

6 Ways Social Workers Can Help With Your Child's Challenges

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At a Glance

Social workers can be an important guide when your child is struggling.

They can connect families with resources and specialists.

Social workers work in many settings, from clinics to private practice.

When your child is struggling, it can be hard to know where to go for guidance. Social workers in the community are a good resource. They work in many settings, like mental health clinics, human service agencies, and hospitals, as well as in private practice.

Here are six ways social workers can help you support your child.

1. Help You Make Sense of What You're Seeing

If you're noticing your child's struggles for the first time, you might not be sure what exactly you're seeing. Social workers can help you start to understand by taking a closer look with you. They can also suggest activities, strategies, and changes at home to work on with your child.

2. Tell You About Resources in Your Community

An important step to helping your child is to find the right support. Social workers can let you know about resources in your community. They may be able to refer you to other professionals or services. And many social workers can recommend afterschool programs that can benefit your child.

3. Explain Who at School Might Help and How to Connect

Different professionals at school can help in different ways. Teachers, guidance counselors, principals, and specialists each play a role in helping struggling students. Social workers can explain who to talk to and ways to connect for the right support.

4. Recommend Other Professionals to Talk To

There might be other professionals who can help with your child's challenges. Speech therapists and tutors are just two examples. Social workers can help you sort through who to talk to and refer you to people in your community.

5. Help With Family Relationships

Family relationships can be tricky, and you may find it hard to talk about your child's challenges. Social workers can suggest ways to think through how to handle family relationships and make these conversations easier.

6. Provide Counseling

It's common for kids who struggle with behavior or school to feel anxious, frustrated, or stressed out. Some social workers are licensed therapists who can help your child or your family cope with emotions and mental health.

How to Engage the Social Worker

Look for a social worker who works mostly with kids and families. (Some specialize even further and work with kids who have learning challenges or are dealing with loss or trauma.) Children's hospitals or mental health clinics can be good resources for finding one. Your child's doctor may also be able to refer you to one.

Call to make an appointment and explain what you're concerned about and want help with. (You may be able to do this by email.) At the meeting, share what you've been seeing at home.

Be sure to give examples. Together, you can talk about the next steps to helping your child thrive.

Key Takeaways

Social workers may be able to help you manage difficult family relationships. They can also help you connect and communicate with the school. Some social workers offer mental health counseling, too.