



School Social Work Sentinel

Third Edition

School Social Work Vision: "Enhancing Student Success"

March 2009

Talking to Kids about Economic Ups and Downs

In these times of economic uncertainty, family talk is bound to center on money, mortgages, jobs, moving, school tuition, and credit cards. Talking to kids about money issues is tough, especially when parents are under stress. Open and honest communication with kids is important, but parents should be careful not to overburden them or tell them more than they need to know. Take your cue from your child, listen to questions, and provide information in an age-appropriate way.

Children under 5 - are most concerned about themselves and need assurance in simple and concrete terms that they will be cared for. They can be content with short term, inexpensive rewards.

Children aged 6-9 – can understand the concept of waiting or saving to buy more expensive things at a later time. When shopping they can learn to read labels critically and to comparison shop.

Children aged 10-12 - can understand that the family has to cut back and can contribute ideas for saving and budget planning.

Teenagers – are capable of understanding the need to prioritize when there's a limited amount of money. They can discuss issues and understand the effects of having less money, and be active in problem solving.

What students can do

Talk

While it is important to talk to children about financial concerns, it is just as important to tell them that it is the parent's job to handle money issues and their job is to focus on their education. Children need to know that they can help the family by coming to school every day, keeping their grades up, and staying out of trouble. If kids are doing their job, parents will have more energy and time to handle the financial concerns.

What parents can do

- Be a role model for your children – demonstrate how to solve problems, how to deal with a crisis, how to make decisions. When they see you handle a situation with confidence they learn that they too can handle life's challenges.
- Use the financial situation as an opportunity to help children learn the difference between what they need and what they want. Don't feel guilty about saying "no" to some requests, kids need to learn that not every wish can be granted.
- Involve children in helping out at home - e.g., babysitting, household chores, but don't make them think they're responsible for supporting the family. Their job is to get an education.
- Maintain household routines as much as possible, and explore fun, low cost activities.
- Assure kids that many families are facing the same issues and need to budget.



The good news is that kids are strong

Kids have the ability to adapt to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or other significant sources of stress. However, being strong does not mean that children won't experience difficulty or distress. Pay attention to signals such as sleep and appetite changes, nightmares, avoidance of people or situations that may indicate that your child is having difficulty. Consider a consultation with your school social worker.

*Information taken from About Our Kids
(www.aboutourkids.org)*

Congratulations to Jennifer Kyle for being selected as the Support Employee of the Year.

March is National Social Work Month!

School Social Work Mission Statement:

“To maximize opportunities for academic success by supporting and advocating for students and their families.”

Foreclosure Assistance

Foreclosure can be prevented for households who seek help before it's too late. The Housing Corporation of Charlotte County continues its efforts to keep families in their homes.

Anyone of any income can go to The Housing Corporation for assistance. This assistance will begin with budget counseling to help determine if the family can afford to stay in their house and if they are willing to make the budget cuts necessary to do that. If families are willing to make the necessary adjustments and have some form of income, they can likely be helped. There is no simple formula to solve the problem and every situation and solution is different.

In addition to foreclosure, debt, and credit counseling, The Housing Corporation also administers Charlotte County's homeownership programs, which include a variety of different ways to help lower-income families become homeowners. These programs include down payment assistance, a rent-to-own program, and the Community Land Trust, which keeps the land in trust while selling the home on the land to a low-income household. The Housing Corporation also has funds to assist homeowners in making necessary repairs to their home. If you need assistance, please call 255-1636.

School Social Work Staff and Assigned Schools

Sandi Currier	Charlotte High School	575-5450
Sharon Dunbar	Lemon Bay High School	475-4961
Susan Flores	Deep Creek Elementary School	255-7535
	Liberty Elementary School	255-7515
	Peace River Elementary School	255-7622
	Neil Armstrong Elementary School	255-7450
Sallie Jones Elementary School		575-5440
Jennifer Kyle	Murdock Middle School	255-7525
	Meadow Park Elementary School	255-7470
Clora Hamilton	L.A. Ainger Middle School	697-5800
Paula Hannon	The Academy	255-7545
Pat Masters	Port Charlotte Middle School	255-7460
Lisa Vullo	Punta Gorda Middle School	575-5485
	East Elementary School	575-5475
Charity Waters	Port Charlotte High School	255-7485
Tony Guzzo	SEA & SOS Programs	255-7545
Lucy Garner	Homeless Education Program	255-7480

For information on School Social Workers, visit the CCPS website: www.yourcharlotteschools.net

Some Useful Web Sites for Parents

- **Charlotte County Family Services Center** – <http://www.charlottecountyfl.com/HumanServices/FamilyServices/>
- **Charlotte County Government** – <http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com>
- **Charlotte County Human Services** – <http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/HumanServices>
- **Charlotte County Public Schools Parent Website** – <http://www.ccps.k12.fl.us/Parents.cfm>
- **KidsHealth.org** – <http://www.kidshealth.org/parent> (health, emotions, behavior, development, nutrition, first aid and parenting)
- **MyFlorida.com** – <http://www.myflorida.com> (Florida State Government Listings)

Community Resources to Assist You

Charlotte County Human Services	941-833-6500
DCF	941-613-2000
Florida KIDCARE	888-540-5437
Charlotte County Homeless Coalition	941-627-4313
Good Samaritans	941-639-3335
Harry Chapin Food Banks	239-334-7007
Healthy Start	941-613-0909
Salvation Army	941-629-5950
	or 941-629-3170
United Way	941-627-3539

Health Department

Punta Gorda	941-639-1181
Port Charlotte	941-255-7424
Englewood	941-474-3240
WIC	Port Charlotte 941-833-3511 Englewood 941-474-3240
Environmental Health	941-743-1266
Education	941-639-1181, Ext. 211



Housing Referral/Utilities/Rent

Charlotte County Habitat for Humanity	941-639-3162
Charlotte County Homeless Coalition	941-627-4313
Charlotte County Human Services	941-833-6500
Englewood Helping Hand	941-474-5864
Housing Corp of Charlotte County	941-255-9454
Palm Tabernacle: REACH	941-764-1411
Punta Gorda Housing Authority	941-639-4344
Salvation Army	941-629-5950
	or 941-629-3170
St Maximilian Kolbe	941-743-6877
St Vincent de Paul Society	
Sacred Heart	941-575-0767
San Antonio	941-235-1254
St Charles	941-625-9784