



## ABSS School Social Work and Attendance

If the only task of teachers was to teach the three R's, their jobs would be easy. But as we know, many factors conspire to make it difficult for some young people to make it through school—among them, poverty, substance abuse, community violence, early sexual activity and family conflicts.

School social workers pick up where teachers leave off. They are perhaps the professionals best equipped to address the social and psychological issues that can block academic progress. School social workers bring their unique skills and systems perspective to the assessment and diagnosis of children's needs. Through counseling, crisis intervention and prevention programs, they help young people overcome the difficulties in their lives, and as a result, give them a better chance at succeeding in school.

Because social workers are trained to think of innovative solutions to complex problems, their interventions often make a strong difference for young people at risk for academic failure and dropping out of school. Their goal is to overcome institutional barriers to learning and gaps in services to maximize academic performance.

Besides helping youth with traditional academic problems, social workers aid others whose specific social, psychological, emotional or physical difficulties put them at risk for falling through the cracks. These include homeless youth, abused and neglected youth and young people with physical or mental health disabilities.

Interesting statistics:

- The negative impact of absences on literacy is 75% larger for low-income children whose families often lack resources to make up lost time on task (Ready, 2010)
- Only 17% of low-income children in the United States read proficiently by fourth grade (NAEP, 2009)
- Nationally, 1 out of 10 kindergarteners & first graders are chronically absent
- Poor children are four times more likely to be chronically absent in Kindergarten than their highest income peers (According to Anne E Casey foundation, 2,794 children are living in high poverty area of which is 8% of Alamance County Children.)
- 56.3% of severe chronic absent sixth graders will graduate from high school (missing 20% or more days of school per year – approximately two months of school)
- By ninth grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than eighth grade test scores
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read