

SWK 6704

Social Work Practice with Children

Master Syllabus | Fall 2026

Instructor	[Instructor name]
Email	[Instructor email]
Office hours	By appointment; add modality/location
Course meeting	[Day/time/modality]

Course Description

This elective builds on Human Behavior and the Social Environment, generalist practice, and research-informed practice. The course examines social work with children from infancy through adolescence in family, school, health, child welfare, community, and digital contexts. Students integrate developmental, ecological, relational, trauma- and violence-informed, and anti-oppressive perspectives while attending to culture, identity, structural conditions, risk, resilience, and protective factors.

Emphasis is placed on developmentally responsive engagement; child voice and assent; multi-informant biopsychosocial-spiritual assessment; case formulation and diagnostic considerations; evidence-informed intervention planning; measurable goals and progress monitoring; collaboration with families and interprofessional systems; and ethical, legal, and advocacy responsibilities. Diagnosis is treated as one source of information within a broader social work formulation, not as a substitute for understanding the child in context.

Course Learning Outcomes and EPAS Alignment

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

#	Course learning outcome	2022 EPAS
1	Apply developmental, ecological, relational, resilience, and anti-oppressive frameworks to understand children and families in context.	2, 3, 7
2	Engage children and caregivers using developmentally responsive, culturally humble, trauma- and violence-informed practices that center child voice and assent.	1, 2, 3, 6
3	Conduct and document a multi-informant biopsychosocial-spiritual assessment that identifies strengths, functioning, safety concerns, risks, protective factors, supports, and social determinants.	6, 7

#	Course learning outcome	2022 EPAS
4	Integrate assessment information into a case formulation and diagnostic considerations while distinguishing formulation from diagnosis and addressing stigma, bias, and uncertainty.	1, 3, 7
5	Select evidence-informed interventions aligned with developmental stage, culture, context, goals, child and family preferences, and practice setting.	4, 8
6	Develop measurable goals, select feasible indicators of progress, evaluate outcomes, and adapt services in response to evidence and feedback.	4, 9
7	Collaborate with children, families, and interprofessional systems while navigating consent, assent, confidentiality, information sharing, and role boundaries.	1, 6, 8
8	Analyze ethical and legal dilemmas, reflect on use of self, address inequities, and advocate for policies and practices that advance child and family well-being.	1, 2, 3, 5

EPAS reference: [Council on Social Work Education, 2022 EPAS](#)

Instructional Methods

Learning activities include focused lectures, discussion of required readings, structured case analysis, role-play and skills practice, evidence appraisal, small-group consultation, reflective writing, and application to varied practice settings. Instructors will provide equivalent participation opportunities across in-person, synchronous online, and asynchronous formats.

Required Textbook and Course Readings

Required textbook: Webb, N. B. (2019). Social work practice with children (4th ed.). Guilford Press. ISBN 978-1-4625-3755-6.

The fourth edition is required. Chapter numbers and titles in the course schedule follow the publisher's official table of contents.

Recommended resources: Davies and Troy's Child Development: A Practitioner's Guide (4th ed.) and the DSM-5-TR may be consulted as references. DSM-5-TR supports diagnostic reasoning when applicable but does not replace comprehensive assessment or case formulation.

Access to readings: All required readings outside the textbook will be provided through Canvas or Yeshiva University Course Reserves. <https://library.yu.edu/Reserves>

Course Expectations and Grading

Attend and participate consistently. In asynchronous sections, participation includes timely and substantive engagement with weekly activities and discussions.

Complete assigned readings before the corresponding session and bring the readings into case discussions and written work.

Engage respectfully with differing experiences and perspectives, maintain professional boundaries, and protect the privacy of clients, practicum sites, and classmates.

Communicate with the instructor promptly when circumstances may interfere with participation or assignment completion.

Course component	Weight
Participation and preparation	15%
Assignment I – Reflection Journals	15%
Assignment II – BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT (Midterm)	30%
Assignment II – Focus on a Topic (Final)	40%
Total	100%

Letter Grade Scale

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	F
94-100	90-93	87-89	83-86	80-82	75-79	70-74	Below 70

Course Requirements

Assignment I – Reflection Journals

Assignment II – Due Session 7 – BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT (Midterm – 60 pts)

Select a client with whom you are or will be working at your internship during this semester, or a child with whom you worked during a previous internship. The child should be older than 18 months and up to 18 years old.

