

**LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS
SERVING CHILDREN AND
ADOLESCENTS, 2004**

Chapter 7 of 7

Perspectives on Social Work Practice

Prepared by

**Center for Health Workforce Studies
School of Public Health, University at Albany
Rensselaer, NY**

For

**The National Association of Social Workers
Center for Workforce Studies
Washington, DC**

March, 2006

Table of Contents

Chapter 7. Perspectives on Social Work Practice.....	1
Summary of the Findings.....	1
Changes in the Practice of Social Work and in the Service Delivery System.....	2
Satisfaction with Resources and Skills	5
Perceived Satisfaction and Efficacy.....	8
<i>Self-Assessment Of Child/Family Skills</i>	12
<i>Satisfaction with Time</i>	13
Importance of Factors to Improve Care for Children/Families	15
Career Plans	15
<i>Factors</i>	16

List of Figures

Figure 1. Mean Reported Increases or Decreases in Factors Affecting Social Work Practice and the Service Delivery System.....	3
Figure 2. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied with Access to Selected Resources, by Level of Involvement with Children and Adolescents	7
Figure 3. Average Self-Ratings of Skills Related to Providing Services to Children and Their Families, by Level of Involvement with Children	13

List of Tables

Table 1. Changes in Service Environment for Children and Adolescents for Selected Groups of Social Workers.....	4
Table 2. Changes in Service Environment for Children and Adolescents By Practice Sector.....	5
Table 3. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied and Dissatisfied with Selected Resources for Their Clients.....	6
Table 4. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied and Dissatisfied with Selected Resources for Their Clients.....	6
Table 5. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied and Dissatisfied with Selected Resources for Their Clients.....	8
Table 6. Satisfaction with Selected Aspects of Practice by Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents, by Practice Area	9
Table 7. Satisfaction with Selected Aspects of Practice by Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents, by MSW and BSW	10
Table 8. Satisfaction with Selected Aspects of Practice by Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents, by Level of Involvement with Children and Adolescents.....	11
Table 9. Satisfaction with Selected Aspects of Practice by Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents, by Employment Sector	12
Table 10. Percentages reporting their child/family-related skills are high (4 or 5 on a 5-point scale)	12
Table 10. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied and Dissatisfied with Time Available for Selected Services for their Clients	14
Table 12. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied with Time Available for Selected Tasks, by Employment Sector.....	14
Table 13. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Who Rated Selected Service Factors as Important for their Clients	15
Table 14. Two-Year Career Plans of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents, By Employment Setting.....	16
Table 15. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Who Would Change Jobs for Selected Factors	17
Table 16. Plans for Future Work with Children and Families, by Setting.....	18

