



Home



HOME by Tonya Lippert, PhD, LCSW depicts the lives of two children thrust into homelessness and uncertain housing situations as they move out of their house, to a motel, to a shelter, and finally another more permanent home. Throughout, the duo is challenged by uncomfortable new places and inquiries from strangers, but ultimately, never lose their optimism or determination. They have each other, no matter at home, nowhere, anywhere, or somewhere—always.

Here's an excerpt from the Reader's Note.

I wrote *HOME* with the hope of increasing empathy for homeless families and children. I wrote it to encourage caregivers' discussions with children about homelessness that would remind children that we are all connected and all worthy of love, safety, and dignity.

It's helpful for grown-ups to talk honestly and openly about homelessness and what it means to children and families to live without a home of their own.

- Families can be homeless anywhere.
- When people lose their homes they tend to move toward towns and cities. Some have enough money for hotels and motels. When they have no more money for them, they might stay with friends or family. Or, if they have no one to stay with, they might go to shelters.
- During disasters such as floods, schools, sports arenas, and other large places might become temporary shelters.
- People who are unwilling or unable to stay at any of these places might go wherever they can find a place that is hidden from other people and adverse weather to sleep.

When talking to children about homelessness, be honest about its causes.

Research indicates that the leading causes are

- 1) poverty (not having enough money) combined with
- 2) lack of affordable housing.

In other words, it comes down to money. Yes, there are some people who are homeless for other reasons, however, the reality is that the biggest factor is money: how little one has and how much homes cost. Rather than blaming homelessness on individuals, we'd do better to change its causes.

Many people work to help children and families who are homeless. And you can too! To learn more, explore the places below.

- [The Homeless Families Foundation](#) offers ideas about how to help.
- [Project Nite Nite](#) donates a book, blanket, and stuffed animal to homeless children.
- To research and better understand homelessness, visit the [National Center on Family Homelessness](#).

This Article's Author

Tonya Lippert, PhD, LCSW, studied developmental psychology and clinical social work, is the co-author of a book on ADHA, was a visiting professor at Reed College, worked at the Oregon Social Learning Center, and currently runs mental health therapy groups at Kaiser Permanente. She lives in Portland, OR.