If you have not worked with a child who fits these criteria, an instructor-provided case or film will be available for you to use.

Confidentiality requirement: A practicum case may be used only when consistent with field-agency policy and supervision requirements. Remove all direct and indirect identifiers, do not submit records or screenshots, and do not enter case material into generative AI or other unapproved platforms.

For this child, please write a paper that includes the following:

A brief description of the child, your relationship to the child, and the child's presenting issue.

Use one of the theories discussed in this course to frame the client's issue.

Complete a biopsychosocial assessment of the child as described in Chapter 4 of Social Work Practice with Children, including the following:

- Individual Factors

- Situational Factors
- Factors in the Support System
- A DSM-5-TR diagnosis related to the presenting issue.

Include at least one actionable and attainable goal for addressing the presenting issue.

Identify any necessary individuals, such as family members or other professionals, who will be needed in the process of working toward the identified goal or goals.

This paper should be 4-6 pages in length, with 3-5 scholarly references; course readings and the textbook may be used. Please use APA 7 formatting, including citations, page numbers, a title page, and a reference page.

Assignment II – Due Session 13 – Focus on a Topic (Final – 80 pts)

The purpose of this assignment is for you to investigate a topic that interests you and is relevant to social work practice with children and adolescents, and to select and present research that can inform social work practice. You may choose from the topics below or select your own. All topics must be approved by the professor. Your information and journal articles will be shared with the rest of the class to create a repository that can support your future practice.

Acceptable content sources include:

Scholarly, peer-reviewed articles from professional journals.

Websites from reputable organizations that present evidence-based interventions or practice guidance.

Non-acceptable content sources include:

Facebook or other social media groups.

Newspaper articles, popular magazine articles, or journalistic news and opinion pieces.

Wikipedia.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

Trauma-focused interventions, such as TF-CBT, related to specific diagnoses and situations, including PTSD, sexual abuse, and natural disasters.

Attachment and bonding.

The assessment and treatment of ADHD as collaboration between school and family.

The use of psychodrama therapy as an intervention.

Body image concerns and interventions, including sociocultural and environmental factors.

Bullying and interpersonal violence, focusing on the bully, the victim, or the bully/victim.

Interventions related to telehealth and teletherapy with children.

Challenges for children and adolescents involved in the juvenile justice system.

Challenges for children and adolescents involved in the foster care system.

Challenges for crossover youth—children involved in both the juvenile justice and foster care systems.

Write a paper addressing the following:

Present a general overview of your topic, including definitions of terms commonly used in understanding the topic.

What are the current best practices or recommendations concerning this topic?

Is there consensus among authors about this topic, or are there conflicting viewpoints?

As a practitioner using this information to inform your work, what are your impressions of the topic?

What biases, experiences, and values do you bring to what you have read?

Are there gaps in what you have read or areas requiring further research?

This paper should be 7-8 pages in length, with 6-8 scholarly references; course readings and the textbook may be used. Please use APA 7 formatting, including citations, page numbers, a title page, and a reference page.

Research Paper Rubric: Focus on a Topic (80 Points)

For each criterion, select the performance band that best represents the submission and assign a whole-number score within the indicated range. Scores across the six criteria are summed for a total of 80 points.

Criterion and Points	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Insufficient
Topic Overview and Definitions 10 points	9-10: Topic is clearly introduced, relevant terms are accurately defined, and the scope is appropriate.	8: Overview and definitions are clear overall, with only minor omissions.	7: Overview is broad, uneven, or missing important definitions.	0-6: Topic and key terms are unclear, inaccurate, or substantially incomplete.
Best Practices and Research Evidence 20 points	18-20: Accurately explains current best practices or recommendations using 6-8 relevant scholarly sources and appropriate evidence-based organizational guidance.	16-17: Explains best practices with appropriate evidence; minor gaps appear in currency, relevance, or depth.	14-15: Evidence is uneven or used mainly descriptively; best-practice claims need stronger support.	0-13: Best-practice discussion is inaccurate, unsupported, or based largely on unacceptable sources.
Consensus and Conflicting Viewpoints 15 points	14-15: Synthesizes authors' areas of agreement and disagreement and explains the implications for practice.	12-13: Identifies consensus and disagreement with generally sound comparison across sources.	11: Mentions differing viewpoints but provides limited synthesis or practice interpretation.	0-10: Presents disconnected summaries or does not address consensus and conflicting viewpoints.

