RED FLAGS
COMMON SIGNS OF HOMELESSNESS

Reactions or Statements by Parents, Guardians, or Students

- Exhibiting anger or embarrassment when asked about current address
- Defensiveness When Asked Questions
- Mention of staying with grandparents, other relatives, friends, or in a motel or comments, such as:

  - "I don't remember the name of our previous school."
  - "We've been moving around a lot."
  - "Our address is new; I can't remember it." (may hide lack of permanent address)
  - "We're staying with relatives until we get settled."
  - "We're going through a bad time right now."
  - "We've been unpacking, traveling, etc.," to explain poor appearance and/or hygiene.

Social and Behavioral Concerns

- Stress-induced Behaviors
- Refusing invitations from classmates
- A marked change in behavior
- Poor/short attention span
- Difficulty socializing at recess
- Difficulty trusting people
- Aggression
- "Old" beyond years
- Protective of parents
- Clinging behavior
- Developmental delays
- Fear of abandonment
- School phobia (student wants to be with parent)
- Need for immediate gratification
- Anxiety late in the school day

Poor Hygiene

- Lack of shower facilities/washers
- Wearing same clothes for several days
- Inconsistent grooming – well-groomed one day and poorly groomed the next

Poor Health/Nutrition

- Lack of immunizations records
- Unmet medical and dental needs
- Chronic hunger (may horde food)
- Fatigue (may fall asleep in class)

Lack of Continuity in Education

- Lack of Organization
- Attendance at many different schools
- Lack of personal records needed to enroll
- Inability to pay fees
- Gaps in skill development

Transportation & Attendance Problems

- Difficulty keeping a schedule
- Erratic attendance and tardiness
- Lack of participation in field trips or in after-school activities
- Absences on days when students bring special treats from home
- Inability to contact parents

Lack of Personal Space After School

- Consistent lack of preparation for school
- Incomplete or missing homework
- Unable to complete special projects
- Lack of basic school supplies
- Loss of books and other supplies on a regular basis
- Concern for safety of belongings

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