Chapter 7. Perspectives on Social Work Practice

Summary of the Findings

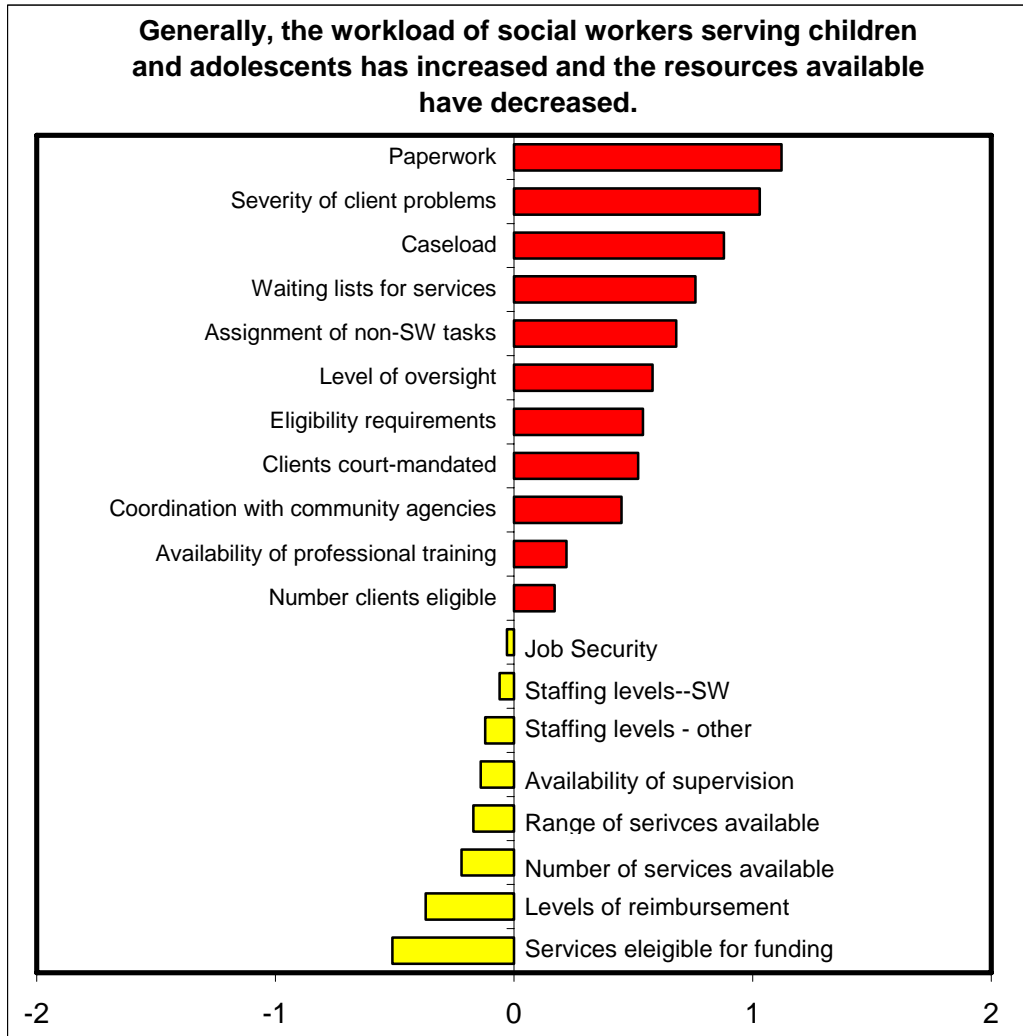
- Increases in paperwork (74%), severity of client problems (73%), caseload size (68%), and waiting lists for services (60%) are the changes in practice most frequently reported by social workers serving children and adolescents.
- Social workers with caseloads of more than 50% children and adolescents were more likely than others to report that the severity of clients' problems increased (78% versus 69%).
- The most significant changes reported in service delivery systems in the past two years include *decreases* in services eligible for funding (52%) and *increases* in eligibility requirements for services (51%) and in the number of clients presenting for reasons other than personal choice e.g. court-mandated to receive services (46%).
- Social workers are most satisfied with their ability to help clients with a range of problems (91%), improve clients' quality of life (86%), and help clients address a few key problems (86%). Satisfaction was lowest regarding their ability to respond to the number of requests received for help (51%), work with community organizations to adapt the service delivery system (46%), and their ability to influence the design of services (44%).
- MSWs were generally more confident of their effectiveness in practice, though BSWs were more likely to be satisfied with their ability to help clients navigate systems and work with community organizations to adapt the service delivery system.
- Social workers who serve children and adolescents are more likely to be satisfied with their ability to address cultural differences than social workers who do not serve this population (76% versus 67%).
- Those in the practice area of Child Welfare/Family were less likely to be satisfied with their cultural abilities than those serving this population overall, (69%), although those in Adolescents were more likely to be satisfied (82%).
- Social workers in public sector agencies were most likely to report increased challenges in both social work practice and service delivery systems. They were most satisfied with their ability to address challenges in the service delivery systems and least satisfied with respect to effectiveness in practice. In contrast, those in private practice reported fewer changes in practice and service delivery systems than others, though still reporting barriers. They were most satisfied with practice overall and least satisfied with their effectiveness in addressing changes in the service delivery system.
- One in five social workers serving some children/ adolescents was dissatisfied with access to mental health care, appropriate medical care and appropriate medications.
- Social workers in Child Welfare /Families and those serving caseloads that were predominantly children and adolescents were most dissatisfied with available resources.

- Satisfaction was highest with time to provide clinical services, and lowest with time to conduct investigations. Satisfaction with time was lower among those more heavily involved with children/adolescents.
- The availability of training/education, the availability of services for clients and caseload size are the factors social workers identified as most important for improving care for children and adolescents.
- Seven in ten social workers who serve children/adolescents plan to remain in their current position in the next two years.
- Higher salary, lifestyle/family concerns, and job stress were the top reasons given for considering job changes.
- The majority of social workers plan to continue providing services to children and adolescents (71%).
- Those in Child Welfare/Family, those with caseloads of more than 50% children/adolescents, and those working in social service agencies were most likely to plan to change positions.
- Three quarters of social workers expected future opportunities to work with children to increase (76%).

Changes in the Practice of Social Work and in the Service Delivery System

In the past two years, more than three-fifths of social workers who provide services to children and adolescents report increases paperwork (74%), severity of client problems (73%), caseload size (68%) and waiting lists for services (60%). Approximately half report services eligible for funding decreased (52%); eligibility requirements for services increased (51%); and clients presenting for reasons other than personal choice (e.g. being court-mandated to receive services) increased (46%).

Figure 1. Mean Reported Increases or Decreases in Factors Affecting Social Work Practice and the Service Delivery System



Social workers who served children and adolescents were less likely than those who did not to report that the number of clients eligible for services increased (38% versus 45%); but more likely to report that the range of services available decreased (40% versus 33%); the number of services available decreased (42% versus 34%); services eligible for funding decreased (52% versus 43%), and the number of clients presenting for reasons other than personal choice increased (46% versus 37%).

