

A DEFINITION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY*

*The term *school psychology* is used in a general form to refer to professionals prepared in psychology and education and who are recognized as specialists in the provision of psychological services to children and youth within the contexts of schools, families, and other settings that impact their growth and development. As such, the term also refers to and is meant to include educational psychologists and others who display qualities this document associates with school psychology.

The following guidelines that address the definition of school psychology are intended to be advisory in nature and to serve an educational function for those interested in better understanding school psychology. These guidelines that define school psychology are not intended to supersede or replace those approved by national associations of psychology or school psychology or by a nation's educational institutions. Moreover, these guidelines can be considered to be minimal: efforts by a nation to improve the quality and scope of school psychology and its practices as outlined herein are to be encouraged when local, regional, or national resources allow and justify such expansion and enlargement. Considerable differences exist among countries in the development of the specialty of school psychology. In some, the specialty is well established, has a long history, and is likely to display the qualities describes in this definition. In some, the specialty is not well established and has a short history. In countries where school psychology is emerging, these guidelines may be aspirational in nature. That is, the definition of school psychology presented in this document sets guidelines toward which the specialty will work to achieve over some years. The specialty of school psychology should not be evaluated only on the extent it conforms to these used to evaluate programs and services retroactively. In addition, the guidelines should not be Moreover, these guidelines are considered to be a living document, one subject to periodic review and revision by appropriate committees within ISPA. The various practices and orientations discussed within these guidelines that help define school psychology implicitly recognize those that have evolved over its history . The continued vitality of school psychology requires it to evolve so as to reflect changes in both the discipline of psychology and the needs of those served by school psychology.

The Nature of School Psychology

1. School psychologists have a degree from a university providing . an organized, sequential school psychology program in a department of psychology or educational psychology, in a school of education, or an administrative unit in a professional school.
2. In countries that have professional associations of psychology or school psychology, the level of the degree (i.e., undergraduate, master's, doctoral degrees) and the nature of their preparation and work qualify persons for membership within the association.
3. The school psychology program will be accredited in those countries where accreditation is possible. Efforts should be made to develop accreditation procedure when none exists.
4. School psychology programs embody the following characteristics.
 - 4.1 Programs offer an integrated, organized sequence of study, one that places primary emphasis on psychology and provides a strong emphasis on education.
 - 4.2 The program has an identifiable program faculty who have primary responsibility for the selection and evaluation of its students, and the nature of the program.
 - 4.3 A professional suitably qualified in school psychology is administratively responsible for the program.
 - 4.4 The program has an identifiable body of students who have been accepted into the program, having met acceptable entrance guidelines.
 - 4.5 Patterns of academic and professional preparation in school psychology are consistent with current research and literature, current and emerging roles to be performed, and services to be provided. In

addition, preparation will prepare practitioners for work with the ages, developmental characteristics, populations, problems, and issues found prominently in the schools and other settings in which school psychologists are employed.

4.6 The program of study includes a core curriculum that contains academic content in basic areas of psychology and education, professional content important to the practice of school psychology, and information relevant to work in culturally diverse settings.

4.7 Professional content provides preparation, including supervised field experiences in assessment, intervention, consultation, organizational and program development, supervision, and research.

4.8 Students acquire knowledge and experiences working in various settings in which school psychological services may be delivered. These may include schools, homes, clinics, agencies, hospitals, and other institutions. Practices may include individual, group, and organizational work in public and privately supported settings.

4.9 Students acquire knowledge of various assessment models and methods including psychological, behavioral (including task analysis), social systems, medical, and ecological models. Individual and group assessment methods focus on persons as well as contextual and environmental features that may influence their behaviors. Assessment methods typically view behavior as a result of interactions between persons and their environments.

5. Assessment refers to educational, social, psychological, neuropsychological, language, and vocational assessment, evaluation, and diagnosis of infants, children, youth, and adults.

5.1 Assessments may occur within various contexts including schools, families, social service agencies, hospitals, detention and rehabilitation settings.

5.2 Procedures include but are not limited to reviewing existing records, observing, screening, interviewing, and testing.

5.3 A primary goal of assessment is to accurately describe intellectual, academic, affective, social, personality, temperament, adaptive, language, psychomotor, vocational, and neuropsychological development and status as well as values. Other important goals of assessment are to assist in determining the etiology of disorders, in planning and evaluating interventions, and in preventing the onset of disabling conditions.

