



Monterey County Office of Education

Leadership, Support, and Service to Prepare All Students for Success

*Dr. Deneen Guss
County Superintendent of Schools*

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program Guidance for District & School site staff

Administrator Tips

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children 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.
- Welcome the student and the family, and let them know that the school is a safe and secure place.
- 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.
- Let parents know of their child's educational rights.
- Know your attendance zone, visit shelters to make contact with the shelter director, and reinforce that students will find the school safe and supportive.
- Hold school meetings, such as the PTA meeting, in neighborhood centers to increase accessibility to school events.
- Provide public transportation bus tokens to get parents to school for conferences, school events, or PTA meetings.
- Encourage parents to volunteer. Discuss their interests and offer suggestions that allow them to use their expertise. Many parents will help if invited to do so.
- Support the school staff as they work with the student.
- Contact the school district homeless liaison for additional support.
- Show that you care about the student!

Administrative Assistant Tips

- Learn to identify the following indicative signs of homelessness:
 - Chronic hunger or tiredness
 - Erratic attendance at schools
 - Attendance at multiple schools
 - Poor grooming or clothing that draws attention
 - Lack of records, such as birth certificate, immunization record, pre-school physical, and school records, or incomplete records
 - Parent who seems confused when asked about the last school attended
 - Low-income motel address on enrollment form



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- Statements from families when enrolling, such as: “We’ve been having a hard time lately.” “It’s a new address. I can’t remember.” “We’ve moved a lot and are staying with friends until we find a place.”
- Assure families that children can enroll if you think that they are experiencing homelessness. (This is mandated by the **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act- Part C, P.L. 107-110**)
 - Enroll the child immediately (even without records). Ask for the name and city of the last school attended; then call that school and ask to have the records sent.
 - Arrange for the child to take a placement test if records are not available.
- Take the family to a private place to fill out enrollment forms.
- Offer to assist with filling out the enrollment forms. Hesitation may indicate an inability to read.
- Assist with filling out free and reduce-priced meal program forms. Arrange for lunch that day.
- Have copies of the school/class supply lists.
- Provide a welcome pack with paper, pencil, pen, and crayons (younger grades).
- Privately and confidentially alert the child’s teacher and guidance counselor of the student’s living situation.
- Before a student leaves, prepare a parent pack
- **Be sensitive, patient, calm, and reassuring. YOU can make a difference!**

Guidance Counselor Tips

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children 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.
- Introduce yourself as someone who works as an advocate for the child’s success in school.
- Arrange a follow-up meeting with parents a couple of weeks after enrollment.
- Ask if the child participated in any after-school activities or had special classes at a previous school, then work to connect the child with similar resources if they are available.
- Make sure the child enrolls in the free and reduced-price meal programs.
- Let parents know of their child’s educational rights.
- Know your attendance zone, visit shelters to make contact with the shelter director, and reinforce that students will find the school safe and supportive.
- Offer support for the physiological needs of the student (food, clothing) as well as the social/ emotional needs (safety, security, and belonging).
- Train peer buddies to orient students to the school.
- Contact the school district homeless liaison for additional support.
- Show that you care about the student!



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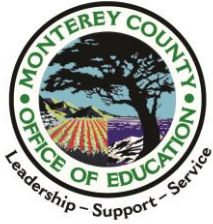
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School Nurse Tips

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children 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.
- Verify immunization records and, if needed, refer the student to the local health department.
- Observe and alert the principal to any serious medical concerns.
- Ask about glasses; the child may need them but not have any.
- Make sure the child enrolls in the free and reduced-price meal programs.
- Assist parents with the completion of medical records.
- Remember that sending a sick child “home” may not be a safe or stable place for a child who is experiencing homelessness. Help families determine options for their children, if ill.
- Contact the school district homeless liaison so that additional services can be coordinated.
- Follow-up with children sent to obtain immunizations or physicals.
- Contact the parent or shelter if a child 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!

Teacher Tips

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children who are homeless, such as attendance at several schools, poor hygiene, gaps in learning, 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 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.



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- Do not take away possessions. Students may need their “stuff” nearby for security.
- Hold the child accountable for what he or she 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.
- Support Classroom Access and Success of Students Experiencing Homelessness
- 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.
- 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!