

## **School Social Workers Help Homeless Students**

School Social Workers make the connection under federal law through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act. They strive to identify homeless children and youth and assist them in accessing free and appropriate education. For the 2011-2012 school year, North Carolina Local Education Agencies had 18,022 children enrolled that were identified under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act.

School Social Workers assist students and families with the following:

- Barriers to enrollment (health records, residency requirements, birth certificates)
- Exceptional student education evaluations, enrollment, and transportation
- Regular attendance
- Community resource information and referrals
- Transition/follow-up services
- Coordination of individual tutorial services
- Provision of basic school supplies and clothing
- Work with families to make certain they know their educational rights

School Social Workers assist school districts and staff with the following:

- Provide workshops for teachers and staff members to inform and address the unique needs of homeless students and families
- Establish school services that meet the basic needs of homeless students (free/reduced meals, transportation)
- Bridge the gap between schools if a child moves
- Ensure that a full range of services is available (tutoring, special education, access to field trips, clothing/shoes, school supplies)
- Maintain contact with parents and/or guardians
- Assist with immediate enrollment and proper placement
- Provide parent education related to rights and resources
- Provide referrals to housing and other community agencies as appropriate
- Provide case management of identified students
- Maintain contact with the district McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison and Coordinator

NC Homeless Education Program (<http://center.serve.org/hepnc/>)

National Center for Homeless Education (<http://center.serve.org/nche>)