

2013

## Families, Schools, and Community: Partners in Children's Well-Being

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## Helping Educators Respond to Families in Distress

The Family Distress Model (FDM) is a non-pathology-based conceptual framework for understanding reactions families may have to problems. The Family Outreach Model (FOM) provides strategies social workers can use to coach teachers about their interactions with families in distress. FDM identifies five phases of family functioning, which FOM builds on to specify indicators for each stage, effects of each stage, useful conversations, and ways educators can respond to families.

**Stage 1: Stable patterns.** Stable patterns of particular families may or may not be compatible with those of the school. To deal effectively with families in Stage One, teachers need to appreciate the meaning of family patterns. The teacher takes the initiative by writing a letter on the organizing principles and stable patterns for the class, defining the culture in which the students live and work. If the home culture is treated as different rather than broken or dysfunctional, a bridge between cultures can be built.

**Stage 2: Dealing with problems.** Sometimes families have established patterns that were previously effective and have not explored changes until a disruption occurs. Families in Stage Two typically want to return to stability, by returning to the old pattern or developing a new one. Families need to perceive that support is available in case their strategies do not work. Professionals can assist by raising questions about the nature of the disruption and the patterns that are affected. When the problem is introduced into the discussion, the teacher might ask how the family addressed other disruptions. The teacher can be supportive without being intrusive by gaining parents' permission to be a temporary voice for the family's goals and to remind family members of those goals in the problem-solving process.

**Stage 3: Coping.** When a family perceives that it has no solution to a problem, members may experience a sense of being overwhelmed, numb, or confused. They may be unable to ask for assistance or respond to helpful questions because they don't believe solutions exist. Families in Stage Three cannot be expected to give the teacher direction about what they want or need because they feel

overwhelmed. This stage is most consistent with a directive helping style. The family desires relief from the acute distress and is open to direction from outsiders. The family needs to be treated respectfully and members need to be assured they are not blamed for the crisis and do not have to confront it alone.

**Stage 4: Isolated and in crisis.** Families that have become isolated following a crisis are often perceived to be uncooperative, resistant, or defensive. Their intention may have been to try to control their distress, but their old problem-solving style may be ineffective. Families in this stage anticipate blame from outsiders and perceive outsider involvement as a source of further instability. Interference from the school may intensify family distress. Dealing with these families requires exaggerated respect.

**Stage 5: Using support.** Aware that their strategies for coping have not worked, these families ask for help. They often exhibit a sense of urgency or lack of focus, and are eager to obtain relief from distress. If the teacher knows the family well enough that agreement about goals and values have been identified, the teacher might review the family's goals and values. Simple routines that support those goals and values can be identified, and small changes that reestablish and support stability can be acknowledged. If a preexisting relationship does not exist or the relationship has not yet sufficiently developed, the teacher might ask the parents what their life will look like after the difficult period has passed. Exploring this question allows the teacher to gain a specific understanding of the family's goals and values. In this stage, concrete questions help the family identify its goals and values, generate new problem-solving patterns, and return to stability. Teachers should develop a list of resources readily available for meeting families' basic needs. Any support that fits with the family's need to reestablish its stability will go a long way toward empowering the family to regain its sense of identity.

*Dealing With Family Distress in Schools*  
T. A. Cornille, D. R. Boroto, M. F. Barnes, & P. K. Hall

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E. Mayfield Arnold, A. K. Walsh, M. S. Oldham, &  
C. A. Rapp

## Parent–School–Child Interactional Systems



### Keywords

education, child well-being, collaboration, school partnerships

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When contact is made between a social worker and a family whose child is having difficulty, the social worker will find it helpful to determine the typical response pattern of parents to the school system: aggressive, passive, or adaptive. To do so, they should consider how parents interpret actions by school personnel, how parents react to school professionals, if parents can describe the problem from multiple perspectives, whether parents align unconditionally with the child, if parents' attitudes indicate hopelessness or helplessness, and whether parents are immobilized by anger.

As the social worker gains a clearer concept of the triadic interactional style of the parent, the school personnel, and the child, the social worker will also develop a rapport and strategy for working with the particular type of system.

With aggressive parents, the social worker should encourage venting of feelings about the school to the social worker rather than at the already defensive school. The social worker can help parents acknowledge the futility of continued hostile behavior. They explore whether parents recognize how the child may be further labeled or victimized by hostile actions, which new behaviors parents would consider to prevent the child's further decline in school, specific ways parents can take charge of the child's behavior at home (if necessary), and how the objective needs of the child can be articulated by parents in ways that do not directly blame and accuse the school.

