

**School-Based Family Counseling and It's Importance in Promoting Student Well-Being and Academic Success.**

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**Abstract**

The family is the smallest social structure of society. Schools are institutions where individuals acquire certain skills and knowledge. Students may sometimes encounter difficulties in their school life. School and family cooperation is very important in overcoming the difficulties faced by students. This study includes what School-Based Family Counseling is and its importance, which includes providing more comprehensive services for children and their families by integrating "school counseling" and "family counseling" services. In this study, which was designed as a basic qualitative research, domestic and international studies on the subject were examined. He concluded that codes such as guidance, crisis, management, and parent were gathered under the categories of school and family, and these categories were combined under the themes of prevention and intervention. It is seen that Brain Gerard's works come to the fore on the subject. Efforts can be made to expand school-based family counseling, which is common in the West and in the United States, in our country as well. Regarding school-based family counseling, elective courses, and master's programs with and without thesis can be opened in the relevant programs of universities. Parents can be informed about the issue during family meetings within the framework of school-family cooperation.

**Keywords:** Family Counseling, School Counseling, School-Based Family Counseling, School-Family Relations.

**Introduction**

In order to ensure learning and development in children's educational processes, the family and the school should be in constant communication with each other. The school-family cooperation realized through family participation greatly supports the development and learning of children in the education process. According to Kılıç (2014), the family, which meets the child's most basic psychological needs of love, is also the most fundamental institution that plays a role in the child's physical, emotional, cognitive, social and moral development.

Another institution that plays a major role in the socialization of children is the school, which comes after the family into which they are born and spend the first years of their lives. With the beginning of school life, children step into a new environment consisting of friends and teachers (Kılıç, 2014). With the beginning of school life, children who communicate with their peers, teachers and school staff develop their behavioral patterns and their social skills increase.

The negative effects of the family on children extend to and affect the school. According to Crespi, Gustafson, and Borges (2006), school psychologists are increasingly encountering students affected by family problems (Gerrard & Uşaklı, 2016). According to Kılıç and Özkan (2015), healthy family functioning contributes positively to children's success at school. In this context, while finding solutions to children's problems, it is inevitable to examine not only the child, but also the family and the immediate environment of which the child is a member.

The need for practices to improve and develop family involvement in Turkey has been stated in various reports (Education Reform Initiative [ERI], 2016; Mother Child Education Foundation [AÇEV], 2017; Aras et al., 2021). Many

studies support the importance of the family in the education process. There are studies that argue that family problems are at the root of problems such as children's academic achievement lagging behind in the education process or showing incompatibility in terms of social skills at the points where they interact with the society. Based on this information, it becomes clear how necessary and important it is to counsel children and families with the services to be carried out through the school, which is an important resource in reaching children and their families and solving problems.

Qualitative research method was used in this study. The research was designed with the basic qualitative research method. Documents were analyzed as data collection tools. There are limited studies on school-based family counseling in the world and in Turkey. In this study, the sources that could be accessed were examined. What is school-based family counseling and why is it important? The research question was sought to be answered with this research method.

Within the scope of solving the problems of children, who are social beings and cannot be handled in isolation from the society in which they live, a new model has emerged in the literature under the title of "school-based family counseling (SBFC)". The first examples of SBFC date back to Alfred Adler in the 1920s ( Gerrard and Uşaklı,2016). School-Based Family Counseling (SBFC) is considered an approach that combines the concepts of school counseling and family counseling within broader meta-systems to address the challenges faced by the student (Hing, Olivier, & Everts, 2013; Özdemir & Aksu, 2018). CAPAC explores children's problems within the context of their own interpersonal relationship network. The interpersonal network can be categorized as peers and adults encountered in the society, the family and class in which the child lives, and the school, i.e. teachers, principals and school staff. The problem of a child who has applied to an SBFC specialist may involve only one, more than one or all of the mentioned networks. For example, as a result of a bullying situation in the classroom, the child may think that he/she will be bullied by his/her peers in the society. In this case, the problem will not be limited to only one of the network of relationships, but will also affect other relationships.

