



CHILD & FAMILY SOCIAL WORKER

JOB DESCRIPTION

Child, family, and school social workers provide social services and assistance to improve the social and psychological functioning of children and their families and to maximize the family well-being and academic functioning of children. Some social workers assist single parents, arrange adoptions, or help find foster homes for neglected, abandoned, or abused children. In schools, they address such problems as teenage pregnancy, misbehavior, and truancy. Increasingly, school social workers are teaching workshops to an entire class. Some social workers specialize in services for senior citizens, running support groups for family caregivers or for the adult children of aging parents, advising elderly people or family members about choices in areas such as housing, transportation, and long-term care, and coordinating and monitoring these services. Through employee assistance programs, they may help workers cope with job-related pressures or with personal problems that affect the quality of their work. Child, family, and school social workers typically work for individual and family services agencies, schools, or State or local governments. These social workers may be known as child welfare social workers, family services social workers, child protective services social workers, occupational social workers, or gerontology social workers.

EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

Social workers should be emotionally mature, objective, and sensitive to people and their problems. They must be able to handle responsibility, work independently, and maintain good working relationships with clients and coworkers. Volunteer or paid jobs as a social work aide offer ways of testing one's interest in this field.

- Compassion/sensitivity
- Patience
- Excellent communication skills
- Maturity
- Leadership skills
- Confidence

EDUCATION & TRAINING

A bachelor's degree in social work (BSW) degree is the most common minimum requirement to qualify for a job as a social worker; however, majors in psychology, sociology, and related fields may qualify for some entry-level jobs, especially in small community agencies. Although a bachelor's degree is sufficient for entry into the field, an advanced degree has become the standard for many positions. A master's degree in social work (MSW) is typically required for positions in health settings, as well as supervisory positions. All States and the District of Columbia have licensing, certification, or registration requirements regarding social work practice and the use of professional titles. Although standards for licensing vary by State, a growing number of States are placing greater emphasis on communications skills, professional ethics, and sensitivity to cultural diversity issues.

SALARIES

Salaries vary depending on work setting, years of experience, specialty and region or state.

Entry level: \$ 27,840	Elementary and secondary schools:	State government \$35,070
Average: \$ 34,820	\$44,300	Individual and family services:
Experienced: \$ 45,140	Local government: \$40,620	\$ 30,680

EMPLOYMENT & ADVANCEMENT PROSPECTS

Employment of social workers is expected to increase 18-26% for all occupations through 2014. The rapidly growing elderly population and the aging baby boom generation will create greater demand for health and social services, resulting in particularly rapid job growth among gerontology social workers. Many job openings also will stem from the need to replace social workers who leave the occupation.

RELATED OCCUPATIONS

- Counselors
- Psychologists
- Special education
- Occupational Therapy

REFERENCES

National Association of Social Workers, 750 First St. N.E., Suite 700, Washington, DC 20002-4241. Internet: <http://www.socialworkers.org>

Council on Social Work Education, 1725 Duke St., Suite 500, Alexandria, VA 22314-3457. Internet:
<http://www.cswe.org>