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
- 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.”

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: [http://www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche).
McKinney-Vento Resources to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. The El Dorado County Office of Education provides support and resources to the 15 school districts in the county and to Alpine County, to implement McKinney-Vento. Technical assistance and training is available to the districts, support for McKinney-Vento Liaisons in each district and staff who serve homeless children and youth.

These resources and more are available at EDCOE.ORG by searching for McKinney-Vento.