

SHIPS

School and Home Intervention for Preschool Students

What is it?

The SHIPS program was developed for the Sonoma County Office of Education's special education preschool by a committed team of specialists. Their goal was to serve the emotional needs of preschoolers who display difficult, hard-to-handle behaviors at home and in school.

SHIPS is a 12-week, comprehensive counseling program that supplements and supports the preschool experience of special needs children. The program engages a counselor in working one-on-one with children in the school setting. At the same time, counseling for the children's families is provided. Family counseling can hone positive parenting skills or help parents deal with personal issues like grief and loss, divorce, anger management, or abuse.

How are students referred?

Children who are enrolled in the SCOE Preschool Program are eligible for SHIPS. Preschool teachers and school psychologists can recommend children in need of mental health services to the SHIPS program.

Each referral is evaluated by a team of SCOE Preschool Program administrators, teachers, psychologists, nurses, and specialists. If the referral is determined to be appropriate, the SHIPS counselor will contact the family to discuss services and schedule program sessions. Parents may also request information about SHIPS from their child's preschool teacher or school psychologist.

SHIPS

School and Home Intervention for Preschool Students



*A counseling program that
provides therapeutic support to
young special needs children
and their families*



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Program components

The SHIPS counselor is a professional child and family therapist experienced in working with special needs children. Services are provided by the counselor over a 12-week period and may include:

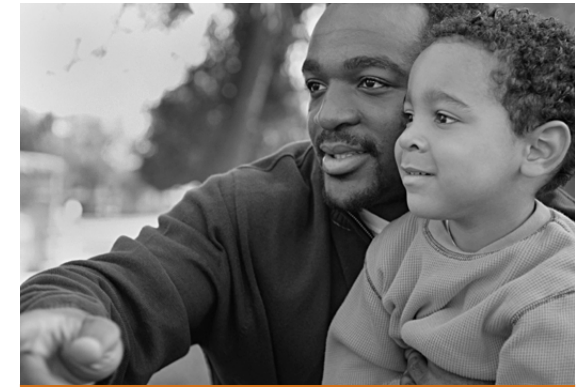
- Once-a-week play therapy sessions for the preschool student;
- Once-a-week counseling sessions for the child's parents;
- Collaboration with the child's preschool teacher to ensure consistency;
- Consultation and collaboration with community agencies providing services to the child and/or family; and

- Referrals when a need for on-going therapy is indicated.



What is play therapy?

Because many special education preschool students have difficulty communicating, play therapy is one of the most effective means of addressing early childhood problems. In SHIPS, the counselor spends one hour per week providing play therapy to each child in the program. These one-on-one sessions take place in private at the preschool site the child attends. The counselor creates a safe and supportive environment, then helps the child process emotional difficulties in a play format.



What counseling services are provided?

Parents receive one hour per week of counseling scheduled during their child's school day. These sessions are conducted by the SHIPS counselor and may include:

- Parent education about child development, managing disruptive behaviors, sibling difficulties, and other issues that may be contributing to their child's emotional problems;
- Assistance designed to help parents deal with fear, grief, denial, or anger;
- Identification of resources and assistance obtaining appropriate community services when ongoing therapeutic needs are indicated for the child and/or family.