

APPLYING MASLOW IN THE REAL WORLD: AMERICA'S HOMELESS STUDENTS

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Chronic patterns of homelessness among families of school-aged children are increasing at an alarming rate. The effects of absenteeism, transience, lack of parental support and the schools' increasing legal responsibilities are having a profound impact on educators. The approximately one million children in the United States who are homeless each night of the school year are not having their basic needs (per Maslow) met outside of the school environment. Schools are now required to take on additional responsibilities in order to prepare these children for learning. Few teacher preparation programs or staff training programs are directly speaking to the topics that would better prepare teachers to understand the issues of these children and address them in appropriate ways.

Gathering information through extensive volunteer work and professional study, the author/presenter has developed a slide/Power Point program for use in university educational psychology classes that educates students/teachers about the issues of homeless children and shares specific recommendations of teaching techniques, children's books and professional literature. This is all established through the presentation on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Both undergraduate and graduate feedback has indicated that his approach has made theoretical information highly relevant to the "real" children in the classrooms.