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OUR OPINIONS

Kid Row

HERE'S a shocking statistic: According to a new study, roughly 700 of the people living on Los Angeles' Skid Row, either in welfare motels or on the streets, are kids.

Worse yet, the school and legal authorities that can and should help these kids too often make their lives even harder.

The study, carried out under the auspices of the United Coalition East Prevention Project, found that some 43 percent of the youths on Skid Row have been given tickets for loitering or not wearing the

proper school uniform. When these tickets go unpaid, the fees multiply, compounding the kids' problems.

This is a tragedy. While no one should be exempt from the rules, schools and cops should be judicious enough to determine why children are in trouble, and what help they might need. Homeless kids need shelter; kids with mentally ill or drug-addicted parents need rescue.

And our schools and police need to find better ways to address the tragedy of children living on Skid Row.