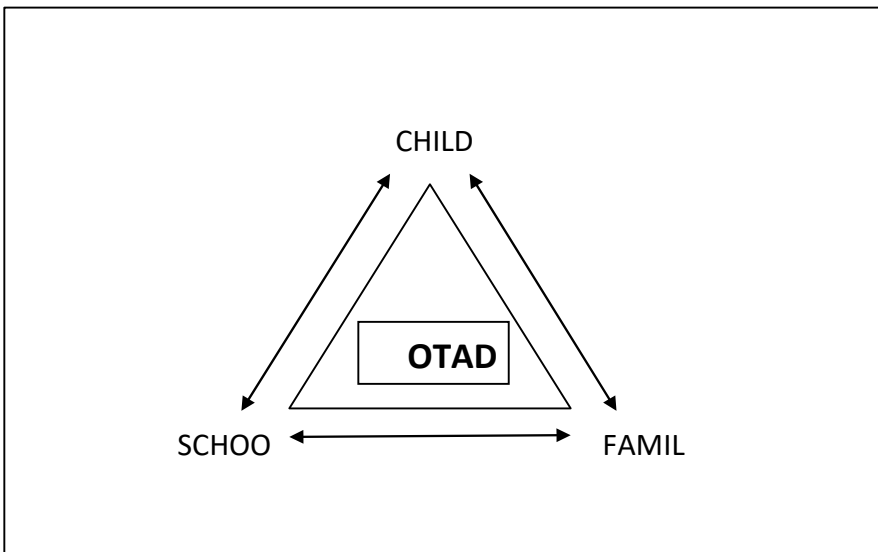


Figure 1: School-based Family Counseling Interaction

According to Kılıç and Özkan (2015), there is a need for professionals (psychological counselors and guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, etc.) to support children psycho-socially in schools in solving many problems arising from the child, the school environment or child-family-school relations. Unfortunately, since such psycho-social

support services are not sufficiently developed in Turkey and around the world, children and young people often have to cope with many problems such as bullying, abuse, violence and substance abuse alone.

The main purpose of CFP is to help teachers and parents, as primary educators, to correct children's undesirable behaviors by conveying the importance of home-school-community cooperation. Kelchner et al. (2020) argued that school-based family counseling programs can contribute to improved family communication and satisfaction. Widerman (1995) emphasizes the importance of positive family influence in successful school education and recommends school system-based school counseling to increase it (Gerrard & Uşaklı, 2016).

School-based family counseling is a crucial component of a comprehensive approach to supporting student well-being and academic success. By involving families in the counseling process, schools can address not only the individual needs of students but also the broader familial dynamics that may impact their educational journey. This collaborative approach fosters stronger relationships between students, families, and educators, creating a supportive environment that enhances student engagement and achievement.

Table 1: Data Information

Sn.	Name of the Study	Author	Year
1	School-Based Family Counseling	Gerrard & Usaklı	2016
2	School-Based Family Counseling: An Overview	Soriano & Gerrard	2013
3	The Influence of School-Based Family Counseling on Elementary Students and Their Families	Kelchner et al.	2020
4	Critical consciousness and School-Based Family Counseling: "Seeing" the pathogen in order to dismantle the pump of oppression	Smith	2017

The literature describes six main benefits of SBFC for schools: improved academic functioning of students receiving SBFC, reduced emotional and behavioral problems of students, reduced disruption of classroom order by other students, improved functioning of students at home, improved relationships between school and families of children with school problems, and cost effectiveness (Albaum, 1990; Stone & Peeks, 1986; Gerrard & Uşaklı, 2016). Based on the benefits of SBA, which supports students in social, affective and cognitive areas, it is expected that SBA activities will be implemented and developed in every school. However, in Turkey, research on school-based family counseling is almost non-existent, and it is not known at what level there is awareness of the CAPS (Özdemir & Aksu, 2018).

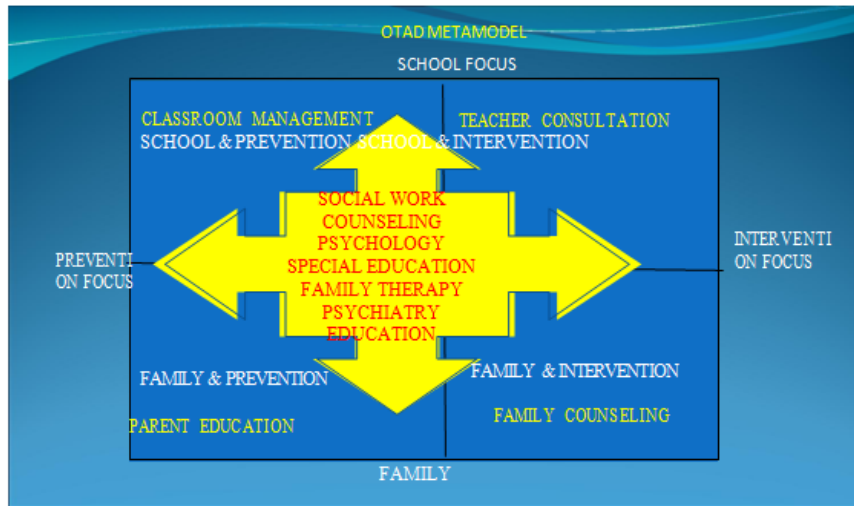


Figure 2: School-Based Family Counseling Metamodel,

Source: Smith, 2007

Table 2: School-based Family Counseling Process

	School Focus		
	Administrative Advisory		
Protection Focus	Guidance Groups Class Management Class Meetings Stress Management School-Prevention	Teacher Consultation Group Consultation Crisis Response Student Support Groups School-Intervention	Intervention Focus
	Family Prevention Parent Education Parent Support Groups	Family Interventions Family Counseling Parent Counseling Couple Counseling	
	Family Focus		

SBFC Model Source Soriano & Gerrard, 2018

**Importance of SBFC**

Family has a great influence on students' lives. The relationship between the family and the student has an important place in a large part of their lives such as school and social environment. As it is known, the family also affects the student's school life. This influence is sometimes positive and sometimes negative. Research has shown that a healthy family environment contributes positively to student success. In their study, Zimmer-Gemback and Locke (2007) created a Family Primary Model in which a more positive family environment is provided and strategies for coping with problems are developed. According to the latest studies, the negative effects are reported to be high. According to the research, it is stated that one of the biggest influences on the negative course of the student's school life is the family. According to Lagana, Ponsford and Lapadat, the failure in students' academic performance is due to lack of family support, according to Sun and Li, divorces, according to Heard, absence of mother and according to Abdelnoor and Hollins, loss of parents.

