

## Tip Sheet for Working with Children Affected by Domestic Violence

### *School on Wheels: Makes a Difference*

- ✓ Learn each child's name and use it often.
- ✓ Be on time. It helps to rebuild stability in their lives' and trusting relationships
- ✓ Give consistent, focused attention to each child.
- ✓ Work to empower the child at every opportunity possible. This creates further opportunity for their success.
- ✓ Work with the child at their level, so that they do not have to look up at you.
- ✓ Be nurturing, keeping physical boundaries at the forefront of your mind.
- ✓ Interact without judgment. Do not feel sorry for them or their situation
- ✓ Distinguish the person from the behavior. Remember, there are no bad children just unacceptable behaviors.
- ✓ Use reflective listening to validate child's feelings. e.g. "I hear you saying that math is difficult. Let's work on it together."
- ✓ Avoid making promises, instead use statements like, "I'll try my best...."
- ✓ Anticipate potential areas of issue and work to help children avoid them, leading children to success, rather than failure.
- ✓ Provide the child with frequent choices to build self-esteem and promote empowerment.
- ✓ Model positive communication and learning with children.
- ✓ Children learn more from watching than being told what to do.
- ✓ Help children build self-esteem by recognizing their inner strengths, rather than relying on other children/adults to build their confidence.
- ✓ Recognize that many "negative" or inappropriate behaviors may be a response to the violent environment they have lived in and the trauma. Be patient.
- ✓ Recognize that shelter is a temporary living situation. The family may leave abruptly and without notice. There will not be follow up on the child or family.
- ✓ Don't take things personal.
- ✓ If you've had a bad day, make sure to avoid letting that interfere with the tutoring time. Having a transition activity can help you to be fully present and to give your best.
- ✓ Refrain from speaking about your personal life so that the student doesn't feel like they have to be your care taker.
- ✓ Take care of yourself and watch out for burn out.

(Adapted from Sojourn Services for Battered Women and Their Children, Santa Monica, CA)