For passively entangled parents, special attention is given to ways of motivating parents to become more active and assertive. Social workers should consider whether the parents are aware of their parental and procedural rights, such as reasonable notification of suspensions and unexcused absences, the right to review school records, and the right to appeal administrative decisions. Further, they should explore if parents always go to the school alone or desire making new efforts, such as allowing the social worker to facilitate communication. Finally, if parents ever had positive experiences with their children's teachers, the social worker can determine positive experiences that enhance self-esteem and the parents' sense of personal strength.

With both types of parents, potential adaptive capacities or experiences should be recognized and encouraged. A particularly helpful means of promoting these dynamics is role playing. Using a role play enables parents to practice more adaptive behaviors that the social worker can model. In the role play, parents learn to be clear about the child's needs in an assertive but non-threatening way with school personnel. Parents are also encouraged to brainstorm solutions with the social worker that may be presented at the actual school conference.

Parent-School-Child Systems: Triadic Assessment and Intervention  
*J. V. Compher*

## Collaborating to Reduce Child Problem Behavior

L UVE, a constructivist learning model, develops collaborative links between schools and parents, so parents can improve daily educational practices with their children and assume a more active role in their children's education.

In this study, the purpose was to analyze common experiences of parents during the application of L UVE. It was hypothesized that the strategy would help develop a partnership between schools and parents, and that the project would help parents learn and understand the importance of participating and being involved in the education of their children. In addition, the project was expected to reduce the problematic behavior of children during adolescence and youth, and its negative effects. L UVE, then, focuses on stimulating the creation of links between school and family, and structuring the environment to encourage parental participation in the educational experiences of their children.

The design of the educational activities included in L UVE, which support parental tasks, was organized through working sessions called learning cycles. Each learning cycle had different phases beginning with exploration, introduction of new concepts, rebuilding knowledge, and evaluation. The approach and design of the activities used for the implementation of L UVE is founded on the learners' logic and not its contents, which means that the contents and activities which were important for parents, were adjusted to what they expressed during the sessions. Every work session accounted for the following phases: The exploration phase, in which participants

explained their ideas; the introduction phase, which allowed them to interact with the content; the cognitive structure phase, which helped each person rebuild the ideas they uphold, according to what they have experienced in the session; and finally, the application phase is where participants had the opportunity to apply new daily knowledge through a sharing of the learning processes with the group at the next session. Using teachers as guides and mediators of a process, while focusing on the parents' choice for instruction, proved to be useful.

L UVE proved valuable to parents because the sessions and activities were designed to incorporate their values and beliefs, instead of purely relying on the ideas of scholars. Also, because the strategy did not follow a traditional scheme, it moved parents beyond the expectations of most programs developed by schools, where staff are perceived as experts who presume they know what is best for parents. For this reason, parents are more likely to participate in such an educational strategy. The L UVE project included parents and schools as important components, and was based on a collaborative approach that provides parents new insights about their ideas and beliefs. The implementation of these programs is but the beginning for opening dialogue among parents and schools.

L UVE: A Constructive Learning Approach for Working With Parents  
*L. S. Cuevas & V. Astroza*

# Promoting Resilience Through After-School Planning

A generation ago, families and communities were perhaps better equipped to provide children and adolescents with the support and opportunities they needed after school. Today, however, this time period presents families and communities with multiple challenges. Changes in family structure, in the nature of work, in neighborhoods, and in society have combined to make the after-school period a time of day when young people are comparatively more vulnerable to negative influences, such as peers who belong to gangs, adults who sell drugs, and random street violence. The creation of safe, stable, developmentally appropriate, and culturally relevant after-school settings has emerged as a major challenge confronting parents, practitioners, child advocates, and, indeed, all policy makers who are concerned about public safety and the well-being of children. Below are five guidelines for promoting resilience in children through after-school planning.

## Guideline 1: An Individualized Approach

Whenever possible, the unique situation of a child, family, and community should drive after-school planning and implementation. For example, children who are displaying academic or behavior problems in school experience greater success in settings that provide adequate structure but place relatively low demands for task completion or focused attention. Children who spend the afternoon in physically dangerous environments are at particularly high-risk for experiencing harmful outcomes.

