

Role of School Psychologists

Who Are School Psychologists?

We are here to help your child achieve their best.

School psychologists help children and youth succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. We have specialized training in both education and mental health and know how to identify and lower barriers to learning. These barriers can include developmental or learning disabilities, behavior difficulties, teaching styles, school or classroom climate, problems at home or with friends, substance or alcohol abuse, violence, and mental health problems such as anxiety or depression.

Our goal is to collaborate with parents, school staff, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments so that all students can learn.

What School Psychologists Do

School psychologists work with students individually and in groups, as well as address school- and district-wide issues such as bullying prevention and positive behavioral supports. We use many different approaches, but generally provide these core services:

Prevention

- Design programs for children at risk of failing at school.
- Promote tolerance, understanding, and appreciation of diversity within the school community.
- Develop programs to make schools safer and more effective learning environments.
- Provide crisis prevention and preparedness information and training.
- Collaborate with school staff and community agencies to provide services directed at improving mental and physical health.
- Develop partnerships with parents and teachers to promote healthy school environments.

Consultation

- Collaborate with teachers, parents, and administrators to find effective solutions to learning and behavior problems.
- Help others understand child development and mental health and how they affect learning and behavior.
- Strengthen working relationships between teachers, parents, and service providers in the community.

Evaluation

- Evaluate eligibility for special services.
- Assess academic skills and aptitude for learning.

- Determine social-emotional development and mental health status.
- Evaluate learning environments.

Intervention

- Provide psychological counseling to help resolve interpersonal or family problems that interfere with school performance.
- Work directly with children and their families to help resolve problems in adjustment and learning.
- Provide training in social skills and anger management.
- Help families and schools manage crises such as death, illness, or community trauma.

Research and Planning

- Evaluate the effectiveness of academic and behavior management programs.
- Identify and implement programs and strategies to improve schools.
- Use evidence-based research to develop and/or recommend effective interventions.

School Psychologists in Our District:

Preschool through second grade - Joanne J. Pesco

Third through sixth grade - Matt Aljian

We work very closely with teachers, school social workers, school counselors, and other staff to coordinate services. This can be in the context of an IEP team, crisis response team, or general education support team.

School Psychologists Training and Credentialing

School psychologists must complete a minimum of a Specialist-level degree program (60 graduate semester credits) that includes a 1200-hour internship. Some school psychologists have a doctoral degree. School psychologists must be certified and/or licensed by the state in which we work. They also may be nationally certified by the National School Psychology Certification Board (NSPCB), which is administered by the National Association of School Psychologists.

Adapted from: "What Is a School Psychologist," Andrea Canter, Helping Children at Home and School II: Handouts for Families and Educators, NASP, 2004. The full handout is available online at www.nasponline.org/families.

© 2011 - 2017 Special Services. All Rights Reserved.