, health, immunization); samples of the student’s work; and contact information for teachers, school counselors, or social workers.
* Provide records immediately for a homeless student when requested by a new school to expedite appropriate placement.
  + Schools must remove barriers to enrollment due to outstanding fees or fines.

**RESOURCES**

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* Virginia’s Project HOPE “Secretaries and Enrollment Personnel: Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness” [https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/liaison/documents/toolk itAppendixL.pdf](https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/liaison/documents/toolkitAppendixL.pdf)
* NCHE Educational Rights Posters and Parent Pack Pocket Folders <http://center.serve.org/nche/online_order.php>

# STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL NURSES AND HEALTH ROOM ASSISTANTS

**STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL NURSES AND HEALTH ROOM ASSISTANTS**

* Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
* Assist parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth with obtaining required health and medical records and completing health forms.
  + Assist them with obtaining medical information from clinics or the state Department of Health.
  + Contact the previous school to obtain immunization and health records.
  + Assist the family with arranging any needed immunizations for their child.
  + Remind registrars that homeless children and youth must be enrolled in school immediately even if immunization or health records are not available at the time of enrollment.
* Notify the principal, school counselor, school social worker, and teachers of any serious medical condition of the child or youth.
* Be familiar with the provisions of Washington State’s Homeless Student Stability and Opportunity Gap Act regarding under what conditions a school nurse, school counselor, or local liaison is authorized to provide informed consent for nonemergency primary care services for an unaccompanied homeless youth.
* Request information from the local liaison regarding a referral to a physician or medical clinic for a child or youth who needs medical care.
* If a homeless student is experiencing stress, fatigue, or minor illness, allow the student to rest in the nurse’s office.
* Talk to a parent or guardian about where the child or youth should go if he or she becomes ill and needs to leave school. Homeless shelters often require that families leave during the day, and homeless parents may be difficult to contact. Remember that when a homeless student is ill and must be sent home, the place he or she is going may not be stable or quiet.
* Provide hygiene items for homeless children and youth; make arrangements for them to take showers before or after school or wash their clothes in sports laundry facilities, as necessary.
* Provide a list of health care resources to homeless parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth.
* Conduct workshops at shelters or libraries for homeless parents on nutrition, hygiene, health needs, or stress reduction.

**RESOURCES**

[**STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL NURSES AND HEALTH**](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/your-health-care-rights-if-youre-under-eighte?ref=uR6Jt%23i392AA11E-B7CF-083D-B5DC-911ACC8EF7A7) **ROOM ASSISTANTS**

* Virginia’s Project HOPE “School Nurses: It’s Not Just Bandages Anymore!” [https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/publications/infobriefs/d ocuments/SchoolNurse2014.pdf](https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/publications/infobriefs/documents/SchoolNurse2014.pdf)
* Minors’ Healthcare Rights in Washington State [http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/your-health-care- rights-if-youre-under-eighte?ref=uR6Jt#i392AA11E-B7CF-083D-](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/your-health-care-rights-if-youre-under-eighte?ref=uR6Jt%23i392AA11E-B7CF-083D-B5DC-911ACC8EF7A7)

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* HB 1682-S3 Improving Outcomes for Homeless Students (Homeless Student Stability and Opportunity Gap Act) [http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1682&year=](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1682&amp;year) 2015



# STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

* Promote a school climate that welcomes all students and supports students with the greatest needs.
* Ensure that posters and brochures on the educational rights of homeless children and youth are displayed in the school, and announce information on the rights of homeless children and youth at school assemblies and parent meetings.
* Ensure that you and all school staff are familiar with the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act that remove barriers to the school enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless students; arrange time for school staff to view the training and awareness materials on the Washington State Education of Homeless Children and Youth Office website: [www.k12.wa.us/homelessed/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/homelessed/default.aspx)

**STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

* If you are a principal of a middle school or high school that has identified more than 10 unaccompanied homeless youth, designate a building point of contact, as required by Washington’s HB 1682-S3, who is responsible for identifying homeless and unaccompanied youth and connecting them to the local liaison.
* Ensure that all school staff and teachers are familiar with trauma-informed services for homeless families, children, and youth.
* Welcome new students.
* Invite homeless parents or guardians to be partners in their children’s education, volunteer at the school, and share their ideas for improving school services.
* Ensure that homeless students have every opportunity that nonhomeless students have for academic and extracurricular activities.
* Maintain a school supply and clothing closet on site where students may obtain items as needed to be prepared for classes and avoid being stigmatized as homeless.
* Ensure that discipline policies take into account situations over which homeless students have no control, such as absences and tardies that result from a parent’s or youth’s car breaking down.
* Implement discipline policies that reinforce positive behaviors and personal responsibility and that keep children and youth in their classes.
* If a homeless parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with school or district policies, discuss the issue in person to attempt to de-escalate the situation. If the individual

remains dissatisfied over an issue related to eligibility, school enrollment, or school selection, refer him or her to the local liaison to initiate the dispute process.

