

What teachers of students living in poverty should know

Students living in poverty are more likely to:

- Receive inadequate pre-natal care and not have sufficient health insurance
- Start school without early literacy skills
- Come to school tired and hungry
- Have more preoccupations and responsibilities at home
- Not experience things that develop communication skills and academic achievement such as visits to zoos and museums, home computers, relationships with educated adults and preschool
- Have high rates of absenteeism and transience
- Attend schools with less experienced teachers

High-performing, high-poverty schools have:

- A culture of high expectations and caring for students
- A safe and disciplined environment
- A principal who is a strong instructional leader
- Hard-working, committed and able teachers
- A curriculum focused on academic achievement that emphasizes basic skills in mathematics and literacy

Best practices for high-poverty schools:

- Increased instructional time
- Ongoing, diagnostic assessment
- Parents as partners in learning
- Professional development to improve student achievement
- Collaboration among teachers and staff

Effective teachers of students living in poverty:

- Know themselves
- Respect and understand the perspectives of their students
- Are determined to meet the individual learning needs of all students
- Spend additional time planning and preparing so that lessons relate to the needs of diverse students
- Have high expectations for their students
- Inspire a desire to learn and restore the child's self image
- Offer extra help and encouragement
- Involve families and educate them on simple ways to help their children at home

Adapted from:

Research review: High-performing, high-poverty schools by the Center for Public Education ©2007
How to be an Effective Teacher to Students Living in Poverty by Lori Spicer