



Youth First's mission is to strengthen youth and families through evidence-based programs that prevent substance abuse, promote healthy behaviors, and maximize student success.

Youth First Social Work Program

Youth First, Inc. partners with schools, churches, and other agencies to transform and strengthen the lives of young people and their families. Specifically, Youth First provides specially trained Master's level social workers for schools and a continuum of evidence-based prevention programs for youth and families. Our on-site, free-of-charge services and programs work to prevent substance abuse, improve family relationships, and develop life skills. Youth First relies on independent evaluations to track outcomes and guide improvements.

Program: Youth First Social Work is rooted in a resiliency framework with an emphasis on:

1. Reducing risk factors that create barriers to learning and life success.
2. Building protective factors that enhance social and emotional well-being.

In partnership with schools, Youth First Social Workers deliver prevention strategies across three tiers: universal programs for general audiences; selective sessions for at-risk groups; and indicated work for at-risk individuals.

Youth First Social Work services include individual support for students on their caseload, parent consultations, teacher/staff consultations, evidence-based programs, educational/classroom presentations, small group sessions, referrals to community resources, and crisis intervention.

Youth First currently has 34 social workers who serve 50 public, parochial, and private schools in five counties: Vanderburgh, Warrick, Posey, Gibson, and Pike. Over 26,000 students have access to a Youth First Social Worker, which is 53% of all the students in the five county region. A complete list of Youth First Social Workers can be found at www.youthfirstinc.org.

Outcomes: Students on the Youth First caseload show significant improvements in protective factors including resiliency, coping skills, mood management, family conflict, communication skills and more. Individual concerns are tracked by parents, teachers and students at baseline, 3 months and 5 months. The data shows a significant reduction in the intensity of concerns cited by all three groups. Teachers also report improvements in school adjustment and problem behaviors.

Cost: Services are free-of-charge to students, families, and faculty, but schools contribute toward Youth First's costs. Youth First raises the rest (over \$1.1 million annually) from multiple public and private sources. One full-time Youth First Social Worker and associated prevention programs cost \$62,000 a year (FY16 estimate).

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