

## School Office Notes...

### Tips for Identifying Homeless Children and Youth

In order to provide the most appropriate services to homeless students, school personnel must first recognize homeless students. In addition to observing the behavioral characteristics listed on the attached pages, the following strategies may be helpful in identifying homeless students in your school.

1. **Student Management Software.** Make use of the capabilities of the administrative software at your school. Sort and list students by address, and note occurrences of the same address for more than one family.
2. **Mailing Labels.** When printing newsletter and other mailing labels, note occurrences of the same address for more than one family
3. **Familiarity with Motel Addresses.** Look up the addresses of low-cost motels and note when families/students list them as their own. Make personal contacts with the front desk staff at motels, low-cost health facilities, police stations, and other public service facilities. Ask them to notify you when they meet homeless families with children.
4. **Incomplete or Unusual Enrollment Records.** Enrollment records, or lack of records, may help identify homeless children. Homeless children often do not have complete medical, academic, and other records that are requested at the time of enrollment. If records are available, they may show that the child has attended *many different schools* in the past.
5. **Statements made by Children and their Parents.** The following types of statements are frequently indicators of homelessness:

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.

I don't know where we live.

We're staying with relatives until we get settled.

We're going through a bad time right now.