



Developing Specialized Training for Social Workers in Working with Ages 0-12 Children and Families

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Abstract

Background:

In Hong Kong, with increasing awareness of child welfare and child protection, the public expect more professional social work service to pre-school age and pre-primary children and their families. Social work service for pre-primary institution in Hong Kong was piloted in 2019 where social workers would offer professional counselling service, parenting education, family relationship consolidation, crisis management and professional consultation to teaching team.

Purpose: A 96-hours Advanced Certificate Programme on Social Work with Children with specialized training in knowledge and intellectual skills in working with ages 0-12 children and their families was developed to (1) fill up the training gap with a well-recognized academic programme in Hong Kong, (2) develop professional competences of social workers in this specialty.

Approach: The programme is built on an ecological-system-constructionist framework, which is anchored in the theory and practice of systems-ecological practice, child-centred approach, and competency-based perspective was launched out.

Results: Over 70 social workers who came from different child-related settings completed the training programme in three years. Their feedback and evaluation on the programme were collected.

Conclusion: It was found that the professional competence of the social workers in working with children and families was enhanced. Their knowledge, skillsets, and repertoire in handling children with diverse needs arising from child maltreatment and adverse childhood experience, potentially traumatic events such as illness, death and grief in family were enhanced.

Keywords: ages 0-12 children, pre-primary institution, social work service, social work education, professional competence