

HILLSDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HILLSDALE, NEW JERSEY

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GUIDANCE
AND COUNSELING**

KINDERGARTEN – GRADE FOUR

- 2009 -

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- PURPOSE -

The Hillsdale Board of Education desires to provide elementary school age children with GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES which promote healthy coping and decision making skills.

Consistent with the philosophy of education, elementary guidance and counseling concerns itself with the child in the developmental process of maximizing student potential. Living and functioning effectively depends on the interaction of an individual's self-concept and the complexity of influences and experiences which children accumulate. The elementary school teacher and counselor work within the education framework and the child's total environment, to enable each child to find his/her identity and to learn to make choices and decisions which lead to effective functioning as a worthwhile being.

Individual students make choices and decisions which determine one's behavior and learning, thus particular attention and time must be given in the entire education program of children to provide training and opportunities to learn decision making skills. The elementary teacher and counselor, because of their specialized training, can provide services and leadership in this area as it is fully integrated into the total school experience.

Elementary guidance and counseling, as provided by counselors classroom and special area teachers, builds upon the belief that human beings must have continuous experiences which are challenging, achievement oriented, and successful. The school creates situations in which pupils find themselves needed and wanted by others. It creates situations in which teachers and counselors can show each child that he/she is accepted by his/her fellow students. Elementary school guidance counseling is concerned with each child's perceptions of the present situation and how they relate to the present and future; selected faculty play a primary role in working with children and making education more meaningful to each child with the implementation of an appropriate program.

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING are part of the total school program that enables students to understand themselves, understand their relationships with others, and acquire the ability to make decisions that lead to productive and enriched lives.

Elementary guidance preparation must begin at an early age. Children need to be taught how to make decisions, consider alternatives, accept consequences of their behavior, and become aware of personal strengths and weaknesses.

- OBJECTIVES -

The individual student (age appropriate)

- should be able to identify likes, dislikes, interests, skills, etc.
- should be able to define one's role in the family setting, neighborhood, and community.
- should have positive feelings and be able to verbalize self-feelings in a straightforward, comfortable manner without fear of non-acceptance.
- should be able to recognize shortcomings and accept limitations, then proceed to work toward improvement.
- should be acceptant of other and be able to identify and work toward solving conflicts in relationships.
- should feel good about learning and working; and when it occurs, should use appropriate skills, problem solving and decision-making skills to reach a level at which one can cope.
- should have a realistic understanding of the interrelatedness of people and the world of things and services, and the part one plays in it.
- should understand that good character is developed, and, as a person how it influences one's actions in a variety of situations.

THE ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, AND PARENTS in the child's life:

- should understand and accept the child's self-concept and work with each of them to determine for themselves positive changes; providing guidance and support.
- should relate to the child as a worthwhile human being, so that the child can use acceptable and appropriate relationship behavior.
- should provide teaching, experiences and opportunities for learning decision-making skills and grant the dignity to leave with and learn from one's mistakes without criticism or ridicule, or without "taking over" the decision making.
- should give the child opportunities to foster character development without totally influencing a child's ultimate understanding of its development for oneself.

- PROCEDURES -

School Professionals should be guided by the following activities and techniques:

- assess individual needs
- identify pupils who need additional services: intellectually talented, emotional difficulties, those students who need supplementary instruction
- counsel students about personal and educational matters
- interpret cumulative data
- make referrals
- orient new students
- hold individual conferences with parents about the child's progress and plans.
- interpret pupil data
- interpret school services which are available
- inform parents about information concerning their child's growth and development
- promote conflict resolution and critical thinking skills
- discuss pupil program changes
- assist in the maintenance and use of cumulative records
- assist in class and group placement of pupils
- assist with screening of students with special needs, not being met by his/her present program
- study and report factors that might lead to improvement of teaching methods and curriculum
- assist in the promotion of good public relations
- assist the child with developing choice alternatives and accepting what is decided upon
- assist the building principal in organizing a schedule and distributing materials for the standardized tests that are administered in grades 1-4 (NJ ASK grades 3 and 4, Terra Nova, Primary Test of Cognitive Skills and In-View)
- assist the building principal in administering the Brigance test as part of our kindergarten screening process
- assist the building principal in developing 504 plans and provide individual accommodation plans for eligible students
- facilitate the Intervention and Referral Service (I&RS) committee meetings/interventions, and formulate student plans.

- COUNSELING -

Counseling is a person-to-person situation in which the focus is on enabling the children who are being counseled to work through to solutions of problems which perplex them and in which opportunities are provided to re-orient views of self and community. While different schools of thought may place differing emphasis upon the activities and roles of the teacher and counselors, all agree that the purpose is to enable individual students to “understanding themselves so that they can solve their own problems” and that in process, are aided to a self-determined resolution of their problem.

Thus, the emphasis in counseling is on assisting the individual to change, to modify behaviors and to solve problems through the establishment of an interpersonal relationship.

Counselors and teachers have had training in the field of human development and are placed in many situations which fit the definition of a counseling situation. Counselors and teachers serve as front-line advisors. The reality factors of school life require them to know and understand the counseling process and how they can function effectively in helping individuals through counseling intervention.

- COUNSELING TECHNIQUES -

Individual Counseling

Individual counseling is the process of establishing with a child a relationship which enables him/her to learn about one's self, to set goals and to develop self direction in moving toward those goals:

Counseling with individual pupils may concern issues:

- about student's inability to master subject matters
- about student's inability to get along with peers
- about behavior problems in the classroom
- about family problems with parent and/or siblings
- about maturation
- about simple emotional problems
- about orientation of new pupils

Small Group Classroom Counseling

Small group counseling is the process of establishing relationships with a small group of children enabling them to communicate certain identified needs with the group leader. This technique provides a major learning experience in human relations and could appropriately be applied in situations regarding:

- antisocial behavior-bullying, fighting, lying, etc.
- poor study habits
- inadequate health practices
- lack of social skills
- understanding of common emotions – fear, hate, etc.
- developing an understanding of character
- grief counseling
- family issues
- anti-violence/bullying classroom presentations

Large Group Counseling

Large group counseling may be applicable in areas that assist units for classroom use and introduces programs and units of study in social studies, science, and health curriculum areas. Some of the areas that might be best addressed in large group counseling situations are:

- attitudes
- social relationships
- decision making and problem solving
- study habits
- world of work
- citizenship
- character development
- appreciation of diversity and prejudice reduction

- **EVALUATION** -

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the program will be determined by:

- follow-up of student attitudes, understandings and perceptions.
- the opinions of the teacher and/or counselor – which took place during the process(es) and the individual's estimate of the progress made toward goals
- scrutiny of the verbal exchange during the process, interview, etc.
- observable behavior changes