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**Common Signs of Homelessness**

*Note: While these are considered common signs, please recognize that they only offer general guidance. There is significant variability within the school-age homeless population. Individual students may differ significantly from the following general characteristics.*

***Lack of Educational Continuity***

* Attendance at many different schools
* Missing records needed to enroll
* Inability to pay fees
* Gaps in skill development
* Mistaken assessment of abilities
* Poor organizational skills
* Poor ability to conceptualize

***Poor Health/Nutrition***

* Missing immunizations & medical records
* Unmet medical & dental needs
* Respiratory problems
* Skin rashes
* Chronic hunger or food hoarding
* Fatigue (may fall asleep in class)

***Transportation & Attendance Problems***

* Erratic attendance and tardiness
* Numerous absences
* Lack of participation in afterschool activities
* Lack of participation in field trips
* Inability to contact parents

***Poor Hygiene***

* Lacking shower facilities/washers, etc.
* Wearing clothes several days
* Inconsistent grooming

***Lack of Personal Space After School***

* Consistent lack of preparation for school
* Incomplete or missing homework

*Adapted from flyers developed by the Illinois & Pennsylvania Departments of Education. For more information on homeless education, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at:* [*nche.ed.gov*](file:///C:\Users\gthancoc\Dropbox\Briefs\OY1%20Deliverables\Liaison%20Toolkit\First%20Drafts%20By%20Chapter\Chapter%2012\nche.ed.gov)

* Unable to complete special projects
* Lacking basic school supplies
* Loss of books and supplies on regular basis
* Elevated concern for safety of belongings

***Social and Behavioral Concerns***

* A marked change in behavior
* Poor/short attention span
* Poor self-esteem
* Extreme shyness
* Unwilling to form relationships with peers & teachers
* Difficulty socializing at recess or lunch periods
* Difficulty trusting people
* Aggression
* “Old” beyond years
* Overly protective of parents
* Clinging behavior
* Developmental delays
* Fear of abandonment
* School phobia (afraid to leave parent)
* Anxiety, especially late in the school day

***Reactions or Statements by Parents, Guardians, or Students***

* Exhibiting anger or embarrassment when asked about current address
* Avoidance of questions related to current address
* Statements about staying with grandparents, other relatives, friends, or in motels & campgrounds
* Statements such as:
  + “I don’t remember the name of the last school.”
  + “We’ve been moving around a lot.”
  + “Our address is new; I can’t remember it.”
  + “We’re staying with relatives until we get settled.”
  + “We’re going through a bad time right now.”