Planning for these children should focus on environmental conditions, perhaps by removing the child from a dangerous setting or increasing the safety level of the setting. Youth who attend settings designed for younger children are likely to be frustrated or unhappy about where they spend the afternoon. Family members and practitioners can focus on creating and implementing a plan that utilizes more developmentally suitable setting(s).

This approach requires accurate assessment of the child (e.g., developmental level, need for supervision, recreational interests), the family (e.g., availability of potential caregivers, values, resources), and the community (e.g., the availability and variety of after-school resources, safety). It also requires that parents, the child, and others involved in afterschool planning be willing to try out a number of settings and arrangements in order to find the best fit.

## Guideline 2: Child Involvement in the Plan

Children should be involved in decision making about after-school care. The child's role will change over time, with early elementary school-aged children having relatively less input. Even

at this age, however, adults should be alert for signs of a setting that isn't a good fit. As children grow older, their preferences should play a larger role in planning. In contrast to the school day, after-school is a time when children can try out activities and roles without the accountability imposed by school grading and rules. As such, it may be an ideal time for them to develop increased personal responsibility and competencies by having opportunities to choose how they spend the afternoon.

## Guideline 3: Encouraging Academic Success

To encourage academic performance, which serves as a protective factor for many kinds of childhood problems, most after-school plans should include activities that promote academic achievement. Plans might include individualized tutoring, homework assistance, or setting time and space for homework. Caregivers can also enhance academic skills by providing games that foster learning, including computer software, and by organizing excursions to museums, galleries, or the public library. Adolescents can participate in prevocational activities, visit worksites, and take on part-time work.

There are a number of resource guides and program evaluations to guide families and practitioners in incorporating an academic focus into after-school environments. There are also many online programs that assist students with homework and allow interactive exploration of an almost unlimited number of subjects. Even though academic achievement is a keystone protective factor, it should not be the sole focus of after-school activities.

## Guideline 4: Fun and Opportunities for Play

After-school environments are more likely to foster optimal child development when they are fun. Given the demands of the school day, the increased level of danger in many neighborhoods, and the reduced amount of unstructured time at home, the afternoon is an ideal time for children to run, jump, yell, or just do nothing—acting based on how they feel. Children are likely to be happier spending time in after-school environments where they can choose among a variety of activities that are fun and interesting. Furthermore, play itself fosters development; children investigate and learn about novel objects and experiences through play. They practice physical and social skills and, through experimentation, develop new skills. Pretend and imaginary play foster development of symbolic and abstract thinking.

There are countless approaches to creating opportunities for play and fun in after-school environments. Families, children, and others working to develop after-school plans can access

a variety of resources that describe planning and programming to make afterschool settings enjoyable for elementary children and for adolescents in community-based programs.

## Guideline 5: A Collaborative Approach

The ultimate responsibility for ensuring that children spend the after-school period in safe and developmentally appropriate environments rests with the biological or foster family. Other community members and practitioners may participate in after-school planning depending on the wishes and needs of the family. From an ecological perspective, however, everyone who influences the after-school experience of a child should be a part of developing and implementing an after-school plan.

The goal of a collaborative approach is to ensure that all important figures in the child's after-school environment work together toward common goals, utilizing complementary rather than conflicting strategies. For many families, this may require little more than clear communication among parent(s), the child, and assorted caregivers. For other families, collaboration may require periodic meetings to discuss available resources and needs, and to reach agreement about goals and strategies.

For a collaborative approach to be successful, practitioners and parents must work as partners. This means that parents are recognized as the ultimate experts about the child and carry decision-making authority, while practitioners are acknowledged as providing specialized knowledge, skills, and access to resources.

*After-School Care for Children:  
A Resilience-Based Approach  
J. K. Nash & M. W. Fraser*



## Community Organizing and Positive Outreach



Families and Schools Together (FAST) is an early-intervention/prevention, collaborative, school-based, multifamily support program for elementary school kids identified by teachers as having behavior problems. Parent-professional partnership engages low-income and isolated families in an eight-week program. In considering FAST from a community-organizing perspective, note that (a) schools are the primary place for families with school-age children to meet and interact; (b) schools can offer opportunities to low-income families to become contributing community members; (c) a collaborative structure reflective of a community-wide commitment to helping kids succeed must be formed before the program can begin; and (d) FAST uses three organizing principles that involve many people and are strongly felt, simple, and unifying (see sidebar). Selecting the best organizing principles is key to effective community organizing.

