

Careers in Child Welfare

So you want to become a Child Welfare Professional?

Child welfare professionals are focused on improving the lives of children. They can work for a variety of social services agencies, including Child Protective Services or private, non-profit organizations.



General Requirements for Child Welfare Professionals

Most child welfare professionals are required to have at least a bachelor's degree in a field such as social work, psychology, or sociology. But ideally child welfare professionals will hold a BSW and/or an MSW.

A Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) is a four-year degree that prepares students for entry-level practice in social work. Students will learn basic skills for working with diverse, poor, and oppressed individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

A Master's degree of Social Work (MSW) is a two-year graduate degree that will combine coursework with hands-on field experience. A master's degree is typically required for positions in schools, health, and clinical settings. Supervisory or managerial positions also usually require an advanced degree.

Helpful Tips

- ❖ Gain as much experience as possible by volunteering with various child welfare agencies & organizations
- ❖ Start your own fundraiser or volunteer program at school
- ❖ Find mentors in the field
- ❖ Conduct school research projects and write papers on areas in child welfare that interest you
- ❖ Talk with professionals and professors who work in the child welfare field
- ❖ Learn as much as you can about the field and research about child welfare – knowledge is power!

For a full listing of all accredited BSW and MSW programs, please see: <http://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/organizations.aspx>

“Children are the world’s most valuable resource and its best hope for the future”

– President John F. Kennedy



Preparing for College: Time Line

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| | Freshman (Grade 9) | Sophomore (Grade 10) | Junior (Grade 11) | Senior (Grade 12) |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| September | Talk with your guidance counselors Sign up for courses that will prepare you for college Take honors or advanced classes in your interest areas | Begin to attend college fairs Consult with current students & alumni about their experiences | Continue to visit prospective schools & attend college fairs | Ask your references to write letters (3 weeks in advance) Begin your applications, making note of all deadlines & requirements Take the ACT (if desired) |
| October | Research prospective colleges | Take the PSAT | Look for opportunities to assume leadership positions in your extracurricular activities | Retake the ACT, SAT or SAT Subject tests (if desired) |
| November | Get involved in community & extracurricular activities that interest you | Continue to participate in extracurricular activities | Develop a short list of your target schools Begin researching scholarships** | Retake the SAT and SAT Subject tests (if desired) |
| December | Read more and practice writing skills | Make plans for campus visits (if desired) | Visit more college campuses over winter break | Retake the SAT and SAT Subject tests (if desired) |
| January | Talk with your parents about the cost of college & develop a financial plan | | Take the SAT or SAT Subject Tests | Apply for financial aid as early as possible (either FAFSA or the TASFA) |
| February | | Speak with your school counselor and develop an academic plan for your junior & senior years | Take the ACT | Discuss your final college selection with your parents and teachers |
| March | | Make campus visits with your parents | Brainstorm ideas for essay topics (for admissions and scholarship applications) | Continue your scholarship applications |
| April | | Attend college fairs to seek information about college majors | Take the SAT or ACT (if desired) | Pick a school and notify all accepted schools of your final decision |
| May | | | Write essays and seek editorial and guidance support | Write thank you notes to everyone who helped you with this process |
| June, July & August | Study for the PSAT | Study for the SAT or ACT | Start applying for scholarships Take the June SAT or ACT (if desired) | Look through the college's course listing & meet with a university academic counselor to select courses |

**For scholarship information, please visit: http://www.sw.uh.edu/communityoutreach/cwep_students.php (click at Scholarship Opportunities).
For more information about the MSW degree program in the Child Welfare Education Project, please email Dr. Monit Cheung at mcheung@uh.edu.

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Preparing for college is a **four-year process** that typically begins when a student enters the 9th grade. Below you will find a step-by-step guide to applying to college in the State of Texas. Please check with your school counselor for details.

