



## HOMELESSNESS AND CHILDREN



The most unsuspecting and innocent victims of poverty and homelessness are children. Families with children continue to be the largest growing segment of the homeless population in Hillsborough County, the state of Florida and the Nation.

- During the 2005-2006 school year, the Hillsborough County Public School's Homeless Education and Literacy Program directly served 800 homeless students. This does not include the 3,500 Migrant students who have been identified as homeless this school year.
- Children and youth identified as homeless by the U.S. Department of Education in FY2000, only 35% lived in shelters; 34% lived doubled-up with family or friends, and 23% lived in motels and other locations.
- 46 percent of homeless parents lived in welfare families as children and 12 percent were homeless as children. (*Homeless Families Today: Our Challenge Tomorrow*, Institute of Children and Poverty, February 1998)
- Approximately 12 percent of homeless children wind up in the foster care system? (*Child Welfare League of America: National Fact Sheet 2003*)
- 25 to 33 percent of youth aging out of foster care are likely to become homeless within three years of leaving foster care. (*Annual Report on Homeless Conditions in Florida, 2002-2003 Fiscal Year, June 2004*)

### IMPACT ON HOMELESS CHILDREN

Homeless children:

- Experience more mental health problems (low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, anger, withdrawal) than children who do not experience homelessness. (*Homeless Families with Children*, National Coalition for the Homeless, June 2001)
- Experience social stigma related to their family's situation, not having needed school supplies, clothing and shoes.
- Have higher rates of asthma, ear infections, stomach problems and speech problems. (*Homeless Families with Children*, National Coalition for the Homeless, June 2001)
- Are twice as likely to experience hunger. (*Homeless Families with Children*, National Coalition for the Homeless, June 2001)
- Have gaps in learning due to irregular school attendance.
- Lack proper in-school assessment.
- Are four times more likely to have developmental delays.
- Are more likely to repeat a grade.
- Are three times more likely to be placed in a special education program.
- Are two times more likely to score lower on standardized tests.
- Are four times more likely to drop out of school.