Social workers in the practice area of Child Welfare/Family were more likely than social workers NPA to report that oversight had increased (62% versus 49%), that clients receiving services for reasons other than personal choice had increased (58% versus 43%), and that social work staffing had decreased (39% versus 31%). Those in Adolescents were more likely to report that the severity of client problems had increased (82% versus 72%), but less likely to report decreases in social worker staffing (25% versus 31%), in range of services (33% versus 40%),

and in number of services (34% versus 42%). Table 1 below shows the differences in perceived barriers by highest social work degree.

Table 1. Changes in Service Environment for Children and Adolescents for Selected Groups of Social Workers

Service Characteristic	All	MSW	BSW	Child Welfare/ Family	Adol- escents	NPA
Paperwork increased	74%	72%	79%	79%	79%	72%
Severity of client problems increased	73%	73%	74%	75%	82%	72%
Caseload increased	68%	68%	71%	69%	68%	68%
Waiting lists for services increased	60%	59%	66%	62%	57%	60%
Assignment of non-SW tasks increased	53%	52%	54%	54%	50%	54%
Services eligible for funding decreased	52%	52%	48%	48%	47%	53%
Level of oversight increased	51%	51%	50%	62%	47%	49%
Eligibility requirements increased	51%	52%	46%	47%	47%	52%
Clients court-mandated increased	46%	44%	53%	58%	50%	43%
Levels of reimbursement decreased	44%	45%	40%	39%	39%	46%
Number of services available decreased	42%	42%	36%	45%	34%	42%
Range of services available decreased	40%	40%	38%	41%	33%	40%
Number clients eligible increased	38%	36%	47%	42%	43%	37%
Staffing levels decreased - other	33%	33%	28%	36%	30%	33%
Staffing levels decreased - SW	32%	32%	32%	39%	25%	31%
Job security decreased	29%	28%	32%	27%	29%	29%
Availability of supervision decreased	29%	29%	23%	25%	28%	29%
Availability of professional training decreased	17%	18%	17%	16%	18%	18%
Coordination with community agencies decreased	11%	12%	8%	13%	10%	11%

While there were few differences by prevalence of children/adolescents within caseloads, social workers who carry caseloads of more than 50% children and adolescents were more likely than those who saw fewer children/adolescents to report that the severity of client problems had increased (78% versus 69%).

Table 2 shows perceived changes in practice and delivery systems by sector. All sectors are experiencing changes in a relatively short-term period. Social workers in the public sector appear most affected by changes.

**Table 2. Changes in Service Environment for Children and Adolescents
By Practice Sector**

Service Area Characteristic	Public	Non-Profit	For- Profit	Private Practice
Caseload increased	71%	69%	75%	59%
Severity of client problems changed	82%	73%	73%	59%
Waiting lists for services changed	67%	60%	59%	50%
Paperwork changed	78%	71%	73%	67%
Level of oversight changed	53%	54%	47%	43%
Assignment of non-SW tasks changed	57%	50%	52%	50%
Eligibility requirements changed	49%	50%	51%	56%
Clients court-mandated changed	53%	40%	46%	44%
Number clients eligible changed	45%	38%	33%	28%
Levels of reimbursement decreased	41%	48%	40%	44%
Coordination with community agencies changed	10%	10%	11%	16%
Staffing levels changed - SW	37%	32%	27%	18%
Staffing levels changed - other	42%	29%	30%	22%
Job security changed	31%	29%	25%	27%
Availability of supervision changed	30%	29%	32%	20%
Availability of professional training changed	20%	21%	15%	6%
Range of services available changed	39%	37%	41%	45%
Number of services available changed	42%	41%	39%	44%
Services eligible for funding changed	49%	51%	52%	58%

Satisfaction with Resources and Skills

More than half of social workers who work with children and adolescents were satisfied with access to various types of resources for their clients. They were most likely to be satisfied with their access to agency resources and appropriate mental health care, and least likely to be satisfied with their access to appropriate medical care for clients. BSWs were more likely than MSWs to report satisfaction with access to agency services and community resources, while MSWs were more likely than BSWs to be satisfied with access to appropriate medications and appropriate mental health care.

Table 3. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied and Dissatisfied with Selected Resources for Their Clients

Access to...	Percent Satisfied (4 or 5 on 5-point scale)			Percent Dissatisfied (1 or 2 on 5-point scale)		
	All	MSWs	BSWs	All	MSWs	BSWs
Type of Resource						
Agency Services	65%	64%	70%	11%	12%	8%
Community Resources	55%	53%	61%	16%	17%	13%
Appropriate Meds	55%	57%	41%	17%	19%	19%
Appropriate Med Care	53%	52%	54%	19%	17%	14%
Appropriate MH Care	58%	59%	47%	21%	21%	26%