**RESOURCES**

* NCHE *Research Summary: Supporting Homeless Children and Youth through Proactive and Positive Behavior Management and Intervention Practices* [http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/res-pos- beh.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/res-pos-beh.php)

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* Virginia’s Project HOPE “School Administrators: Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness” [https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/liaison/documents/toolk itAppendixL.pdf](https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/liaison/documents/toolkitAppendixL.pdf)



# STRATEGIES FOR FOOD SERVICES STAFF

* Look for indicators that a child or youth may be experiencing homelessness, such as someone who does not have lunch or money to purchase a meal, seems extraordinarily hungry and wants more food than is provided in the regular meal, or begs food from his or her peers, and refer this student to the local homeless liaison.
* Build positive relationships with students, and listen for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness; make referrals to the local liaison.

**STRATEGIES FOR FOOD SERVICES STAFF**

* Ensure that homeless students are able to receive free meals immediately upon identification, without the need for paperwork beyond a referral from the local liaison or shelter director, as required by law.
* Maintain students’ confidentiality regarding their living situation.
* Do not implement practices that stigmatize homeless students or others receiving free meals, such as a creating a special line or a different colored ticket.

**RESOURCES**

* NCHE “Access to Food for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students” <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/nutrition.pdf>



# STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS

* Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
* Make the classroom a welcoming place for homeless students.
  + Assure the student that you care.
  + Connect a newly enrolled student with other students, such as a lunch buddy.
  + Inform the student of extracurricular activities that may be of interest, and arrange participation.
  + Do not hold homeless students accountable for situations over which they have no control, such as not having a place to do homework or not being able to pay fines.

**STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS**

* + Do not disclose the student’s living situation.
* Encourage the student, and hold him or her to high expectations.
* Discuss with the homeless student what his or her school challenges are and connect the student with services or make appropriate accommodations.
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**STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS**

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# STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

**STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

* Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
* Build trust with students as a caring adult; listen carefully to their wishes and concerns.
* Contact the local liaison to make referrals for the student or family for needed services within the LEA and in the community.
* Examine a student’s school record for missing credits, and arrange for the student to recover credit for work partially completed.
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* Help older students with life skills, such as financial literacy and healthy choices.
* Encourage the student and build hope for the future.
* Encourage students to plan to attend college.
  + Make sure they enroll in college preparatory classes.
  + Arrange for them to visit a college campus.
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**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS**

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**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS**

* + Learn to identify indicators of possible homelessness during the enrollment process, such as
    - a lack of records, such as a birth certificate, immunization records, school and preschool records, address verification;
    - parents who do not know the last school their child attended;
    - attendance at multiple schools;
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  + Ensure that posters with the educational rights of homeless children and youth are posted visibly in the registration area and brochures are readily available.
  + Have sensitive conversations in a private area; allow the family or youth to fill out forms in a private area.
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* Provide a backpack with age-appropriate school supplies and clothing, if needed.
* Contact the parent or guardian when a homeless student is absent (or contact the unaccompanied youth) to identify any challenges with attendance.
* Before a student withdraws, prepare a parent pack with photocopies of the student’s records (e.g., academic, health, immunization); samples of the student’s work; and contact information for teachers, school counselors, or social workers.
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**STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL NURSES AND HEALTH ROOM ASSISTANTS**

* Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
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# STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

* Promote a school climate that welcomes all students and supports students with the greatest needs.
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* Ensure that homeless students have every opportunity that nonhomeless students have for academic and extracurricular activities.
* Maintain a school supply and clothing closet on site where students may obtain items as needed to be prepared for classes and avoid being stigmatized as homeless.
* Ensure that discipline policies take into account situations over which homeless students have no control, such as absences and tardies that result from a parent’s or youth’s car breaking down.
* Implement discipline policies that reinforce positive behaviors and personal responsibility and that keep children and youth in their classes.
* If a homeless parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with school or district policies, discuss the issue in person to attempt to de-escalate the situation. If the individual

remains dissatisfied over an issue related to eligibility, school enrollment, or school selection, refer him or her to the local liaison to initiate the dispute process.

**RESOURCES**

* NCHE *Research Summary: Supporting Homeless Children and Youth through Proactive and Positive Behavior Management and Intervention Practices* [http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/res-pos- beh.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/res-pos-beh.php)

**STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

* HB 1682-S3 Improving Outcomes for Homeless Students (Homeless Student Stability and Opportunity Gap Act) [http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1682&year= 2015](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1682&amp;year=2015)
* Virginia’s Project HOPE “School Administrators: Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness” [https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/liaison/documents/toolk itAppendixL.pdf](https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/liaison/documents/toolkitAppendixL.pdf)



# STRATEGIES FOR FOOD SERVICES STAFF

* Look for indicators that a child or youth may be experiencing homelessness, such as someone who does not have lunch or money to purchase a meal, seems extraordinarily hungry and wants more food than is provided in the regular meal, or begs food from his or her peers, and refer this student to the local homeless liaison.
* Build positive relationships with students, and listen for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness; make referrals to the local liaison.

**STRATEGIES FOR FOOD SERVICES STAFF**

* Ensure that homeless students are able to receive free meals immediately upon identification, without the need for paperwork beyond a referral from the local liaison or shelter director, as required by law.
* Maintain students’ confidentiality regarding their living situation.
* Do not implement practices that stigmatize homeless students or others receiving free meals, such as a creating a special line or a different colored ticket.

**RESOURCES**

* NCHE “Access to Food for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students” <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/nutrition.pdf>

