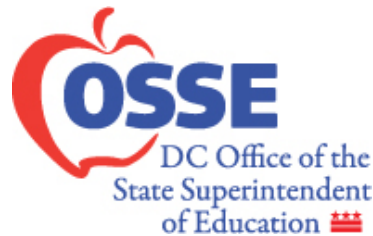


# Conditions Experienced by Homeless Children

Proposed Intervention Strategies

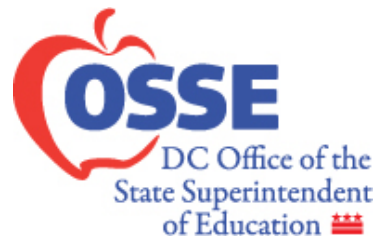


# District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education

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*Office of Transitory Services  
Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program  
Program Coordinator:*

*Deltonia N. Shropshire, MA  
Office: (202) 698-3321*



# CONDITION

# CHARACTERISTICS

## ❑ CONSTANTLY MOVING



- ❑ Rootlessness
- ❑ No sense of their space or possessions
- ❑ View life as temporary
- ❑ Often leave projects incomplete or half-finished
- ❑ Cling to possessions

# CONDITION

- CONSTANTLY MOVING



# CHARACTERISTICS

- Restless
- Aggressive behavior as they try to claim something for themselves
- Feel a loss of control in other areas of their lives and will project by physically fighting frustration
- Difficulty with transitions
- Poor attention span

# Intervention Strategies



- ❑ Give the children something that belongs only to them (e.g., care of a plant, ball, school supply)-others must ask the student's permission to play or work with this possession.
- ❑ Do not take away their possessions as a disciplinary measure.
- ❑ Break tasks down into small segments that can be successfully completed in a short period of time; keep a check list of completed work. The experience of mastery and achievement is critical to their self esteem.
- ❑ To counter the loss of control the student may feel, give them classroom assignments (monitor, team leader, etc.).

# Intervention Strategies

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- Give the student choices when appropriate (e.g., choose to do math or reading now, do this paper now or after the science period).
- Teach the student to act responsibly in the classroom and expect responsible behavior from them ...RULES.
- Teach alternative methods of expressing frustration (journaling, art, exercise, etc.).
- Initiate proven incentive programs for successes



# Intervention Strategies

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- ❑ Clearly define transition procedures as you move from one activity to the next.
- ❑ Provide closure for the child if you know in advance that they are leaving the school. Give them time to clean out “their space” and say good-bye to friends and staff. Provide all of their records before departure. For example, copies of transfer card, IEP where appropriate and academic records/grades.



# CONDITION

## □ FREQUENT CHANGE OF SCHOOL



# CHARACTERISTICS

- No structure in their lives
- Lack of continuity
- Unwilling to risk forming deep bonds
- Use withdrawal and introversions as a defense

# CONDITION

# CHARACTERISTICS

## □ FREQUENT CHANGE OF SCHOOL



- Depression over leaving familiar places & friends
- May fall behind academically as they miss school days
- Change curricula and teachers
- May be placed inappropriately because of lack of school records

# INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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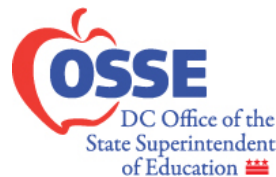
- ❑ Provide structure in the classroom by keeping a consistent daily schedule and clear concise rules, posted and visible at all times
- ❑ Implement “Peer Learning”; helps students learn in a familiar manner
- ❑ Involve students in cooperative learning activities



# INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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- Quickly integrate the children into the appropriate classroom,
  - have set of quickly-administered assessment tools readily available for accurate student placement (OSSE)
- Ensure that eligible student's have access to all educational services and supplemental services



## CONDITION

- ❑ Overcrowded conditions
- ❑ One room living conditions
- ❑ Lack of private space
- ❑ Limited space for physical Activities



## CHARACTERISTICS

- ❑ Withdrawal or aggressive behavior
- ❑ Unable to do homework due to noisy or confined environment
- ❑ Academically delayed
- ❑ Unable to get enough sleep
- ❑ Tired/Listless constantly
- ❑ Ignores or tunes out others
- ❑ Hyperactivity
- ❑ Delays in gross motor development

# INTERVENTIONS

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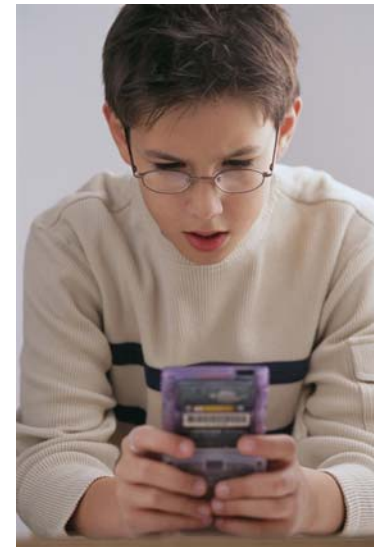


- ❑ Be aware that homeless children may listen and attend to important information with some difficulty.
- ❑ Use various modalities for presenting important information (e.g., say it, write it on the chalkboard, have children repeat it).
- ❑ Provide a portable lap desk.
- ❑ Arrange assignments to assist students to keep pace without having to take things home
  - Keep work in the classroom that would ordinarily be sent for homework
- ❑ Do not use the children's recess or PE to make-up work. Exercise and fitness may be very limited.

# Interventions

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- Provide alternative **educational** activities (e.g., electronic games, computer software downloads, approved online websites, etc.) that serve as incentives for warm-up exercises or post work rewards.
  - This also can be used to allow “quiet-time” for a student that may be overwhelmed or tired.



## CONDITION

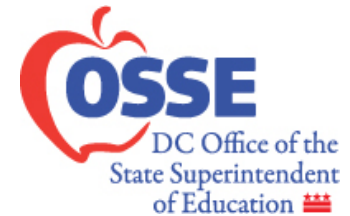
- ❑ LACK OF ACCESS TO BASIC RESOURCES



## CHARACTERISTICS

- ❑ Clothing; Reluctance to attend school because clothes are thought sub-standard, may be stigmatized by peers; low self-esteem
- ❑ Refrigeration/cooking facilities- nutritional risks and health problems
- ❑ Transportation: Inability to regularly attend medical appointments and school
- ❑ Personal hygienic products; lack thereof

# RESOURCES



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DC OSSE Office of Transitory Services  
Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program  
Program Coordinator

[Deltonia.Shropshire@dc.gov](mailto:Deltonia.Shropshire@dc.gov)

U.S. Department of Education

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth  
Barbara Duffield (Director)

<http://www.naehcy.org>

National Center on Homeless Education -

<http://www.serve.org/nche>

*Portions of this presentation are adapted from the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY).*



# Additional Information

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2008 NAEHCY Conference  
Washington, DC  
October 31-November 3, 2008  
Crystal City Hyatt  
<http://www.naehcy.org>