

School Social Work Services

School social work services are designed to address social, emotional, economic, and environmental barriers that may interfere with a student's academic success. Through early identification, prevention, and intervention services, school social workers support the whole student -- his or her needs at home, in school, and in the community.

School social workers are an integral part of the school community. As such, they may serve as the link between the home, school and community. Additionally, school social workers serve as advocates, liaisons, coordinators, case managers, counselors, and consultants for students, parents, school staff and community agency personnel. Schools can employ school social workers in a variety of ways; therefore, these practitioners must be flexible, creative and able to demonstrate competencies in a wide range of areas. The role and responsibilities of each school social worker will be influenced and impacted by both the expectations of the local school division, the community needs, as well as the personal competencies and preferences of the individual professional.

School social workers are trained mental health professionals who provide direct as well as indirect services to students, families, and school personnel. Some of the responsibilities and scope of services are described below.

Services to Students

- Participate in special education and 504 evaluation teams, including preparing social or developmental history for a child with a disability and delivering counseling as a related service identified in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).
- Provide crisis interventions, including depression/suicide screening and interventions, abuse and neglect reporting, and alcohol and substance abuse screening and interventions.
- Provide individual and group counseling to help children develop appropriate social emotional skills, understand and accept self and others, learn conflict resolution and anger management skills, coping with stressor, and address mental health or behavioral issues.
- Advocate for equitable student access to school- and community-based services and instructions to address issues such as teen pregnancy and parenting, medical or mental health issues, chronic absenteeism, substance abuse, etc.

Services to Families

- Facilitate school-based services and instructions through activities such as parent conferences and home visits.
- Provide family education, counseling, and support in areas such as child development, child mental and behavioral health, and special education processes.
- Provide advocacy and linkage to community-based services and resources to meet basic needs, meet medical or mental health needs, or access programs for children with special needs.
- Coordinate and manage multi-agency services such as Children's Services Act (CSA) meetings, Best Interest Determination Meetings, or treatment team meetings with Department of Social Services or mental health providers.