Freshman Year (Grade 9)

- Begin to explore careers and colleges. Start by visiting college websites and develop a relationship with your school counselor and teachers. Talk with people in your field of interest.
- When looking at prospective colleges, consider a variety of factors including the cost, location, types of programs, admissions criteria, student body composition, and support network.
- Talk with your school counselor and sign up for courses that will prepare you for college. Make sure you select a curriculum that will both challenge and interest you.
- Try to take honors or advanced classes in your interest areas.
- Get involved in community and school activities. Select activities that will eventually provide you with leadership experience.
- Talk with your parents about the cost of college and develop a financial plan.

Sophomore Year (Grade 10)

- Attend college fairs and consult with current students and alumni about their experiences.
- Take the PSAT for the first time in October.
- Continue to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities
- Make campus visits with your parents to get a feel for the school.
- Speak with your school counselor and develop an academic plan for your junior and senior years.
- Use your summer to prepare for the SAT or ACT.

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Junior Year (Grade 11)

- Continue to visit prospective schools and attend information sessions.
- Develop a short list of your target colleges and research their specific admissions criteria. Try to have a good balance of dream schools, safety schools, and good matches in between.
- Look for opportunities to assume leadership positions in your extracurricular activities.
- Begin researching scholarships (and start applying)
- Brainstorm ideas for essay topics for your college applications.
- Start talking about your college interest with teachers whom you will invite to write your reference letters.
- Start writing essays and seek editorial and guidance support from teachers and other professionals in your field of interest.
- Take the SAT or ACT for the first time.
- When registering for SAT or ACT, make sure to put your target colleges as recipients of the Score Report Request (for the free score reports).
- Take any SAT Subject Tests required by your finalist schools.
- Use your summer to study for the ACT or SAT tests if you plan to re-take them.

Senior Year (Grade 12)

- Request reference letters at least 3 weeks in advance. Talk in person and then email your reference person with an attachment that includes your résumé and an example letter (including the college address and a paragraph for the reference person to write about you).
- If applying to schools through the ApplyTexas Application, be sure to research their requirements and deadlines.
- Take or retake the ACT, SAT, or SAT Subject Tests if required.
- Apply to several schools and send in your applications as early as possible. Make note of all application deadlines early!
- Send in any required forms if you're applying for financial aid (either the FAFSA or the TASFA). Submit them early for best consideration.
- After you've decided which college you'll be attending, notify the other colleges that you've been admitted to.
- Make sure to write thank you notes to those your helped you in this process!

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Academic Achievement Tests for Higher Education

Undergraduate Admissions

SAT Reasoning Test

Required by many four-year colleges, especially private schools. Usually taken once or twice starting in the Junior Spring. (www.collegeboard.com)

SAT Subject Tests

Required or recommended by some four-year colleges (the specific subjects vary). Usually taken once or twice, starting between the Junior and Senior year. (www.collegeboard.com)

ACT

Accepted in place of the SAT by many four-year colleges, often preferred by state schools. Usually taken once or twice, starting in the Junior Spring. (www.actstudent.org)

AP Tests

Accepted as college credit at most four-year colleges if a high school is achieved. Can sometimes be taken regardless of whether student has taken an AP class. Taken in the junior and senior years of high school. (www.apcentral.collegeboard.com)

Graduate/Professional Schools

GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)

Test in mathematics usually required for graduate business studies. Usually taken in the junior or senior year of college. (www.mba.com)

GRE (Graduate Record Examination)

Similar to the SAT, the GRE is required for many graduate programs, particularly those in the social sciences. Usually taken in the junior or senior year of college. (www.ets.org/gre)

LSAT (Law School Admission Test)

Required for entrance into law school. Usually taken in the junior or senior year of college. (www.lsac.org)

MCAT (Medical College Admission Test)

Required for entrance into medical school. Usually taken in the junior or senior year of college. (www.aamc.com/mcat)

PCAT (Pharmacy College Admission Test)

Required for entrance into pharmacy school. Usually taken in the junior or senior year of college. (www.pcatweb.info)

Language Proficiency Tests

IELTS (International English Language Testing System)

Accepted by over 2,000 academic institutions in the US (www.ielts.org)

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

Usually a college admission requirement for non-native English speakers. Taken the senior year of high school. (www.ets.org/toefl)