6. School psychologists are involved in various forms of interventions in order to help promote development, to acquire and best utilize personal, school, family, and community resources, and to minimize difficulties and disorders.

6.1 Interventions involving infants, children, youth, and adults may be designed to facilitate their development in one or more of the following areas: intellectual, academic, affective, social, personality, temperament, adaptive, language, psychomotor, vocational, and neuropsychological development and status as well as values.

6.2 Interventions often involve school psychologists working directly with individuals, groups, or systems, or indirectly (e.g., through consultation) with teachers, principals, and other educational personnel, parents and

other family members, as well as other professionals and paraprofessionals. In addition, school psychologists serve as liaison between school and other community, regional, and national agencies.

6.3 Interventions may be directed toward promoting well being and preventing the onset of problems (i.e., primary prevention), minimizing difficulties once they occur (i.e., secondary prevention), and stabilizing disabilities and working to ensure basic and needed services are provided to those who can be expected to manifest one or more disabling conditions over some years (i.e., tertiary prevention).

6.4 Direct services include but are not limited to counseling and other forms of therapeutic services, teaching, tutoring, and other interventions in which a school psychologist personally works with one or more individuals in need of services. Indirect services include but are not restricted to assessment and program planning, providing pre-service and inservice professional preparation, supervision, consultation, collaboration, research and evaluation, and other methods by which needed services are delivered by others with the assistance of school psychologists.

7. Consultation generally refers to the provision of school psychological services using indirect methods to deliver services.

7.1 Consultation services typically recognize and emphasize the importance of using cooperative and collaborative methods to address problems. Consultation services may be offered to teachers and other educational personnel, other professionals, religious and other community leaders, parents, and government officials at the local, regional, national, and international levels. Consultation often involves school psychologists participating with other professionals, parents, students, and others as members of a team.

7.2 Consultation services encourage participation in ways to promote knowledge of psychology and education and their proper applications to enhance growth and development. Consultation services may include providing assistance in planning and evaluating programs to better utilize or advance cognitive, affective, social, emotional, adaptive, language, psychomotor, neuropsychological, and vocational abilities and well-being. Consultation services also may be directed toward enhancing the understanding and ability of teachers, administrators, and parents to promote development. Consultation services strive to create positive climates within which to live, work, and learn.

8. Organizational and program development services are provided to schools, school districts, agencies, as well as other organizations and administrative units at local, regional, national, and international levels. Services may include assessment and evaluation, interventions, coordination, program planning, curriculum and instructional development and evaluation, and consultation. Typical goals include promoting and strengthening the coordination, administration, planning, and evaluation of services within one unit or between two or more units responsible for serving infants, children, youth, or adults. Organizational and program development services provided by school psychologists typically focus on educational, psychological, and social issues.

9. Supervision refers to professional services provided by those with advanced preparation and experience who are able to assume responsibility and accountability for the provision of school psychological services.

9.1 The level and extent of supervision depend on the nature of the services being delivered, the professional expertise and personal qualities

manifested by other staff members, together with other job and administrative duties and responsibilities.

9.2 The administrative unit responsible for providing school psychological services is directed by a school psychologist who also is responsible for supervising the activities of school psychologists working within this unit.

10. School psychologists along with those responsible for financial, administrative, and programmatic influence on school psychological services are accountable for the delivery of school psychological services in an effective and efficient manner. Accountability involves self-evaluations together with evaluations at the programmatic and institutional levels. Evaluations involve both the providers and consumers of services, including professional, paraprofessional, and clerical staff, students, parents, and persons within the community. A primary goal of the accountability process is to help ensure the effective and efficient delivery of school psychological services.

11. School psychologists are committed to a service delivery model in which research and theory form a primary basis for practice. They can be expected to be knowledgeable of research relevant to practice and guide their services accordingly. In addition, school psychologists are expected to contribute to research and theory by actively engaging in research, evaluation, professional writing, and other scholarly activities intended to advance knowledge and its applications relevant to school psychology.

12. School psychologists are knowledgeable of legislation, public policies, and administrative rulings that guide the delivery of psychological and educational services. They provide their services in ways consistent with these provisions. In addition, they work to insure suitable laws that promote school psychology services are enacted and enforced.

13. School psychologists are knowledgeable of professional codes of ethics that guide their profession, provide services in ways consistent with these ethics, and work to insure their continued relevancy.

14. School psychologists continue their professional development in ways that help insure their practices are consistent with current knowledge, legislation, and codes of professional practice and conduct.