A collaborative team includes a minimum of four partners: a parent from the community, two community agency professional representatives (one from a mental health agency and one from a substance-abuse program), and one professional from the local elementary school.

Parents must volunteer to participate in FAST. This prerequisite respects parents' ability to make their own choices and develops self-esteem and confidence. During the program, parents can see their child's behavior improve, empowering them when they realize that the change occurred as a result of their participation in the program.

Moreover, parents determine the content of the program and receive social support.

Families graduating from FAST form small clusters of interdependent parents with the potential for assuming a leadership role in their community. Each cluster is independent and focused on its own school and neighborhood, but linked to other FAST groups and schools.

FAST provides parents with an in-school, self-help parent group that is run by the parents. During each evening group session, children enjoy recreation with a staff leader. Representatives from various groups develop parent advisory councils (PACs) that plan activities, allowing families to connect with families from their own program and meet other FAST family graduates. After completing the program, parents have a connection to other graduates, have backup support from the community and school, and feel empowered in having achieved the shared goal of helping their child improve. This success gives parents the confidence to work toward new goals.

Each FAST program hires a parent graduate to co-lead the next group, thus creating jobs for FAST parent graduates and contributing to community development. Furthermore, it puts families into a relationship with coworkers who may better understand their situation than others in the community.

Families and Schools Together (FAST): Integrating Community Development With Clinical Strategies  
*L. McDonald et al.*

### FAST organizing principles:

- Parents love their children and are concerned about their well-being.
- Positive experiences that are educational and spiritually nourishing will connect people to the program and one another.
- A partnership between families and schools will best help children succeed. Families, communities, and schools can work together locally with families sometimes in the lead and the school sometimes in the lead.

## Co-Creating Positive Youth Development

Young people in poor urban communities often feel powerless in the face of degradation, crumbling buildings, failing school systems, and ways of being related to that suggest little hope for the future. The experience of powerlessness has been identified as a key risk factor for poor physical and mental health. Let's Talk About It (LTAI), a school-based program located in an urban high school serving poor and diverse teens, LTAI can be characterized as a social group work program, a mental health program informed by youth development principles, a protective factor in the lives of youth in distressed communities, and an ongoing opportunity for youth to collectively exercise power. The program operates in a public high school system. Students live and attend school in an area known for high levels of crime, AIDS, drug activity, and community violence.

LTAI meets daily during lunch, led by social workers, peer counselors, and social work interns. Students decide the frequency of their participation: daily, weekly, or biweekly. Group members invite fellow students to participate, resulting in a group of youth who may not ordinarily interact in the broader school environment. LTAI also does not separate youth who are functioning well from those who are experiencing serious difficulties. Through the group, LTAI helps youth understand behavior (theirs and others) as just one of a number of performance choices. Their sense of themselves as choice makers is nurtured, and they come to recognize that their behavior and identity are not fixed. This approach to adolescent mental health goes beyond a focus on changing particulars (e.g., problematic behavior, cognitive distortions) to a focus on environment-building processes. It is a methodology to be practiced rather than a model to be applied. Similar approaches as LTAI have

been employed in a variety of settings serving children and youth, including elementary, middle, and high school classrooms; after-school programs; youth theater; youth employment programs; and therapy clinics for children, youth, and families.

Facilitating a collaborative, group-building process like LTAI can be challenging for new and experienced practitioners alike. Practicing collaboration as a method of co-creation requires a focus on the group-building activity and issuing the challenge in an ongoing way so individuals contribute to the process. It also requires adopting a not-knowing stance, not controlling what happens, and being willing to create with the unexpected. Relating to the group-building activity as the unit of change and supporting the group to exercise power requires adult facilitators to continuously develop new performances, especially in light of potential barriers: some people do not like one another and can be hurtful, some are afraid of strong emotion, some have judgments or limiting ideas about what they and others can do, and different opinions exist.

Young people stand to gain a great deal from practitioners who are expanding their capacities to create with youth, to support youth to exercise their power. What this will look like in a particular practice situation is not knowable ahead of time. It must be created with the youth involved.

