



Materials to Educate Children About Homelessness

Homelessness is difficult because it is the symptom of many community problems including income disparity, domestic violence, lack of mental health services, and a weakening safety net. Some great teachers have created activities, lesson plans and books for younger kids in order to include them on the learning process of homelessness; while teaching young children to be allies and advocates against homelessness, in the future. Many of these educational materials can be coupled with the myths and facts listed below– especially the fact that over 6,000 kids are homeless each year in Jefferson County Public Schools.

Who is the homeless population?

The homeless population includes people across all demographics- men, women, singles, families, youth, elderly, people with jobs, etc. It also often includes: Those experiencing mental and emotional health issues, people with disabilities, our military veterans who've had difficulty reentering civilian life, low-income families struggling to make ends meet due to systemic racism and discrimination, young adults who have aged out of the foster care system, or people who belong to the LGBTQ+ community and have no real place to go or to call home. The homeless population is incredibly diverse with complex factors that have led to them not having a place to call home.

Where Do Homeless People Sleep?

There are many different places that homeless people go to sleep such as the park, on the sidewalk, in their cars, friends/families house, homeless shelters, and in tents. For someone who is homeless, finding a place to sleep is a big obstacle.

What Do Homeless People Look Like?

Homeless people are just ordinary people who look just like you! They are just people that are going through a hard time in life. Skin color, age, or gender doesn't really matter when it comes to homelessness. Anyone can be homeless; it just depends on their situation.

Having the Conversation Surrounding Homelessness

- Encourage open discussion about what students know about homelessness and about any questions they might have.
- Help students become more aware of what their home means to them. Link what their home means to them to how they might feel if they did not have a home.
- Explain that being homeless means that one does not have a place to call home. It might be for a day or two or for many weeks or months. Talk about how difficult it is.

- Help students understand that being homeless doesn't mean that someone has done something wrong. It isn't an illness and it certainly isn't anything someone wants. It can be a result of difficult times in a person's life.
- Discuss the different places people might live if they don't have a home (i.e., shelter, car, with friends).
- Explain that there are single people, families, and children who do not have a home.
- Read stories and books about people from all walks of life and/or about homelessness. Help students to realize that despite differences, people experience many of the same feelings.
- Conclude discussions of homelessness with ideas about how students and communities can help people who don't have a home.

How can you help?

- Fundraising: collect money, so you can donate it to a nonprofit organization that helps the homeless. Check the Coalition for the Homeless website to see our partnering agencies. <http://louhomeless.org/who-we-are/members/>
- Donate Food
- Pass out Street Tips and information on Louie Connect
- Volunteer with agencies helping the homeless
- Participate in the National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week. This is held annually during the week before Thanksgiving. During this week, kids and parents are encouraged to create their own yearly tradition by: Volunteering at local shelters to serve breakfast, lunch or dinner; drop off donated goods such as blankets, socks, gloves, and hygiene products; Provide gifts just because; teach kids in shelters how to paint, dance, or teach basic life skills that children can help and become involved in. Children can also volunteer by offering to clean up shelter playgrounds (while supervised) and playrooms while children implement other ideas to teach the shelter children how they may cleanup.

More Information

Homelessness Activities for Parents: <https://naehcy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Homeless-Awareness-PD-Activities.pdf>

Fact vs. Myths: <https://www.vox.com/2015/1/15/7552441/homeless-facts-myths>

How to talk to your child about homelessness: <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/family-homelessness/?activity=talking-about-it-for-children-experiencing-homelessness-provider>



List of Louisville Shelters

Shelter	Address	Phone Number	Hours of operation
Volunteers of America Family Emergency Shelter	1321 S. Preston Street	502-636-0816	Overnight shelter for men/women/families
Center for Women & Families	927 S. 2 nd St	502-581-7200	Overnight shelter for women
Wayside Christian Mission	432 E. Jefferson St.	502-584-3711	Overnight shelter for men/women/families
Re: Center Ministries	733 E. Jefferson St.	502-584-6543	Day Shelter for Women & Overnight for Men
Rhonda's Another Chance Inc	710 S. 31 st St.	502-776-8830	Overnight shelter for women
St. John Center for Homeless Men	700 E. Muhammad Ali Blvd	502-568-6758	Day Shelter for men open daily 7am- 3pm
Salvation Army	911 S. Brook St	502-671-4900	Overnight shelter for men/women/families
The Healing Place Men's Campus	1020 W. Market St.	502-585-4848	Overnight shelter for men
St. Vincent De Paul	1029 S. Preston St	502-272-2138	Overnight shelter for men
Up for Women and Children Day Shelter	425 S 2 nd St	502-384-0001	Day shelter for women open M/W/F 9am-1pm

