### SCHOOL STAFF TRAINING

Chicago Public Schools
Students in Temporary Living Situations

# STUDENTS IN TEMPORARY LIVING SITUATIONS

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) will provide an education environment that treats all students with dignity and respect. Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) will have equal access to the same free and appropriate educational opportunities as students who are not homeless.

#### FEDERAL AND LOCAL HOMELESS EDUCATION POLICIES

- The McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act was reauthorized as part of NCLB
  - Student homelessness is defined by the US
     Department of Education; every district has a
     McKinney Vento program that uses this definition
  - Goal is to identify and remove barriers to education for homeless students; including transportation, enrollment, and others
- A local consent decree, Salazar v. Edwards has applied to CPS STLS for nearly 15 years.
  - This decree states that each CPS school must have a trained STLS liaison.

#### **DEFINING STUDENT HOMELESSNESS**

- Living in shelter, motel, or hotel
- Doubled up at someone else's home
- Sleeping in cars, parks, buses, trains, or abandoned buildings
- Awaiting foster care placement
- Refugees and migrant workers in any of the above situations
- Unaccompanied youth, of any age, in any of the above situations; includes children staying with grandparents or others who are not the legal guardian



## CHILD HOMELESSNESS IN CHICAGO AND THE UNITED STATES

- More than 80% of STLS students identify as "doubled up"
- STLS enrollment tripled in the last ten years; much of that growth came during and after the 2008 economic recession
- Nationally, 40% of children living in shelters are under the age of 5
- Children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population
- More than 85% of homeless families are headed by single mothers

### CHALLENGES FACED BY STLS STUDENTS, WHEREVER THEY RESIDE

- Trauma related to loss of home, family illness, loss of employment, parental death, parental incarceration, parent's loss of job
- Loss of routines and personal possessions
- Increased rate of chronic and acute illness
- Increased frequency of developmental delay
- Isolation, fear, and stigma
- Elevated risk for physical & sexual assault
- Family rejection due to sexuality/gender identity

#### McKinney Vento Services

- Transportation provided to eligible students
- Immediate Enrollment without regard to documentation
- Maintain enrollment in school of origin upon becoming homeless
- Automatic waiver of school-related fees (uniforms, school supplies, lab equipment, gym uniforms, customary field trips, etc.)
- Automatic eligibility for free school meals



#### SUPPORTING STLS FAMILIES EVERY DAY

- Encourage and facilitate enrollment in preschool
- Refer to free or low-cost medical care and food stamps through CFBU
- Refer to social service providers (social workers, counselors)
- Promote confidentiality and privacy
- Attend professional development on topics related to STLS students such as: domestic violence, LGBTQ youth, family homelessness

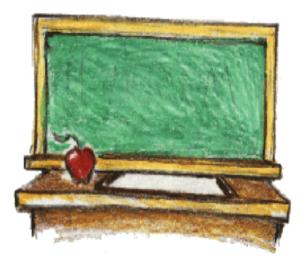
#### **STLS STUDENTS & TRAUMA**

- Many STLS students have witnessed violence at home or in the community
- Experience of **homelessness** is traumatic
- Students may experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, and/or depression
- STLS students may be at risk for dating violence or may have fled domestic abuse

# THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WITH STLS STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

- Keep in communication with the STLS liaison about attendance or behavior issues when appropriate
- If student is out of uniform due to living situation, refer to liaison instead of punishment
- Avoid taking possessions away from STLS students
- Homeless families have experienced trauma and this may be represented in their interactions with you; listen, be patient, and practice the Golden Rule
- Contact information changes frequently for highly mobile families; get many secondary contacts and update the list frequently

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS ABOUT STLS STUDENTS & SPECIAL EDUCATION



- Immediate enrollment applies to students with special education needs
- Support expedited evaluations
  - High mobility can disrupt process, so it's best to get started as soon as possible
- If school cannot implement IEP, enroll student immediately and contact your SSA