

# School Social Worker - First Year Checklist

- Get the list of students you will be assigned to work with at the school.
  - Which students have IEPs and 504 plans?
  - Confirm specific requirements for SSW in these plans (e.g. specific minutes of contact per week, consultation, attendance at IEP meetings etc.)
  - Contact previous caseworkers and staff who know those children to get more background information if appropriate (e.g. what worked with the student in the past?)
- Gain access to the student information system
 

You need student data:

  - Attendance
  - Discipline
  - Health
  - Academic records/placement (*on grade-level*)
  - Student Schedule (*if appropriate*)
  - Parent/Guardian and other relatives/siblings on record
  - Other records - notes from previous session or other school staff, documents that may be on file from agencies, custody information, etc.
- Medicaid Reimbursement System - Learn how it works at your school (may be particularly important for special education students)
- Develop a referral sheet - A referral sheet will eliminate verbal references with no documentation. (*See example on back page*)
- How do students and families' access to social work services at the school?
  - Is there an appointment system used?
  - Will students need a pass?
  - How and from whom do they receive the passes?
  - Are there interpreter services or staff available when needed to communicate with non-English speaking students or parents?
- What is in place for the school social worker to impact the whole school system?
  - Comprehensive behavior management system, RTI/RTII, bullying prevention, school climate, attendance family involvement/participation (*as a school or district initiative*)?
  - Are there opportunities to co-teach?
  - Are there materials available to be distributed?
  - What are expectations from your administration, staff, and peers? What do they see as positive School Social Work Services?
- Find the union representative at the worksite and ask for support and information about school culture.
- Lean on the individuals most closely impacting students social/emotional needs and develop a monthly check-in/communication system with these peers.
  - Community agencies active in the school (e.g. Head Start, YWCA, Probation Service, faith-based groups, etc.)
  - Nurse
  - School Psychologist
  - School Secretary
  - Certified School Counselors
  - Others - including administrators and School Resource Officer (SRO)
- Students will need your services on day one (e.g. discipline, emotional upsets, attendance, homelessness, etc.) - BE VISIBLE!
- Introduce yourself to other educators and explain your role. Inquire about how they partnered with other School Social Workers in the past.
  - What works for them? (e.g. pull-out, push-in, co-teaching).
  - What needs do their students have?
  - Attend a faculty meeting or in-service to provide information on your services.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions - you need information to do the best job for your students.
- Find out where students are referred for services when their needs cannot be met in the school environment.
- Develop relationships with key staff from outside/community based-agencies:
  - County Caseworkers
  - Child Protective Services
  - Homelessness Support
  - Food Banks
  - Refugee Services
  - Police/Probation
  - Faith-based Organizations
  - MH/MR/ID programs, etc.

Attend community-based meetings of social services agencies to network/meet providers.
- Clarify your role in the school's emergency/crisis plan.
  - What would your role be in the case of a violent incident at a school, a death in the school community, etc?
  - How might your role change during and after an incident
  - What type of ongoing support activities will you be asked to provide?
- Clarify your role in formal disciplinary and attendance matters.
  - Are you expected to play a role in prosecution of truancy cases with local District Court Judges or will your role be more supportive and child family oriented?
- Identify a location for you to conduct interviews or meet with children, parents, and others that is private and allows confidential communication.
  - Does this room have access to your confidential records? Can you make a confidential phone call or access the internet from this room?

