

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, over twenty-one percent of children in the United States live in poverty. This means that almost fifteen million children live below the federal poverty line and live in under-resourced neighborhoods. When a child of poverty walks into a classroom, their worries, beliefs, and problems of the home life come with them. Many opportunities and struggles arise when a teacher has a child of poverty in his or her classroom.

Many opportunities arise when a teacher is given the opportunity to teach a child or children who live in poverty. One of the biggest opportunities a teacher has is to build a relationship with her students. Individual relationships with every student shows the children that someone cares for them and wants them to succeed in life. According to Linda Cliatt-Wayman, the best things you can do for a child in poverty is to tell them you love them, show them you want them to conquer their dreams and encourage them to exceed your highest expectations for them. A personal relationship between a teacher and a student is an important part in persuading a child that they are more than where they live or where they come from.

Through building relationships with the children who live in poverty, teachers have the opportunity to build the child up and encourage them to be whatever they dream of being. The barrier between a child in poverty and what they aspire to be can be knocked down due to a teacher showing them that poverty does not define them. Children who live in under-resourced neighborhoods may feel like they are trapped in poverty because they feel like they cannot escape the title of being a child of poverty. As Linda Cliatt-Wayman believes, children and teenagers in poor neighborhoods are in a state of hopelessness because of the barrier between them and the rest of the world.

Through a deep relationship and a connection, teachers can change their students' outlooks and teach them that they can achieve anything and do anything they wish to do.

With all the opportunities that come with teaching children in poverty, also comes many hindrances. One of the biggest struggles for a teacher in an under-resourced neighborhood is trying to relate to the children when the teacher has never lived in poverty. Many teachers feel like they do not have a place trying to relate to a child of poverty when they know nothing of poverty. According to the article "Push, Don't Pity, Students in Poverty", when teachers are faced with the conflict of relating to the students, teachers are supposed to do what they know how to do: teach. This article advises teachers to not get caught up in not being able to get on their level, but to nurture them and teach them to the best of their ability. Children of poverty are not looking for someone to relate to, but someone to encourage them and believe in them when no one else does.

Another obstacle teachers face when teaching a child of poverty is the weights the children bring into the classroom. The children of poverty face many circumstances that cause them to be distracted in the classroom. Whether from hunger or family issues, many children bring their struggles into the classroom. For example, when children come to school on a cold day without warm clothes on, they are distracted by how cold they are when they are supposed to be learning how to read or how to add fractions. With all of these obstacles, also comes a solution. Teachers fight against the children's distractions by paying attention to every child and seeing if their needs are being met. When a teacher shows attention and concern for a child's needs, the child realizes that

someone cares about them and if their physical, mental, and emotional needs are being met.

In conclusion, teaching children of poverty is a unique and fragile situation for a teacher. With the possibility to change a child of poverty's life, comes many opportunities and struggles. The opportunities that a teacher has is to build an individual relationship with each student and to inspire and encourage them to be whatever they want to be. The struggles a teacher faces when dealing with a child of poverty is trying to relate to each child when they have no idea what living in poverty is like. Another struggle teachers face is trying to teach a child when they are distracted by their needs that are not being met. Teaching children of poverty is one of the best and most important jobs because you are training up the next generation and teaching them that no plan or dream is too big or out of reach.

#### Works Cited

Aftunion. "When poverty comes to school." American Federation of Teachers, 17 Dec. 2014, [www.aft.org/periodical/psrp-reporter/winter-2014/when-poverty-comes-school](http://www.aft.org/periodical/psrp-reporter/winter-2014/when-poverty-comes-school).

Clatt-Wayman, Linda. "Push, Don't Pity, Students in Poverty." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Jan. 2018, [www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education-update/jan18/vol60/num01/Push,-Dont-Pity,-Students-in-Poverty.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education-update/jan18/vol60/num01/Push,-Dont-Pity,-Students-in-Poverty.aspx).

## **Important Work: Teaching Children of Poverty**

(Please check ✓ all items as they are completed)

	<b>Center of Excellence - TCOP Essay Contest Checklist</b>
	Essay has a proper title page which includes the following:
✓	• Title: <b><i>Important Work: Teaching Children of Poverty</i></b>
✓	• Author's Full Name ( <i>appears only on the title page</i> )
✓	• Status (P-12 Teacher, Graduate or Undergraduate Student, Teacher Cadet)
✓	• Mailing Address
✓	• Phone number
✓	• E-mail address
✓	• Word count
✓	• Name of school
✓	The title of the essay also appears on the top of the first page of the essay text.
✓	Essay contains a minimum of two current research references.
✓	All references, quotations, and copyrighted material used in the essay are identified properly, using either MLA or APA format.
✓	Essay is double-spaced, using 12 point Arial font, and one inch margins.
✓	Essay contains at least 800 words but no more than 1600 words.
✓	The Microsoft "word count" tool is used for calculating number of words.
✓	Word count does not include the title or reference pages.
✓	Each page of the essay is numbered starting with the first page of the essay (not the title page). The numbers are centered at the bottom of each page.
✓	The essay is submitted by email to <a href="mailto:COE@fmarion.edu">COE@fmarion.edu</a> as a Microsoft WORD attachment.
✓	COE Essay Contest and author name appear in the subject line of the email.
✓	The Essay Contest Checklist is attached with Essay prior to submission.
✓	The electronic essay is submitted by <b>5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 16, 2018.</b>

Contest Rule:  
The Center of Excellence – TCOP Essay Contest  
Checklist must be submitted electronically with  
the essay.