Criterion and Points	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Insufficient
Practitioner Reflection: Biases, Experiences, and Values 15 points	14-15: Provides thoughtful, specific reflection on impressions, biases, experiences, and professional values and connects them to practice.	12-13: Reflection is relevant and shows self-awareness, though some connections need greater depth or specificity.	11: Reflection is general, largely descriptive, or only loosely connected to practice.	0-10: Reflection is minimal, missing, or demonstrates little awareness of bias and professional values.
Research Gaps and Future Directions 10 points	9-10: Identifies meaningful gaps and offers well-supported priorities for further research or practice development.	8: Identifies relevant gaps and reasonable future directions with minor limitations.	7: Gaps or future directions are vague, overly broad, or weakly connected to the reviewed evidence.	0-6: Does not identify credible gaps or areas for further research.
Organization, Scholarly Sources, and APA 7 Style 10 points	9-10: Paper is coherent, professional, and well organized; source and length requirements are met; APA 7 citations and references are accurate.	8: Writing and organization are clear overall, with only minor APA, citation, or editing problems.	7: Organization is uneven or repetitive, with recurring writing, citation, formatting, or length problems.	0-6: Paper is difficult to follow or poorly edited, with serious source, citation, attribution, APA, or assignment-compliance problems.

Total Score: _____ / 80 points

Course and University Policies

Accessibility and Disability-Related Accommodations

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations should make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services during the first week of class. Once approved for accommodations, students should contact the instructor to support timely implementation.

Office of Disability Services: <https://www.yu.edu/student-life/resources-and-services/disability-services>

Academic Integrity and Use of Artificial Intelligence

All submitted work must represent the student's own learning and acknowledge the ideas, language, data, and work of others, using appropriate citations. Students are responsible for following the current WSSW Policy Manual and Course Catalog, as well as all applicable Yeshiva University academic integrity requirements.

1. Generative AI may be used only when the instructor or assignment instructions explicitly authorize a particular use. When authorized, students must disclose and cite the use as directed and remain responsible for accuracy, originality, and source verification.
2. Assistive tools for spelling, grammar, or accessibility do not remove the student's responsibility for the substance of the work and may be limited by assignment-specific instructions.
3. Client, practicum, agency, or other confidential information may never be entered into generative AI or unapproved digital platforms.

4. Fabricated citations, misrepresented sources, or submission of generated content as the student's own work may constitute an academic integrity violation.

Policies and resources: [WSSW Policy Manual and Course Catalogue](#) | [Yeshiva University Academic Integrity](#)

Confidentiality and Use of Case Material

Students must protect confidentiality in all class discussions, written work, presentations, and online activities. Use instructor-provided cases whenever possible. When a practicum case is expressly permitted, remove names and all direct or indirect identifiers; change nonessential details; avoid uploading records or screenshots; and follow field-agency policy, supervision requirements, HIPAA, FERPA, and the NASW Code of Ethics as applicable. The instructor may require a student to revise or replace material that creates a confidentiality concern.

Course Reserves and Copyright

Required articles will be posted through Canvas or made available through Yeshiva University Course Reserves in accordance with library and copyright requirements. Course materials are provided for enrolled students' educational use and should not be redistributed outside the course.

Incomplete Grades and Late Work

Requests for an incomplete are considered only in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with current WSSW policy. An incomplete requires instructor approval and a written plan with a completion deadline. Late-work expectations and any approved extensions will be communicated by the instructor; students should request support as early as possible.

Professional Conduct and Respectful Learning

The course addresses sensitive topics involving children, families, trauma, violence, identity, discrimination, and systems of care. Students are expected to communicate respectfully, avoid stigmatizing language, recognize the limits of their knowledge, respond constructively to feedback, and seek supervision when course material raises practice or personal concerns.