Exercising Power From the Bottom Up: Co-Creating the Conditions for Development With Youth at an Urban High School  
*N. Feldman*

# Improving Educational Outcomes for Children in Care

Youth in foster care are at risk for negative educational outcomes, yet child welfare can only indirectly address these outcomes. Educational reform and change, such as the federally proposed Blueprint for Reform, are beyond the scope of child welfare agencies, and holding them accountable for the educational achievement of foster youth is unrealistic. However, both child welfare and educational perspectives agree that educational outcomes (a) are central to academic success and subsequent self-sufficiency, (b) that coordination helps to ensure the success of disadvantaged children, and (c) that both systems are chronically underfunded given legislative mandates. From a policy perspective, child welfare emphasizes documentation and monitoring of processes but not academic or other education-related outcomes. Educational policy, in contrast, focuses on the achievement of specific grade-level academic outcomes. Consequently, although there is some overlap, action plans for these two systems differ.

From a child welfare perspective, in which family-centered and strengths-based practice are emphasized, there exists a strong connection between systems in terms of sharing conceptual congruity regarding parent and family involvement. The time may thus be ripe to optimize parental involvement as a child welfare system strategy in improving educational outcomes for youth in foster care. Such a strategy may open avenues for new or shared resources. For example, the combined forces of the Fostering Connections Act, with its emphasis on improved educational outcomes, and NCLB, with its parental involvement strategy for improving educational outcomes, provide child welfare agencies with an opportunity to involve a number

of case principals to work toward a common goal. These two legislative acts may thus offer an effective means for improving the poor educational outcomes of foster youth. The parent, foster parent, case manager, and guardian ad litem can all develop skills and methods of parental involvement to advocate on behalf of vulnerable youth. These principals will each need to be engaged and trained in how to advocate at the local, district, and state levels. Most already receive some training, be it as parent, foster parent, case manager, or guardian, so supplementary training for education advocacy and support might be added with minimum resource expenditure. States and other jurisdictions might develop new voluntary, child welfare citizen review panels to assess the educational progress of youth in foster care or expand the responsibility of current Foster Care Review Boards.

No Foster Child Left Behind: Child Welfare Policy Perspectives on Education  
N. Gustavsson & A. MacEachron

TABLE 1. Collaborative Model for Improving Educational Outcomes for Foster Youth

Policy level (examples)	Actions
Macro (e.g., Children's Bureau, state education, child welfare agencies, school boards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Children's Bureau training toolkits for educators and for child welfare professionals about the educational needs and outcomes of foster children and what can done at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels to improve outcomes.</li> <li>• NCLB implementation of parent involvement strategies.</li> <li>• Expand McKinney-Vento state coordination and liaison role to all foster children.</li> <li>• Expand child welfare citizen review panel functions to include regular (e.g., annual) review of educational outcomes.</li> </ul>
Mezzo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support parent involvement initiatives for local implementation (e.g., schools) from a family-centered, strengths-based perspective.</li> <li>• Implement regular training about the education of foster children, the services available, and how to improve them.</li> <li>• Designate fixed responsibility for foster youth within the school.</li> <li>• Documentation of parental involvement strategies that comply with NCLB.</li> </ul>
Micro (e.g., teachers, homeless liaison, school social worker, child welfare worker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific action plans and indicators of parental involvement.</li> <li>• Regular parent/caregiver teacher conferences documented.</li> <li>• Monitor attendance and education progress by child welfare worker, homeless liaison, parent/caregiver, and foster youth.</li> <li>• Reward foster youth for positive educational outcomes.</li> <li>• Review and determine the needs and services for individual education plans (IEP).</li> </ul>

Note. NCLB = No Child Left Behind Act.

## A New Educational Space: What Kinship Caregivers Want

Current issues regarding the education of children with disabilities who are placed with kinship caregivers are highlighted using qualitative data from low-income, aged 40–70, African American kinship carers. Kinship caregivers in this sample highly value education as a priority for the children in their care and have a variety of suggestions for improving communication and services between the school system and caregivers that have grandchildren placed in special education programs.

With respect to their discussion on Admission, Review, and Dismissal meetings and Individual Education Plans, the caregivers felt that they wanted to understand more about educational testing and evaluations. In addition, they felt that parent–teacher conferences would assist them in meeting educational expectations for the children in their care and allow for reinforcement of what the children learn in the school environment.

The grandparents suggested that educators revisit the concept of “mainstreaming” children with learning disabilities considering its impact on teachers who are not trained in special education in conjunction with the lack

of classroom resources. They wanted fewer children in special education classes so the children could benefit more from one-on-one contacts with their teachers. They felt that they could also use ombudspersons for negotiating and navigating school systems to meet the needs of students requiring a variety of services.