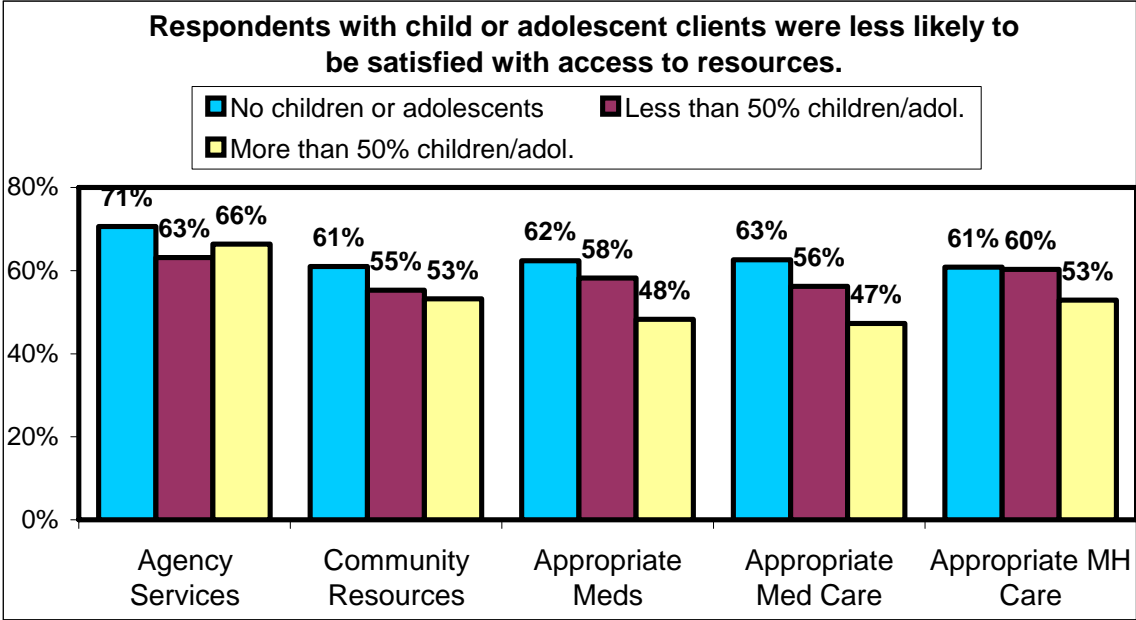
As shown below, social workers in Child Welfare/Family were less likely to be satisfied and more likely to be dissatisfied than social workers NPA in relation to access to medications, medical care, and mental health care. Those in Adolescents did not differ from social workers NPA.

Table 4. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied and Dissatisfied with Selected Resources for Their Clients

Access to...	Percent Satisfied (4 or 5 on 5-point scale)			Percent Dissatisfied (1 or 2 on 5-point scale)		
	Child Welfare/ Family	Adolescents	NPA	Child Welfare/ Family	Adolescents	NPA
Type of Resource						
Agency services	68%	67%	64%	9%	11%	12%
Community resources	53%	59%	54%	15%	15%	16%
Appropriate meds	38%	55%	57%	28%	14%	19%
Appropriate med. care	42%	50%	55%	23%	15%	16%
Appropriate MH care	47%	62%	59%	29%	18%	20%

Figure 2 shows that social workers serving children and adolescents were somewhat less satisfied with their access to resources than social workers not working with children and/or adolescents. Those who worked with predominantly child/adolescent caseloads were less likely to be satisfied than those carrying caseloads of 50% or fewer children/adolescents, as shown below.

Figure 2. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied with Access to Selected Resources, by Level of Involvement with Children and Adolescents



Sector made a pronounced difference in the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction reported. Those in private practice were substantially less likely to say they were satisfied with their access to agency resources, but were substantially more likely to be satisfied with access to medications and mental health care. Those in the public sector, in contrast, were less likely than others to report being satisfied and more likely to report being dissatisfied with access to medications, medical care, and mental health care.

Differences by demographic location of practice were not pronounced, although those in rural areas were less likely than others to be satisfied with access to community resources and mental health care.

Table 5. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied and Dissatisfied with Selected Resources for Their Clients

Access to...	Percent Satisfied (4 or 5 on 5-point scale)				Percent Dissatisfied (1 or 2 on 5-point scale)			
	Public	Nonprofit	For-profit	Private practice	Public	Nonprofit	For-profit	Private practice
Agency services	65%	68%	65%	54%	11%	9%	10%	18%
Community resources	56%	54%	57%	52%	15%	16%	19%	16%
Appropriate meds	44%	57%	56%	68%	26%	18%	21%	12%
Appropriate med. care	41%	57%	57%	61%	23%	16%	14%	10%
Appropriate MH care	49%	56%	61%	73%	28%	21%	19%	10%

Perceived Satisfaction and Efficacy

Social workers who served children and adolescents were most likely to be satisfied with their ability to help clients with a range of problems, and to improve quality of life for their clients. They were least likely to be satisfied with their ability to influence service design, or to work with community organizations to adapt the service delivery system.

These results are not substantially different from responses of social workers who do not serve children/adolescents, except that those who do were more likely to agree that they help clients address a few key problems, resolve crisis situations, and feel satisfied with their ability to address cultural differences.

Social workers in the practice area of Child Welfare/Family were less satisfied than those serving children/adolescents overall on several important measures. They were less likely to agree that they: helped clients with a range of problems; felt satisfied with their abilities handling cultural differences or complex issues; effectively responded to the number of requests for help; or were satisfied with their ability to coordinate care.

