



(More information about social workers in)

Does Documentation Matter?

Pupil Services Documentation

Directions: Add this information to the documentation you have reviewed. Now discuss who would you rate as the more effective school social worker and why (using details from the documentation and stories below)?

School Social Worker A (sswer A)

This sswer feels it is important to document her work, so the team can understand student goals and progress. She is working with a student who has been identified as being chronically absent. She meets with the student briefly. In this meeting she tells the student the number of absences they have and she asks why the student has missed school. The student reports not liking school. The school social worker calls mom to tell her the number of absences the student has, the statutes that require mom to send the student to school or face fines, and that the student does not like school. Mom confirms this to be true. The sswer briefly checks in with teachers to tell them the student doesn't like school and so the student's goal will be to increase a sense of belonging at school. They will write this in the plan at the attendance improvement meeting. The sswer reviews the student records quickly and does not note anything of concern. Ms. Smith, the student's teacher, offers to do a 10X2 intervention and eat lunch with the student and friends a few times over the next couple months. The sswer, principal, student, and mother meet to discuss attendance improvement. The sswer begins the meeting by sharing the absence data, and then tells the student that their goal will be to increase their sense of belonging at school. The sswer shares that they will achieve this goal through the 10X 2 intervention, by eating with Ms. Smith, and by enrolling the student into a school club that the sswer thinks she'll like. After two months, the student has not attended the school club. Ms. Smith has followed through with the intervention and lunch bunches. The student reports feeling 'somewhat connected to school' and that 'some teachers care if I am here or not'. The student reports additional challenges at home and conflict with mom without giving specifics. The student had 1 unexcused and 2 excused absences in the last two months.

School Social Worker B (sswer B)

This sswer arrives at school early each day to be present when students arrive. She greets students warmly using their names at the door, checks in with certain students and other staff. She is working with a student who has been identified as being chronically absent. She builds rapport in the hallway with this student, observes them in class, checks in with their teachers and mother, reviews their file and then meets with the student formally. The pupil records reveal that the student often misses school in December. They discuss various concerns and challenges from an ecological systems perspective to get a sense of all the barriers to attendance. The student reveals some deep emotions and feelings, which leads the sswer to help the student and mother connect to mental health services in the community. The student shares that their dad died two years ago in December and that time is always hard. The sswer's warm demeanor contributes to the mother opening up to her about challenges too. The sswer supports mom in getting connected to services for parenting support and basic resource connections. Noting that a barrier to attendance was the student and mother not having information about how to ask for mental health and basic needs support, the sswer initiated conversations with administration about creating a more accessible resource map and referral pathway as part of their school mental health system. The sswer discussed concerns with the classroom teachers with the student's assent, and they decided together that the student's teacher, Ms. Smith would do the 10 X 2 intervention and offer to eat lunch with the student and friends a few times. After two months of support, the student has had only one additional absence and both student and mother are functioning much better and reporting a higher level of wellness. The sswer has been too busy to document much of her work.