

CLASSROOM PRESENTATION

(Regarding Refugees from Hurricane Katrina enrolling in our schools.)

Written by Marie Nelson, MEd, Tyler, Texas ISD

INTRODUCTION

We are talking with you today about the effects that Hurricane Katrina has had on our country as well as how it is and will be affecting our city and schools immediately and in the future.

BEGINNING

This is what we know so far. Our federal government is stating that this is the biggest natural disaster that our country has faced in its history. It has been a huge challenge for all of the agencies responding to this disaster. However, even though it is a huge challenge, they are rising to the task as quickly as they can safely do so.

Many people who were directly affected by this disaster have no homes, jobs, or schools to which they may go back. A large number of these people have come or are in the process of coming to Tyler and other cities in Texas, Arkansas, and other surrounding states. Some of them are either living in or will be living in shelters, hotels, apartments, etc.

Some of the children of these families will be enrolling in our schools. Some of you may become acquainted with these students as they become members of your class. We here at Tyler ISD want to welcome them and treat them with the utmost respect and compassion that we would hope to receive if we were the ones coming from such a tragic circumstance.

Do any of you have any relatives or friends that were involved in this disaster? If so, is there anything that you would like to share with us about them or their situation?

What, if anything, upsets you the most about the hurricane?

Do any of you have any questions or concerns about what has happened because of Hurricane Katrina or what will be happening on your campus as you have these new students enroll?

NORMALIZING

Some of you may have been watching television coverage of the hurricane or have heard adults talking about it. This may have caused you to feel upset about what has taken place. It is normal to feel upset when one sees others suffering. For a few of you, you may have even been feeling things like not wanting to go to sleep, wanting to be close to your parents or friends, loss of appetite, or a feeling of anger that is hard to control. If this is the case for you, please know that it is very normal and will get better as time goes by. However, if you continue to be bothered by this over a period of a few weeks, please talk with your parents, teacher, or school counselor about it. They will be able to help you.

For many of you, however, you may be more concerned as to how this is going to affect you personally as far as how many students may be in your individual classes, etc. We really do not know at this time whether this will be a small or large number. Just know that Tyler ISD is doing everything possible to make this a smooth transition for everyone.

Some of you may be feeling that you want to help in some way. Most people do feel this way in this type of situation. You may want to come up with ways that your campus can help those who are displaced from their homes. Look with your teachers, counselors, and principal for ways that you can help in this effort. And, remember, it is still okay to laugh, have fun and play.

IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Sometimes when new people come to our class or school, we want to take advantage of the situation and start misbehaving to try to attract their attention, or worse, to make fun of them. This is not acceptable. It is more important than ever to follow our school rules and behave in a manner that makes others feel welcome.

CONCLUSION

Are there any questions before we end? If at any time over the next several days you want to talk with someone, please let your teacher know.

This is affecting us all in one way or the other. One of the best things that we can do for ourselves as well as those who are coming, is to welcome them and treat them as we would want to be treated. □

<http://www.tlcinstitute.org>

This information is made available courtesy of The National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children (TLC), a non-profit 501(c)3 program of Children's Home of Detroit (CHD). If you have questions that you would like to ask our TLC Certified Trauma Specialist on staff, or would like a recommendation for a TLC

Certified Trauma Specialist in your area, please call TLC toll-free at 877-306-5256 or email us at steele@tlcinst.org