



# Children, Parents & Homelessness

**WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?** People who are experiencing homelessness are unable to acquire and maintain regular, safe, secure and adequate housing, or lack a “fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence.”

**WHAT IS TRANSIENCE?** People who are transient stay in one place for only a short time, moving between different temporary housing situations.

## When children experience homelessness:

- They are **sick** four times as often as other children.
- They have high rates of **acute and chronic illness**.
- They suffer from **emotional as well as behavioral problems** almost three times as often as other children.
- About 87% of school-age homeless children are enrolled in school but **only around 77% of them attend school regularly**.
- These children are four times as likely to have **developmental delays** and are also twice as likely to repeat a grade, usually due to frequent absences and moving to new schools.

## HOW CAN PARENTS PROVIDE STABILITY?

If you are homeless or in transition as a family, there are a few ways to give children the stability that is so important for children’s well-being:

- 1. Establish a regular routine** that you do every night, no matter where you are, such as reading their favorite book. This can also give you the chance to connect with your child by asking about their day.
- 2. Connect with teachers or other school staff members.** Having that connection at school helps children feel like they belong and is a great way for parents to get resources as well!
- 3. Make sure that you also talk to children** about your situation just enough to keep them informed, but not so much that they become overwhelmed.

## HOW CAN OTHERS HELP?

A child experiencing homelessness -- and their parent -- can use extra support from connections at schools, churches or other community groups. Let the child and/or parent know that you’re there to talk about issues and help them make much-needed connections with your community.

- 1. Provide resources for the child.** Make sure they have proper supplies for school, food to eat and daily care goods. This can help the child remain healthy and in school, and can take some of the pressure off parents.
- 2. Give the child social support.** They may not want to bother a parent with their own concerns, so giving children a safe space to talk can be critical. Help the child make their own connections with teachers and other supportive adults to build their sense of belonging and safety.

## A SPECIAL NOTE FOR PARENTS:

**Self-care is critical** for parents facing the stress, uncertainty and fear of homelessness. Find someone to talk to who may be in the same situation, or other trusted individuals who might help connect you with resources you need to stay safe, healthy and strong.



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Find more resources for parents online at  
[www.scanva.org/prc](http://www.scanva.org/prc)