

Mental health is as important as physical health to our quality of life. Good mental health includes having the skills necessary to cope with life's challenges. If ignored, mental health problems can interfere with a child's learning, development, relationships, and physical health.

School psychologists are mental health professionals who have specialized training in both psychology and education. They use their training and skills to team with educators, parents, and other mental health professionals to ensure that every child overcomes barriers and learns in a safe, healthy and supportive environment. School psychologists understand school systems, effective teaching and successful learning.

Today's children face more challenges than ever before. School psychologists can provide solutions for tomorrow's problems through thoughtful and positive actions today.



Ask a School Psychologist

School psychologists can make a positive, lasting difference in children's lives. Schools today serve increasingly diverse and dynamic student populations. Every child brings unique strengths and challenges to the learning process. School psychologists are a vital part of the effort to unlock each child's potential for success.

For more information on School Psychology, contact your school psychologist or the California Association of School Psychologists at 916.444.1595 or visit our web site at www.casponline.org.



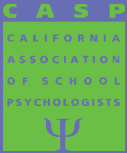
Working to Improve California's Schools—
— One Student at a Time

GENERAL



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Growing Up Isn't Easy

All children and adolescents face problems from time to time. They may:

- Have fears about starting school
- Manage their time poorly
- Fall behind in school work
- Be upset about family events such as divorce and death
- Feel depressed
- Experiment with drugs or alcohol
- Think about suicide
- Lack study skills
- Worry about their sexuality
- Face a tough decision about college or work
- Consider dropping out of school
- Not be aware of their aptitudes or abilities

Children are remarkably resilient when they get the support they need. Children and youth thrive when they feel safe and supported. Parents and teachers sometimes need help in their effort to provide a system of support that meets each child's individual needs. School psychologists are there to help parents, educators, and communities understand and solve these, and many other problems.

What Do School Psychologists Do?

School psychologists tailor their services to the particular needs of each child and each situation. They provide mental health services that address needs at home and school to help students succeed academically, emotionally, and socially. School psychologists use many different approaches, but most provide these core services:

Consultation

- Give healthy and effective alternatives to teachers, parents, and administrators about problems in learning and behavior



- Assist others in understanding child development and how it affects learning and behavior
- Strengthen working relationships between educators, parents and community services

Intervention

- Promote healthy learning behaviors through the development of positive behavioral support plans and the use of scientific, research-based instruction.
- Work one-on-one with children and families
- Help solve conflicts and problems in learning and adjustment
- Provide psychological counseling for children and families
- Provide social skills training, behavior management, and other strategies
- Provide guidance to families and schools with crises, such as separation, loss, and tragedies at home or at school

Prevention

- Identify potential learning difficulties
- Design programs for children at risk of failure
- Provide parents and teachers with the skills to cope with disruptive behavior
- Foster tolerance, understanding and appreciation of diversity in the school community
- Develop initiatives for safe and effective schools

Education

Develop programs on topics such as:

- Teaching and learning strategies
- Classroom management techniques
- Working with students who have disabilities or unusual talents
- Substance abuse
- Crisis management
- Anti-bullying programs and more

Research and Planning

- Evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs, behavior management systems, and other services
- Generate new knowledge about learning and behavior
- Contribute to planning and evaluating school-wide reform and restructuring

Assessment

Use a variety of techniques at an individual, group, and systems level to evaluate:

- Academic skills
- Learning aptitudes
- Personality and emotional development
- Social skills
- Learning environments and school climate
- Eligibility for special education

Health Care Provision

- Collaborate with school and community-based personnel to provide a comprehensive model of school-linked health services
- Work with children and families to provide integrated community services focusing on psychosocial wellness and health-related issues
- Develop partnerships with parents and teachers to create healthy school environments

Where Do School Psychologists Work?

The majority of school psychologists are employed in public and private school systems. However, school psychologists practice in a variety of settings including:

- Public and private schools
- School-based health centers
- Clinics and hospitals
- Private practice
- Universities, community and state agencies, and other institutions

