

DISTRICT LETTER TO PARENTS

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

Written by Patti Porter, Tyler, Texas ISD

To: TISD parents

From:

Date: September 1, 2005

Re: TISD's response to displaced students of Katrina

As you may have heard, Tyler is expecting a minimum of 2500 evacuees from Louisiana and Mississippi by this weekend. All Tyler hotels are at capacity with those escaping the flooding and devastation, and shelters are filling as well. Many of the evacuees are school-age children. We want to welcome them and invite them to attend a TISD campus.

Parents may register their children at the administration building beginning Tuesday, September 6. Administrators will distribute the students as evenly as possible so as not to overload any one campus. Students in a family will be kept together on a campus and transportation will be provided. School meals will be provided as well.

Please inform your children of this possibility and prepare them to welcome new students to their class. Help your children realize that these new friends will be traumatized from their situation and may not participate in classroom activities or a relationship in a typical manner. They may have suffered multiple losses and have a great many needs.

Our staff's response is to enroll students, welcome them, and offer them a safe and supportive place to spend 8 hours of their day. As with every student, teachers will ask for their best and present many opportunities for challenge and growth with support and care.

There is much media attention given to this nearby disaster and the great outpouring of help and contributions. It is important and appropriate for our children to learn compassion and service from adults, but it is also important to help our younger children to not become overwhelmed by the stress and anxiety of the situation. Media exposure should be very limited. Adult conversations regarding our own anxieties should take place away from the children as well.

A great way to calm the anxiety caused by the disaster is to channel it into positive action. Many TISD classrooms are finding ways to help our neighbors by collecting money, clothing, toys, and other items. Allowing your children to help through their school or church or other service organization will help replace some of their fears or concerns with a more positive perspective.

Keep your child's teacher informed of events within your own families that may have a bearing on the child's learning time at school. Good communication between parents and teachers is a great support for our children in all endeavors.

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<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