Those in Adolescents were less likely than all social workers serving this population to agree that they effectively responded to the number of requests for help, but were more likely to agree that they helped clients with a range of problems, that they were satisfied with their ability in cultural differences, and that they were satisfied with their ability to influence service design.

Table 6. Satisfaction with Selected Aspects of Practice by Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents, by Practice Area

Satisfaction Factor	All Who Serve Children and Adolescents	Do Not Serve Children or Adolescents	Child Welfare/ Family	Adolescents	NPA
Help clients with range of problems	91%	92%	85%	91%	92%
Help clients address one or two key problems	86%	80%	81%	87%	87%
Improve quality of life	86%	89%	81%	85%	87%
Help clients resolve crisis situations	83%	73%	79%	81%	83%
Help clients meet objectives	79%	75%	74%	85%	80%
Satisfied with ability in cultural differences	76%	67%	69%	82%	76%
Help families respond to client needs	72%	64%	77%	72%	71%
Satisfied with ability to address complex problems	67%	66%	55%	67%	69%
Satisfied with amount of time spend with clients	59%	57%	47%	56%	61%
Satisfied with ability to help clients navigate	57%	64%	56%	54%	57%
Satisfied with ability to coordinate care	52%	58%	43%	47%	54%
Effectively respond to number of requests for help	51%	53%	44%	45%	53%
Work with community orgs to adapt system	46%	43%	50%	45%	45%
Satisfied with ability to influence service design	44%	45%	39%	52%	44%

Table 7 shows differences in satisfaction with efficacy between BSWs and MSWs. Although MSWs were generally more confident than BSWs, BSWs were more satisfied with their ability to help clients navigate systems and work with community organizations to adapt the service delivery system.

Table 7. Satisfaction with Selected Aspects of Practice by Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents, by MSW and BSW

Assessment Factor	MSW	BSW
Improve quality of life	86%	80%
Help clients meet objectives	80%	76%
Help clients with range of problems	92%	87%
Help clients address few key problems	87%	78%
Help clients resolve crisis situations	83%	79%
Help families respond to client needs	71%	73%
Satisfied with ability to help clients navigate	55%	66%
Satisfied with ability to coordinate care	51%	55%
Effectively respond to number of requests for help	51%	52%
Work with community orgs to adapt system	42%	61%
Satisfied with ability to address complex problems	68%	61%
Satisfied with amount of time spend with clients	61%	46%
Satisfied with ability in cultural differences	77%	65%
Satisfied with ability to influence service design	44%	45%

Table 8 shows key differences based on prevalence of children and adolescents in caseloads.

Table 8. Satisfaction with Selected Aspects of Practice by Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents, by Level of Involvement with Children and Adolescents

Assessment Factor	All who serve children/adolescents	50% or fewer children/adol.	More than 50% children/adol.
Help clients with range of problems	91%	91%	90%
Improve quality of life	86%	89%	82%
Help clients address few key problems	86%	87%	86%
Help clients resolve crisis situations	83%	83%	82%
Help clients meet objectives	79%	83%	76%
Satisfied with ability in cultural differences	76%	76%	76%
Help families respond to client needs	72%	66%	79%
Satisfied with ability to address complex problems	67%	70%	62%
Satisfied with amount of time spend with clients	59%	64%	50%
Satisfied with ability to help clients navigate	57%	58%	56%
Satisfied with ability to coordinate care	52%	53%	51%
Effectively respond to number of requests for help	51%	56%	45%
Work with community orgs to adapt system	46%	44%	49%
Satisfied with ability to influence service design	44%	43%	45%

Finally, Table 9 shows important sector differences. Social workers in the public sector were least likely to be satisfied with their effectiveness overall, though they were most likely to report satisfaction on items related to the service delivery system. Those in private practice were the most satisfied overall, although they were less likely to indicate satisfaction on items related to the service delivery system (e.g. ability to help clients navigate the system; working with community organizations to adapt the delivery system).

Table 9. Satisfaction with Selected Aspects of Practice by Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents, by Employment Sector

Assessment Factor	Public	Nonprofit	For-profit	Private practice
Improve quality of life	79%	84%	90%	95%
Help clients meet objectives	73%	77%	84%	91%
Help clients with range of problems	88%	90%	94%	95%
Help clients address few key problems	83%	87%	89%	89%
Help clients resolve crisis situations	82%	82%	87%	82%
Help families respond to client needs	72%	72%	76%	70%
Satisfied with ability to help clients navigate	59%	56%	67%	50%
Satisfied with ability to coordinate care	51%	49%	59%	55%
Effectively respond to number of requests for help	46%	48%	54%	65%
Work with community orgs to adapt system	51%	47%	42%	34%
Satisfied with ability to address complex problems	61%	68%	71%	74%
Satisfied with amount of time spend with clients	48%	54%	55%	86%
Satisfied with ability in cultural differences	73%	73%	77%	83%
Satisfied with ability to influence service design	39%	42%	43%	56%