Kinship caregivers felt that they needed education concerning substance abuse and exposure of children to drugs during and after pregnancy; the relationship between drugs and educational achievement; and the overall integration between these conditions, ADD/ADHD, and the behaviors of children in classroom settings. Importantly, caregivers felt desperately in need of further education and exploration of alternatives to the use of Ritalin in managing these conditions. They expressed concerns about the overuse of medication to address the behavior problems of children. The caregivers expressed very strong feelings about the labeling of young children and the long-term impact of these labels. They worried about their stigmatizing effects and the potential for the children to grow into what these labels represent.

Significantly, they recommended that the

school should listen to the grandparents, because they know these children better than anyone else. When others have thrown up their hands, thrown in the towel and given up, the grandparents are still there attempting to provide love and a stable living environment for these children.

Education and Kinship Caregivers:  
Creating a New Vision  
C. Lawrence-Webb, J. N. Okundaye, & G. Hafner



# Strengthening the Teacher and School Social Worker Alliance



Over 40 years ago in *Society and the Schools: Communication Challenge to Education and Social Work*, the need for interprofessional collaboration between education and social work was characterized as one of “inescapable urgency.” The need for this collaboration is more urgent today. Schools are encountering challenges posed by increasing numbers of immigrants, non-English-speaking students and families and increased numbers of students from single parent and poor families. As entitlement programs shrink and the income gap between rich and poor continues to widen, it becomes vital for teachers to have support in addressing psychosocial issues that arise in the classroom and impede the educational process. Providing such support is the central task of school social workers in their collaboration with teachers.

There are many common characteristics that distinguish teaching and social work from other professions, such as predominance of women, practice in a bureaucratic setting, and a service orientation. Despite their similarities, when these groups attempt to collaborate, challenges often surface due to differing experiences early in their lives, in academic training, and upon entrance into a professional school setting.

**Early socialization.** The personality traits and values that characterize teachers develop not only through professional socialization, but are attributes and values of those recruited into the profession. In comparing values and attitudes of social workers and teachers, social workers show a greater tendency toward radicalism, and often are seen and see themselves as members of a “dissenting profession.” In contrast, there is a conservatism that characterizes those recruited into teaching, which is enhanced by professional socialization in the school setting.

**Academic preparation.** Education for prospective teachers focuses primarily on developing expertise in subject area content and delivery, and gives limited attention to class, gender, and race. For social workers, education emphasizes respect for persons of all backgrounds. This difference is often apparent in the school, with teachers believing that social workers give too much weight to students’ circumstances and social workers thinking teachers focus too much on fitting all students into the same curriculum. Teachers are also taught a cognitive style to perceive something in the student as the source of difficulty, while social workers rely on an ecological perspective of interconnectedness

between social and organizational issues and individual needs and problems.

**Early work experience.** Once in the school, the influence of teachers’ more progressive academic training often fades, making it difficult to develop and implement new ideas. Social workers may find it easier to hold on to professional knowledge and values as they are “guests” in the teachers’ “host setting.” Whereas being less identified with the school may help social workers resist and question norms, it brings challenges such as token status, role ambiguity, and role strain.

## Implications and Strategies

Knowledge of differences can help enhance relationships: social workers should clearly, consistently, and frequently educate teachers about their roles by offering support to teachers, and articulating and explaining roles so teachers are encouraged to ask for assistance. Social workers should ask teachers about their views of the school, classroom, and individual students, and how the social worker can serve as a resource to ease workload. Social workers already support teachers through out-of-the-classroom activities in students’ homes, in the community, and in other areas of the school, but they can arrange teacher–parent meetings during school time and cover the classroom. Social workers need to let teachers know that their group work training makes them qualified in classroom management. Such collaboration can help alleviate the burden of high student–teacher ratios.

As facilitators of in-service programs, social workers can bring information about the impact of multiculturalism and oppression to teachers’ attention, and share techniques to help teachers reach more students and increase achievement of academic goals. School social workers must find ways to pursue “institution changing” without appearing threatening to teachers’ abilities. They must seek opportunities to present policy and program initiatives that teachers feel enhance their role, and prove their support of the primary emphasis on academics. To do so, social workers have to make clear the connection between psychosocial intervention and improved academic performance, and consistently present their ideas to teachers as means “in the service of academics” rather than as ends in themselves.

Understanding Socialization of Teachers and Social Workers: Groundwork for Collaboration in the Schools

L. R. Bronstein & J. S. Abramson

## New Website Coming Soon

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