

The American Counseling Association's "Counseling Corner" Weekly Columns

Let's Put Your School Counselor To Work This Year

from the American Counseling Association

With the new school year either just started or right around the corner in most parts of the country, it's easy to hear that sigh of relief from parents as they turn the responsibility of educating their little darlings over to the classroom teacher.

And while that instructor is certainly going to be a major part of your child's life and your focus over the coming school year, the classroom teacher is only part of the equation for a successful school year. Your school counselor is a vital member of the academic team, especially if your child or children are facing any learning or developmental issues.

Professional counselors who serve as school counselors, whether at the elementary, middle or senior high school levels, are usually among the most trained and educated people in the school system. While requirements vary slightly from state to state, all school counselors are certified by the State Board of Education. Most states require school counselors to not only have a college degree, but a Master's degree in counseling and some even require classroom teaching experience.

This training produces a professional who understands both the educational process and the developmental stages children go through. They are able to recognize barriers that can interfere in the learning process, and have the tools to help overcome such barriers.

At the elementary school level, not being one of the "popular" kids may not seem so important to a parent, but a school counselor can recognize the issue and how it can affect the learning process, and can help the child deal with it. The same is true for middle and high school students when there may be self-concept developmental issues, especially around the age of puberty and early adolescence. A trained school counselor is there to offer students assistance in addressing these issues.

School counselors also provide a variety of assessment instruments and information programs to help students facing problems from attention and discipline issues to more severe learning disabilities. And for high school students, school counselors provide important guidance toward college or careers.

It's a good investment for every parent to make an appointment with the school counselor and to learn what types of help and services are being offered. It's an investment that can help make your child's school year happier and help ensure academic and personal success.

"Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACAcornet@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org.

###

words: 391