

**School Social Work Council
California Chapter
National Association of Social Workers**

WHO ARE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS?

School Social Workers are the *link between home, school, and community*. They are an integral part of the total educational team of a school, working together with teachers, administrators, counselors, school psychologists, nurses, speech clinicians and other staff. School Social Workers' unique training enables them to understand and interpret the interactive influences of the school, the home, and community and prepares them to provide personal and programmatic supports to assist in each of these areas.

Preparation for the profession of School Social Work requires completion of a two-year master's degree in a university-based School of Social Work, as well as the completion of a Pupil Personnel Services Credential. School Social Workers are bound by professional ethics, and are responsible for continuing educational and professional growth and development...dedicated to helping students fully develop their potential – socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually.

WHAT DO SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS DO?

School Social Workers respond to school staff concerns about students and their families facing multiple risk factors. Together with staff, they work to develop, implement, and evaluate programs to help students and their families. Through the use of assessment, counseling, collaboration, consultation, and coordination of services, School Social Workers serve students, parents, school, and community through the following activities:

- Join/bridge the school and the community
- Facilitate and/or participate in Student Success (Study) Teams, facilitate and/or participate in Student Assistance Programs and Attendance Review teams
- Coordinate Healthy Start programs
- Develop and implement parent education programs
- Coordinate special programs such as tobacco prevention and violence prevention and safe school programs
- Provide professional development for teachers on such issues as child abuse, classroom strategies, diversity issues, sexual harassment
- Facilitate professional development for teachers on such issues as child abuse, classroom strategies, diversity issues, sexual harassment
- Facilitate support groups for students on such topics as separation/divorce, depression, eating disorders, peer relationships, and anger management
- Facilitate programs such as conflict management and resolution, mentoring, community service and after-school programs
- Develop grant proposals
- Develop and supervise school-based services performed by community agencies/organizations
- Mediate disputes between students, parents, and school systems.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS HELP SCHOOLS

- Understand factors (cultural, economic, familial, health factors, etc.) that affect students' abilities to make maximum use of their school experience
- Utilize their resources in meeting the educational, social, and emotional needs of their diverse student bodies.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS HELP COMMUNITIES

- Understand school policies, programs, practices and goals
- Minimize those environmental factors which inhibit learning
- Develop resources that adequately meet the needs of students and families, i.e., child care, transitional programs to the world of work, teen pregnancy assistance, in partnership with schools

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS HELP STUDENTS

- Identify differences in school and develop ways to make school a more positive and productive experience
- Understand themselves – their own strengths and limitations
- Improve relationships with others – both peers and adults
- Cope with Stress
- Develop decision making skills
- Improve their self-concepts – and thus receive maximum benefit from their educational opportunities

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS HELP FAMILIES

- Actively and effectively participate in their children's education
- Understand and meet their children's social and emotional needs
- Understand programs available to students with special needs
- Utilize school and community resources effectively
- Reach out to families in diverse backgrounds, building bridges to the school, so that families can help their students in partnership with the school

WHICH STUDENTS MIGHT BENEFIT FROM SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS?

- Poor academic achievement and/or failure to complete school work
- Drug and/or alcohol use and abuse
- Excessive shyness, withdrawal, depression
- Aggressive or impulsive behavior
- Frequent physical complaints
- Poor peer/adult relations
- Difficulty adjusting to school structure
- Irregular attendance
- Pregnancy
- Chaotic family and community conditions including homelessness, family violence, substance abuse issues
- Issues relating to recent immigrant status

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS BELIEVE...

- The reasons why some children are not successful in school should be discovered as early as possible.
- Families and schools should be well-informed by each other about the child's strengths, achievement, behavior or any problem that might emerge.
- Parents/Guardians should be assisted to utilize those school and community resources which can help their child improve, build on strengths and succeed in school.
- Students and their families and teachers can be best served by a team approach with administration, counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, speech clinicians, other specialists and teachers working together.

Also check out:

School Social Work Association of America - www.sswaa.org

California Association of School Social Workers - cassw.net