Types of Poverty

- Generational
- Situational
- Drug/Alcohol Related

Consequences of Poverty

Children living in poverty are more likely to...

- be physically, sexually, and/or emotionally abused.
- live in constant stress which affects the brain.
- take on adult responsibilities at a young age. (child care, cleaning, cooking)
- live in poverty as an adult.
- be involved in crime.
- not have heat and water
- move frequently
- fail in school
What Poverty Looks Like in the Classroom

- Slow academic progress
- Failing or low grades
- No school supplies
- No snack
- Bad breath (acid stomach from not eating)
- Often appear tired or exhausted (stress causing parents to fight at home, not being able to sleep because the heat has been turned off)
- Frequently tardy and/or absent (taking care of siblings, abuse)
- Never having homework
- Easily frustrated (cries and/or shuts down)
- Repeated cases of head lice
- Headaches
- Lack of connection with others
- Lack of engagement
- Changing schools a lot
- Wearing a coat all day (withdrawing, covering up abuse)
- Wearing clothes to cover up (abuse)
- Lack of grit
- Smell or dirty (water may have been turned off at home)
- Lack of bathing
- Poor grooming habits
- Food Hoarding (no food at home)
- Stealing
- Overly diligent (used to being in charge at home)
- Questioning rules and directions
- Failing to ask permission when needed
- Not wanting to leave at the end of the school day
Amanda joined your class at mid-year. She often questions the rules in the classroom. She rarely asks permission. She has even left the classroom without telling you. She argues with you quite often when you give directions or says she wants to complete a lesson a different way. She is usually late to school and is absent at least once a week. She is always in a hurry to leave at the end of the day, because she picks up her younger sisters in the primary hall and walks home with them. You have heard rumors that her mother sells tickets at an adult movie theater, but you have not met her mother in person. A series of men who Amanda tells you are her mother’s boyfriends pick her up from school. She completes her work, helps other students, and helps keep the classroom organized. She has good grades.

Ever since Robbie joined your classroom, little things have been disappearing. You used to have a jar on your desk with pencil eraser caps, but now that jar is empty. A few of the girls in the class have complained that their snacks keep going missing. Robbie seems thin for his age. He asks when it will be lunch in the middle of lessons, even though you have asked him not to. He cries if he gets to school late and has to miss breakfast. You have caught him several times taking an extra muffin from the morning muffin cart. He often brings food back to the classroom from the cafeteria even though he isn’t supposed to. Sometimes his breath smells sour. Anytime there is food in the classroom, such as at a classroom party, he doesn’t eat. He asks if he can take it home to his brother. He doesn’t seem to have much energy, and you have to remind him to pay attention. He rarely raises his hand, and he doesn’t participate. He does not do his homework.

Junior failed third grade. He comes to school in dirty clothes. Sometimes the other students complain that he doesn’t smell good. There is often dirt on his face, arms, and neck. Junior never turns in his homework or brings papers back. He is struggling to read. He is the lowest reader in your fifth grade class. He has failing grades. He has trouble finishing his work. You can’t send any more books at his level home, because they never come back. He gets into fights at school. The one time his dad came to school, he was visibly drunk and the principal had to ask him to leave. His mother works in the school cafeteria, but she never comes to check in with you about Junior. You found out that Junior’s real name is Eli and is named after his dad. Junior did not know this however. You are the first person to tell him what his real name is.

Leticia is very quiet in your classroom. She doesn’t raise her hand to participate. She rarely completes her work, no matter how many times you stop at her table and try and support her. She gives up quickly and often tells you that the work is too hard and that she “can’t do it.” She has difficulty sharing and frequently asks you for things in the classroom that belong to you. She doesn’t play with the other children at recess, instead, she often seems to want to stand next to you and the other teachers who have duty. She never has her school supplies. Anything that goes home, stays home. She is usually tardy every morning and misses school at least once a week. She never does her homework.
## FACES OF POVERTY

### What Can You Do?

You have the power to build additional barriers or to help your students defeat the cycle of poverty.

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<th>Don’t</th>
<th>Do</th>
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<tr>
<td>Punish them for things that out of their control.</td>
<td>Make a positive connection</td>
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<td>Make homework more important than their progress in class.</td>
<td>Give them positive feedback about the work they do in class.</td>
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<td>Tell them repeatedly that they are unprepared for class.</td>
<td>Check with the counselor about getting them school supplies and/or shoes and clothing.</td>
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<td>Chastise them for being late to or absent from school.</td>
<td>Welcome them to school with joy no matter how late they are or how many times they have been absent.</td>
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<td>Assume that spending extra time on them is useless.</td>
<td>Explain how education leads to success in society.</td>
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<td>Make them eat their party food at school.</td>
<td>Talk about their future.</td>
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<td>Tell them that you know that their family is poor.</td>
<td>Let them know that they matter and have value.</td>
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<td>Spend a lot of time at the holidays having students talk about the presents they received.</td>
<td>Share stories of famous people who overcame poverty with the whole class.</td>
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<td>Insist they write about a personal memory. For a child under stress, not all memories are good ones.</td>
<td>Give them a soft entry time before jumping into academics in the morning.</td>
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<td>Tell them that they need to try harder. They are probably doing the best they can and don’t want to let you down.</td>
<td>Ask them if they have eaten breakfast when they complain of headaches or other aches and pains.</td>
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<td>Keep cereal or crackers in the classroom to give to students who have missed meals.</td>
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<td>Get to know who they are. They are more than just the situation they live in.</td>
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