

Talking Points for School Psychology Presentation

A CAREER IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

(Non-italicized text denotes talking points.
Italicized text is included on overheads and PowerPoint presentation)

The mission of the Florida Association of School Psychologists is to promote and advocate for the mental health and educational development of Florida's children, youth, and families in educational systems and communities; and to advance the profession of school psychology in the state of Florida.

I. Why the need for School Psychologists?

Today's students are faced with a myriad of challenges that can impact their academic and emotional adjustment to school. School psychologists are specially trained to provide services to students, educators, and parents to address these challenges. In addition, federal legislation such as The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that all children are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education. School Psychologists play an integral role in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of students in order to assist in determining a student's most appropriate educational placement. In addition, school psychologists...

(Go to overhead or PowerPoint)

(Overhead 1)

- *Understand how schools work and how children learn*
- *Provide easily accessible, cost-effective mental health services to children*
- *Promote positive mental health and a safe and effective learning environment*

School psychologists are an invaluable resource in addressing the issues that impact the educational and psychosocial needs of children such as:

(Overhead 2)

Issues that impact the educational and psychosocial needs of children include...

- *Learning styles and disabilities*
- *School violence*
- *Divorce*
- *Bullying*
- *Mental Health Issues*
- *Motivational issues*
- *Suicide prevention*
- *Attention Deficit Disorder*

II. What are the training requirements to become a School Psychologist?

School psychologists have specialized training in both psychology and education. **(Go to overhead/PowerPoint).** Training for school psychologists includes coursework in normal and abnormal child and adolescent development, school organizational systems, learning theory, counseling theories, statistics, behavior analysis, and assessment of learning and emotional factors that impact school success.

(Overhead 3)

Coursework includes...

- *Normal and abnormal child and adolescent development*
- *School organizational systems*
- *Learning theory*
- *Counseling theories*
- *Statistics*
- *Applied Behavior Analysis*
- *Psychological and psychoeducational assessment*

Training requirements to become a school psychologist involves a minimum of 60 graduate semester hours in a school psychology program including a year-long internship. To be employed as a school psychologist, one must be certified and/or licensed by the state in which services are provided. School psychologists may also be nationally certified.

III. What do School Psychologists do?

(Overhead 4)

Consultation

- *give healthy and effective alternatives to teachers, parents, and administrators about problems in learning and behavior*
- *help others understand child development and how it affects learning and behavior*
- *strengthen working relationships between educators, parents and community services*
- *design and develop procedures for preventing disorders, promoting mental health and learning, and improving educational systems*
- *provide inservice and other skill enhancement activities to school personnel, parents, and others in the community regarding issues of human learning, development, and behavior*

(Overhead 5)

Assessment – *use a wide variety of techniques at an individual, group, and systems level to evaluate:*

- *academic skills*
- *learning aptitudes*
- *personality and emotional development*
- *social skills*
- *behavioral analysis*
- *learning environments and school climate*
- *eligibility for special education*

Psychoeducational assessment for possible special education eligibility includes possible placement in programs for giftedness, learning disabilities, emotional handicaps, and mental handicaps.

(Overhead 6)

Intervention

- *work face-to-face with children and families*
- *help solve conflicts and problems in learning and adjustment*
- *help enhance learning opportunities and experiences for all children*
- *provide psychological counseling for children and families*
- *help families and schools deal with immediate crises as well as ongoing issues such as grief and loss*
- *provide information to enhance parenting skills and techniques*

(Overhead 7)

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*
- *help foster tolerance, understanding, and appreciation of diversity in school community*
- *develop school-wide initiatives to make schools safer and more effective*

(Overhead 8)

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*

(Overhead 9)

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*
- *stay abreast of current trends in psychology and education and share with educators and parents*

(Overhead 10)

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*
- *developing partnerships with parents and teachers to create healthy school environments*

(Overhead 11)

Advocacy... **(Go to overhead/PowerPoint)**

School Psychologists advocate for the students they work with through advocating for appropriate educational placements and ensuring that the needs and rights of the students are appropriately addressed. School Psychologists also advocate for the well-being of children through involvement with their professional state organization (FASP) and their national organization (NASP). FASP and NASP actively advocate for the needs of children through legislative action and public policy advocacy. For further information about what FASP and NASP does for children, visit www.FASP.org and www.nasponline.org.

Advocacy...

- *Appropriate education placements*
- *Ensuring that the needs and rights of students are appropriately addressed*
- *FASP- www.fasp.org*
- *NASP- www.nasponline.org*
- *Other community services/programs*

IV. Where do School Psychologists work?

(Go to overhead/PowerPoint) The vast majority (approximately 90%) of school psychologists are employed within the public schools. In Florida, School Psychologists are typically employed by one of Florida's 67 school districts. The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a 1:1000 school psychologist to student ratio. Other settings where School Psychologists may practice are private practice, colleges or universities, private schools, hospitals, clinics, and institutional/residential settings.

(Overhead 12)

School Psychologists are employed in...

- *public school settings*
- *private practice*
- *private schools*
- *college or university*
- *hospitals*
- *clinics*
- *institutional/residential settings*

V. What does a "typical" day look like for a School Psychologist?

Most school psychologists employed in the public school setting serve from 3-5 schools. These schools may be elementary, middle schools, high schools or alternative education settings. School psychologists generally work closely with other student services personnel such as guidance counselors and school social workers. A "typical" day for a school psychologist may consist of providing psychoeducational evaluation to students, counseling, report writing, and participating on Child Study Teams to generate interventions and strategies for targeted students.

VI. Contractual Issues:

Salaries vary significantly among Florida's 67 school districts. The contractual year may be 10 months (the length of a teacher's contract), 11 months, or in some counties, 12 months. The salary is typically based on the advanced degree required to become a school psychologist beyond the bachelor's degree and reflects the length of the contractual year. In addition, some districts pay a supplement to school psychologists.

VII. Professional Organizations:

School Psychologists are encouraged to be members and stay involved with their professional organizations. The Florida Association of School Psychologists (FASP), at the state level, and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), at the national level provides excellent services to members including: opportunities for continued professional growth through state and national conferences, newsletters, and advocacy for the profession of school psychology as well as for critical issues impacting the lives of children.

FASP : Represents 1100 school psychologists in Florida. Web site: www.FASP.org

NASP: Represents more than 21,500 school psychologists. www.nasponline.org

VIII. Florida's Training Programs in School Psychology

(Overhead 13)

Provide handout to students on Florida's training programs in School Psychology

Florida's Training Programs in School Psychology

Barry University (Miami)

www.Barry.edu/psychology/ssp

Florida A & M University (Tallahassee)

www.famu.edu.acad/colleges

Florida International University (Miami)

www.fiu.edu/~edpsy/sch_psychhome.htm

Florida State University (Tallahassee)

www.fsu.edu/~coe/departments/hss/schoolpsy.html

Nova Southeastern University (Ft. Lauderdale)

www.cps.nova.edu

University of Central Florida (Orlando)

www.graduate.ucf.edu

University of Florida (Gainesville)

<http://nersp.nerdc.ufl.edu/~founded/handbk2.htm>

University of South Florida (Tampa)

www.coedu.usf.edu/deptpsysoc/psych/

Financial Aid Resource Handbook for School Psychology is available for download on the Florida Association of School Psychology website. Visit www.fasp.org and connect to Training and Credentialing through the "Contacts and Committees" link on our homepage. You can also directly link to School Psychology training programs through the Training and Credentialing page on the FASP web site.