Self-Assessment Of Child/Family Skills

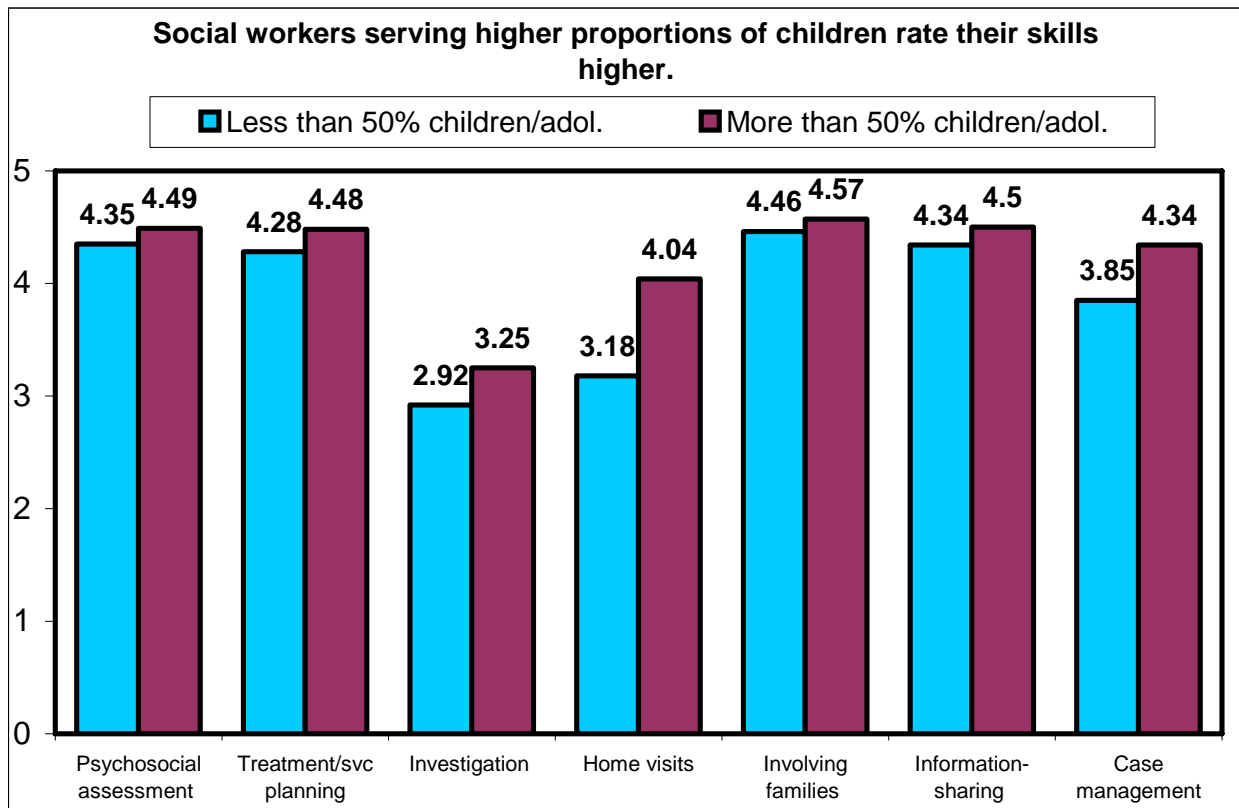
Social workers who work with children/adolescents were most likely to rate their skills at involving families highly (90%), and were least likely to be satisfied with their investigation skills (42%).

Table 10. Percentages reporting their child/family-related skills are high (4 or 5 on a 5-point scale)

	All	CWF - MSW	CWF - BSW	Adol - MSW	Adol - BSW	NPA - MSW	NPA - BSW
Psychosocial assessment skills	87%	94%	64%	91%	92%	90%	67%
Treatment/svc planning skills	86%	91%	80%	96%	100%	87%	66%
Investigation skills	42%	60%	58%	33%	62%	37%	39%
Home visit skills	61%	85%	94%	51%	92%	52%	70%
Skills involving families	90%	97%	96%	91%	93%	90%	82%
Information-sharing skills – other agencies/professionals	87%	87%	93%	92%	100%	87%	83%
Case management skills	75%	84%	94%	81%	100%	71%	77%

Social workers with caseloads of 50% or more children/adolescents consistently report higher confidence with their skills than those serving fewer children/adolescents, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Average Self-Ratings of Skills Related to Providing Services to Children and Their Families, by Level of Involvement with Children



Satisfaction with Time

Reported satisfaction and dissatisfaction with time available varied dramatically as shown in Table 10 below. Social workers who served children and adolescents were most likely to be satisfied with their time to provide clinical services and address presenting problems, and most likely to be dissatisfied with their time to perform administrative tasks and conduct investigations.

MSWs were generally more likely than BSWs to be satisfied with the time available for most tasks (Table 10). BSWs were more likely than MSWs to be satisfied with the time available to access basic services and conduct investigations.