Course Schedule

This master schedule identifies the common course sequence and core readings. Instructors may add cases, activities, and recommended readings while retaining the course learning outcomes, major assignments, grading distribution, and core content. Any changes to due dates will be announced in the section syllabus and Canvas.

Session 1. Course Orientation and the Child in Context

Topics and practice: Course expectations; social work roles with children; developmental and ecological perspectives; strengths, needs, and context.

Required: Webb, Chapter 1, 'The Challenge of Meeting Children's Needs in the Context of Difficult Family and Community Environments.'

Session 2. Child Voice, Participation, and Developmentally Responsive Engagement

Topics and practice: Children as participants in practice; relationship building; communication across developmental stages; assent, power, and protection.

Required: Webb, Chapter 2; McCafferty and Mercado García (2024).

Session 3. Ecological Systems, Social Determinants, Culture, Risk, and Resilience

Topics and practice: Structural conditions; family and community environments; culture and identity; risk, resilience, and protective processes.

Required: Webb, Chapter 3; Kirkbride et al. (2024), selected sections, pp. 58-61 and 76-79.

Session 4. Engagement and Multi-Informant Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Assessment

Topics and practice: Sources of information; child, caregiver, school, and collateral perspectives; strengths and functioning; safety and assessment quality.

Required: Webb, Chapter 4.

Recommended or selected: National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 'Screening and Assessment.'

Session 5. Case Formulation, Diagnostic Considerations, and Stigma

Topics and practice: From information gathering to formulation; formulation versus diagnosis; differential considerations; uncertainty, bias, and help-seeking stigma.

Required: Webb, Chapter 5; McTavish et al. (2024).

Recommended or selected: Villatoro et al. (2022).

Session 6. Adversity, ACEs, Trauma, and Safety

Topics and practice: Population-level adversity research versus individual screening; benefits and potential harms of ACE screening; safety, strengths, and relational assessment.

Required: Austin et al. (2024); Webb, Chapter 14, selected sections.

Session 7. Trauma- and Violence-Informed Practice: Principles and Critiques

Topics and practice: Trauma-informed care as an orientation and organizational approach; conceptual clarity, evidence limitations, structural trauma, and risks of pathologizing.

Required: Leotti and Wahab (2025).

Assignment: BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL ASSESSMENT (Midterm) due.

Session 8. Evidence-Informed Intervention Planning

Topics and practice: Matching interventions to formulation, developmental stage, goals, context, preferences, setting, and available evidence; implementation feasibility.

Required: Webb, Chapter 5; Brown et al. (2024).

Session 9. Family and Caregiver-Focused Practice

Topics and practice: Family engagement; caregiver well-being and skills; family relationships; shared goals; cultural and structural context.

Required: Webb, Chapter 6, 'Helping the Family Help Their Child.'

Session 10. Practice Modalities and Service Settings

Topics and practice: Play and expressive approaches; group work; school-based interventions; selecting a modality and monitoring progress.

Required: Webb, selected material from Chapters 7-9 as assigned by the instructor.

Session 11. Child Welfare, Kinship and Foster Care, and Structural Inequity

Topics and practice: Child welfare involvement; kinship and foster placements; racial disproportionality; structural drivers; family and community advocacy.

Required: Webb, Chapter 10; Dettlaff and Boyd (2020).

Session 12. Schools, Immigration, and Interprofessional Collaboration

Topics and practice: School social work roles; immigrant and refugee children; collaboration across educational, health, behavioral health, legal, and community systems.

Required: Webb, Chapter 16; Rodriguez et al. (2024).

Session 13. Ethics, Confidentiality, Mandatory Reporting, and Use of Self

Topics and practice: Consent and assent; confidentiality and its limits; reporting obligations and ethical tensions; supervision, boundaries, and reflective use of self.

Required: Harrell and Wahab (2022); Chung et al. (2024).

Recommended or selected: Current jurisdiction-specific law and agency policy supplied by the instructor.

Assignment: Focus on a Topic (Final) due.

