

## Homeless Children's Network

### Did You Know?

- Families with children constitute approximately 40% of people who are homeless in the U.S. (Shinn and Weitzman, 1996)
- The average age of a homeless person is nine. (Homes for the Homeless)
- Domestic Violence is the leading cause of homelessness. (The Family Law Center, San Rafael)
- The typical homeless family is a 27 year-old single mother with two children under the age of six. (Homes for the Homeless)
  - 63% have been violently abused by an intimate partner
  - 66% were violently abused by a childhood caretaker or other adult in the household before reaching 18
  - 43% were sexually molested as children
  - 45% have had a major depressive disorder, twice the rate of other women
  - 31% have attempted suicide at least once, primarily during adolescence
  - 12% have been hospitalized for treatment of mental illness (Better Homes Fund, Homeless Children: America's Outcast)
- Over 30% of homeless families have an open case for child abuse or neglect; one out of five have lost at least one child to foster care. (Homes for the Homeless)
- Many children aged between six and seventeen years who are homeless struggle with serious mental health issues.
  - Nearly one in three children who are homeless have at least one major mental disorder that interferes with daily activities compared to nearly one in five school-age children who are not homeless.
  - Almost half of children who are homeless have anxiety, depression, or withdrawal compared to less than one in five other school age children.
  - More than one in three children who are homeless manifest delinquent and aggressive behavior compared to less than one in five other school-age children.  
(National Mental Health Association)
- Homelessness has a devastating effect on a child's success in school.
  - 45% of homeless children do not attend school on a regular basis.
  - Homeless children are twice as likely to repeat a grade, often due to frequent absences and moves to new schools.
  - 28% of homeless children go to three or more schools in a single year.  
(Better Homes Fund Research Project)
- Specific behavioral and psychological problems engendered by homelessness persist long after the children move into permanent supportive housing with their families. If these problems go unchecked, children remain at high risk for school failure, delinquency, chronic depression, substance abuse, suicide and adult homelessness – even after they are housed. (Stanford Study of Homeless Families, Children and Youth, 1991)