Table 10. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied and Dissatisfied with Time Available for Selected Services for their Clients

Satisfied with time available for...	All serving children and adolescents		MSWs		BSWs	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Providing clinical services	72%	11%	75%	10%	51%	19%
Addressing presenting problems	71%	8%	74%	7%	60%	9%
Addressing severity of problems	68%	10%	70%	9%	55%	13%
Addressing breadth of problems	59%	14%	61%	13%	48%	18%
Providing services to client families	56%	14%	56%	13%	51%	16%
Participating in training	49%	25%	49%	25%	48%	22%
Accessing basic services	46%	20%	44%	21%	55%	10%
Addressing service delivery issues	41%	22%	42%	22%	37%	21%
Performing administrative tasks	38%	32%	38%	32%	39%	33%
Conducting investigations	37%	32%	34%	34%	46%	25%

Social workers who carried predominantly child/adolescent caseloads were less satisfied with the availability of time than those who served fewer child/adolescent clients. Specifically, they were less satisfied with time to address presenting problems, severity of problems, breadth of problems, provide clinical services, participate in training, and perform administrative tasks.

As an overall trend, social workers in private practice were more satisfied with the time available than those in other sectors, while those in the public sector were the least satisfied, as shown below in Table 12.

Table 12. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Satisfied with Time Available for Selected Tasks, by Employment Sector

Service Factor	Public	Non-Profit	For-Profit	Private Practice
Satisfied time address presenting problems	58%	72%	66%	93%
Satisfied time access basic services	42%	50%	46%	39%
Satisfied time providing services to client families	46%	58%	51%	71%
Satisfied time addressing severity of problems	54%	68%	69%	88%
Satisfied time addressing breadth of problems	47%	56%	57%	85%
Satisfied time addressing service delivery issues	38%	41%	44%	50%
Satisfied time providing clinical services	57%	71%	74%	95%
Satisfied time conducting investigations	41%	35%	30%	35%
Satisfied time participating in training	48%	43%	48%	64%
Satisfied time performing administrative tasks	34%	40%	37%	44%

Importance of Factors to Improve Care for Children/Families

The availability of training/education (85%), availability of services (81%), and caseload size (79%) are the factors identified by social workers as most important in assisting them provide quality care to children and families (85%).

Those in Child Welfare/Family were more likely than other social workers to assign importance to supervision (73%), organizational support (73%), caseload size (91%), time (78%), manageable paperwork (83%), staffing (81%), and better opportunities (68%). They were less likely to assign importance to better reimbursement (55%). Those in Adolescents were more likely than others to assign importance to supervision (69%), caseload size (85%), interagency coordination (78%), time (77%), and better opportunities (69%).

Table 13. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Who Rated Selected Service Factors as Important for their Clients

Service Factors	MSW	BSW	50% or fewer children/ adolescents	More than 50% children/ adolescents	All who serve children/ adolescents
Training/Education	85%	83%	83%	87%	85%
Availability of Services	80%	85%	78%	83%	81%
Caseload Size	78%	86%	72%	86%	79%
Manageable Paperwork	72%	79%	69%	76%	73%
Staffing	71%	79%	69%	76%	72%
Better Compensation	72%	72%	71%	73%	72%
Interagency Coordination	70%	72%	67%	74%	70%
Time	68%	78%	68%	72%	70%
Organization Support	64%	71%	61%	70%	65%
Supervision	63%	60%	59%	67%	63%
Better Reimbursement	64%	52%	69%	55%	62%
Better Opportunities	59%	67%	57%	63%	60%
Resource Centers	54%	64%	57%	54%	55%

Career Plans

The majority of social workers who served children and adolescents expect future opportunities to work with children and adolescents to increase (76%). Eighty-four percent of those in Child Welfare/Family and 86% of those in Adolescents believed that opportunities would increase. Eighty-one percent of BSWs and 75 percent of MSWs thought opportunities would increase. Eighty two percent of those with predominantly child/adolescent caseloads and 70% of those who served 1-50% children/adolescents see future opportunities to work with children to increasing.

The majority of social workers who serve children/adolescents (71%) planned to remain in their current position in the next two years, and 28% planned to pursue another opportunity or a promotion. Eleven percent planned to decrease their social work hours, but almost as many (9%) planned to increase their hours. Five percent planned to retire, 5% planned to leave social work but continue working, and 1% planned to stop working. These figures do not differ substantially by degree or by demographic location of practice. Plans to remain in current positions are highest, however, among those who have worked with children the longest, while plans to leave the field but continue working are highest among those who are least experienced with this population.

Those in Child Welfare/Family were less likely to plan to remain in their current position (59%), and more likely to plan to seek a new opportunity or promotion (35%) than other social workers. Social workers in Adolescents did not differ substantially from all who served children/adolescents.

Those who served more children and adolescents are less likely than those who served fewer to plan to remain in their current position (67% versus 73%); but they are more likely to plan to seek a new opportunity or promotion as a social worker (31% versus 25%). Those in private practice were much more likely to report plans to stay in their current position (84%), and less likely to plan to pursue a new opportunity (11%).