Session 14. Digital Practice, Artificial Intelligence, Advocacy, and Integration

Topics and practice: Hybrid and digital practice; surveillance, access, privacy, algorithmic bias, professional judgment, and integration of assessment, intervention, evaluation, and advocacy.

Required: Webb, Chapter 17; Behan-Devlin (2024).

Recommended or selected: Reamer (2023), selected sections, pp. 52-66.

Course References

Required and recommended course readings are listed below. Instructors may add current sources that align with the common course outcomes and schedule.

- American Psychiatric Association. (2022). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed., text rev.; DSM-5-TR). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425787>
- Austin, A. E., Anderson, K. N., Goodson, M., Holditch Niolon, P., Swedo, E. A., Terranella, A., & Bacon, S. (2024). Screening for adverse childhood experiences: A critical appraisal. *Pediatrics*, 154(6), e2024067307. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2024-067307>
- Behan-Devlin, J. (2024). Digital technology in children's safeguarding social work practice in the 21st century: A scoping review. *British Journal of Social Work*, 54(7), 2957-2976. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcae071>
- Brown, F. L., Lee, C., Servili, C., Willhoite, A., Van Ommeren, M., Hijazi, Z., Kieselbach, B., & Skeen, S. (2024). Psychological interventions for children with emotional and behavioral difficulties aged 5-12 years: An evidence review. *Cambridge Prisms: Global Mental Health*, 11, e75. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2024.57>
- Chung, R. J., Lee, J. B., Hackell, J. M., Alderman, E. M., Committee on Adolescence, & Committee on Practice and Ambulatory Medicine. (2024). Confidentiality in the care of adolescents: Policy statement. *Pediatrics*, 153(5), e2024066326. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2024-066326>
- Davies, D., & Troy, M. F. (2020). *Child development: A practitioner's guide* (4th ed.). Guilford Press.
- Dettlaff, A. J., & Boyd, R. (2020). Racial disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system: Why do they exist, and what can be done to address them? *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 692(1), 253-274.
- Harrell, S., & Wahab, S. (2022). The case for mandatory reporting as an ethical dilemma for social workers. *Advances in Social Work*, 22(2), 818-840. <https://doi.org/10.18060/24910>
- Kirkbride, J. B., Anglin, D. M., Colman, I., Dykxhoorn, J., Jones, P. B., Patalay, P., Pitman, A., Soneson, E., Steare, T., Wright, T., & Griffiths, S. L. (2024). The social determinants of mental health and disorder: Evidence, prevention and recommendations. *World Psychiatry*, 23(1), 58-90. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.21160>
- Leotti, S. M., & Wahab, S. (2025). Mapping the landscape of trauma-informed care in social work: A critical scoping review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 26(4), 651-667. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241286810>
- McCafferty, P., & Mercado García, E. (2024). Children's participation in child welfare: A systematic review of systematic reviews. *British Journal of Social Work*, 54(3), 1092-1108. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcad167>
- McTavish, J. R., McHolm, A., Niec, A., Pietrantonio, A. M., McKee, C., & MacMillan, H. L. (2024). Case conceptualization in child welfare: An underused resource to improve child, family, and provider outcomes. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 14, 1292690. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2023.1292690>
- National Association of Social Workers. (2021). Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (n.d.). Screening and assessment. <https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/screening-and-assessment>
- Reamer, F. G. (2023). Artificial intelligence in social work: Emerging ethical issues. *International Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 20(2), 52-71. <https://doi.org/10.55521/10-020-205>
- Rodriguez, S., Kirksey, J. J., Roth, B., Sosa, L. V., Lopez-Escobar, L., & Kim-Christian, P. (2024). Immigration enforcement effects and the role of school social workers supporting immigrant students. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 29(2), 151-176.
- Villatoro, A. P., DuPont-Reyes, M. J., Phelan, J. C., & Link, B. G. (2022). 'Me' vs. 'them': How mental illness stigma influences adolescent help-seeking behaviors for oneself and recommendations for peers. *Stigma and Health*, 7(3), 300-310. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sah0000392>
- Webb, N. B. (2019). *Social work practice with children* (4th ed.). Guilford Press. <https://www.guilford.com/books/Social-Work-Practice-with-Children/Nancy-Boyd-Webb/9781462537556>