Table 14 shows career plans for social workers in different employment settings. The least projected stability was in social service agency settings, where only 58% of social workers planned to remain in their current job for the next two years.

Table 14. Two-Year Career Plans of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents, By Employment Setting

Five-Year Career Plan	Private practice (N=367)	Hospital (N=216)	Behavioral Health Clinic (N=181)	Social Service Agency (N=265)	School (N=284)	Group Home (N=37)	Criminal Justice Agency (N=32)
Plan remain in current position	84%	73%	67%	58%	79%	79%	83%
Plan leave SW but continue to work	3%	5%	4%	8%	2%	4%	7%
Plan retire	5%	3%	5%	7%	4%	4%	7%
Plan stop working	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%

Factors

Higher salary (76%), lifestyle/family concerns (54%), stress of current job (36%), and interesting work (35%) are the top reasons identified by social workers providing services to children and/or adolescents for changing jobs.

Table 15 shows how factors differ by practice area and highest earned social work degree.

Table 15. Percentages of Social Workers Serving Children and Adolescents Who Would Change Jobs for Selected Factors

Job Change Factor	Child Welfare/ Family		Adolescents		NPA		All MSWs (N=1638)	All BSWs (N=228)	All serving children/ adolescents (N=1866)
	MSW (N=185)	BSW (N=69)	MSW (N=132)	BSW (N=19)	MSW (N=1220)	BSW (N=134)			
Higher Salary	79%	84%	77%	79%	74%	83%	75%	83%	76%
Lifestyle/Family Concerns	48%	57%	51%	36%	57%	50%	55%	51%	55%
Stress of Current Job	42%	55%	37%	14%	34%	39%	35%	42%	36%
Interesting Work	45%	29%	32%	21%	35%	28%	36%	28%	35%
Location	27%	23%	39%	43%	33%	34%	33%	32%	33%
Personal Reasons	30%	35%	28%	36%	33%	29%	32%	31%	32%
Better Benefits	27%	33%	32%	43%	30%	41%	30%	39%	31%
Increased Mobility	27%	36%	32%	36%	24%	25%	25%	29%	26%
Lighter workload	25%	42%	25%	14%	21%	21%	22%	27%	23%
Opportunities Training/Educ.	23%	23%	21%	14%	21%	20%	21%	21%	21%
Different Supervisor/Mgmt	16%	22%	18%	36%	13%	20%	13%	21%	14%
Peer Support	11%	3%	13%	29%	10%	9%	10%	8%	10%
Quality of Supervision	15%	13%	6%	21%	10%	10%	10%	12%	10%
Agency Mission	11%	7%	9%	14%	9%	8%	9%	8%	9%
Increased Responsibility	11%	14%	9%	21%	9%	9%	9%	11%	9%
Other	7%	12%	8%	21%	9%	8%	9%	10%	9%
Ethical Challenges	7%	1%	7%	21%	6%	3%	6%	4%	6%

Social workers with caseloads of 50% or more children and adolescents were more likely than those who served fewer to cite the stress of their current job (38% versus 33%) or increased mobility (29% versus 23%) as reasons to change jobs.

Social workers employed in public sector agencies were more likely to cite increased mobility (32%) or stress of current job (45%) as reasons to change jobs than social workers in other sectors. Those in private for-profit organizations were more likely to say that they would consider changing for better benefits (40%). Those in private practice were more likely than others to cite lifestyle/family concerns (62%) and personal reasons (40%),

Almost half of social workers who work with children/adolescents (46%) do not plan to change their involvement with children and families in the next five years, and 23% plan to increase their time working with this population. Ten percent indicate plans to decrease their work with children and adolescents, and 2% plan to discontinue working with these populations. Twenty percent said that their plans were unsure.

Social workers in Child Welfare/Family did not differ substantially from the other social workers except that they were more likely to be unsure of their future career plans (26%). Those in Adolescents did not differ from other social workers.

MSWs were more likely than BSWs to say that they did not anticipate career changes (46% versus 40%), or plans to reduce their time working with children/adolescents (11% versus 5%). BSWs were more likely to plan to increase their time with this population (28% versus 22%) or that they were unsure of their plans (25% versus 19%).

While there were not substantial differences by involvement with children/adolescents, sector, or rural/urban location, some differences emerged by setting, as shown in Table 16.

Table 16. Plans for Future Work with Children and Families, by Setting

	Hospital (N=203)	Psychiatric Hospital (N=51)	Health Clinic/ Outpatient Facility (N=84)	Behavioral Health Clinic (N=172)	Social Service Agency (N=255)	School (N=282)	Group Homes - child/adol. (N=37)	Criminal Justice Agency (N=30)
No Change	48%	39%	40%	44%	41%	53%	43%	30%
Increase Time	19%	22%	24%	21%	20%	22%	21%	26%
Reduce time	9%	12%	9%	16%	9%	10%	7%	4%
No future work	2%	6%	6%	2%	1%	1%	0%	15%
Unsure	22%	22%	21%	18%	29%	15%	29%	26%