According to studies conducted in Turkey, it is stated that the same negative situations affect the success of students. According to Özdemir and Aksu (2018), students' problems are generally caused by the family, these problems are associated with families and these problems should be solved. Failures in school and out-of-school life arising from these negative situations are visibly revealed. It is aimed to minimize the family problems that affect the student's life and success and a number of studies have been carried out for this purpose. These studies were designed to be linked to the relationship between family and school and paved the way for the creation and development of SBFC (School-Based Family Counseling).

On the other hand, family and school are cited among the reasons why children experience some problems, such as negative attitudes, visible lack of motivation, unhappiness and unwanted behaviors. Children carry the problems experienced in the family to school and start to experience problems in school for these reasons. Again, when we focus on the main reasons here, although solving problems within the family involves the family, it also affects the school in a way. The solution of in-school problems arising from this impact also needs the solutions of school guidance counselors and related departments. Since it is not enough to solve only the problems within the school, problems within the family are also included in this scope. For these reasons, the focus has been on problem and problem solving in interaction with the school and the family. This has led to the creation of school-based family counseling (SBFC) in studies and research.

The focus of SBFC is on the relationship between school, family, and student, contributing to the school success, development and support of students (Gerrard and Uşaklı). Most of the research conducted clearly indicate that negative family relationships harm students' school success and the order within the family, and the importance of SBFC in this direction is clearly stated. SBFC (School-Based Family Counseling) includes the family and deals with family problems that students have difficulties with. Here SBFC aims to help both the student and the family. Ensuring bilateral relations and creating an environment of trust will lead the SBFC process to healthier results.

It is stated in the literature that family reasons are involved in the low achievement and negative impact on the development of children who experience negative situations, problems and issues. At the same time, it has been stated that children who grow up in a healthy environment exhibit positive behaviors. For example, it is stated that children in family groups where parents are together are more successful in problem solving and more active in social life. However, these competencies of a child who has lost a family member or whose parents are divorced are negatively affected and lead to failure.

In a healthy family and school environment, children's development is positive and contributes to their academic success. Research has shown that the values, competencies and skills acquired by a child growing up in a healthy family environment and a healthy school environment contribute to the child's spiritual development and success.

It is not possible to keep school and family independent from each other. The family affects the school as well as the school affects the family. Gerrard and Soriano (2013) stated that school-based family counseling is a culturally interconnected method with family counseling.

SBFC brings together family counseling and school counseling to bring a different dimension to the interaction between school and family. SBFC also deals with the child's interactions arising from both family, school and environmental

factors. Classroom environment, friends, peer group, external environment are the elements that the child interacts with. SBFC also examines these dimensions and deals with these factors in order to obtain healthier results.

It is difficult to solve child and family problems and to create a healthier and more prosperous environment. Each society has tried to find solutions to these problems according to their own values and judgments. The Power-Based School Counseling approach (Akos & Galassi, 2008), Contextual School Counseling approach (Baskin & Slaten, 2014) are among these examples. California State University, Los Angeles City Schools, and the University of San Francisco are some of the places that use the CAPS model.

In a study conducted by Özdemir and Aksu (2018) in Turkey, it was reported that school counselors stated that the number of children affected by problems and troubles in the family was high. In order to increase the awareness of the problems arising from these negative family conditions and the inadequacy of school counselors, SBFC models were applied. In Turkey, SBFC research and awareness are almost non-existent. According to the research conducted by Özdemir and Aksu (2018), it was found that the awareness of CAPS in Turkey is slowly beginning to emerge, and that the family should be included in the process in problem solving.

In the study conducted by Özdemir and Aksu (2018), positive results were obtained from the questions asked to the participants about their thoughts on the merger of family counseling and school counseling, and the participants emphasized that this merger would be better and would give better results.

All studies reveal the importance of family and school interaction. It has been revealed that the underlying reasons for this are that the problems within the families affect the children and also affect the school. School counseling alone cannot address these problems and find a solution. At the same time, family counseling alone cannot eliminate these problems. Some families do not want to go to family counselors because of the reactions from outside. They do not seek help from counseling centers to solve their problems due to fear of being excluded from the society.

In the study conducted by Kılıç and Özkan (2015) in Turkey, it was stated that most of the participants consisting of social workers thought that family counseling was inadequate. However, it was stated that the number of family counseling centers in Turkey was 49 and the inadequacy of this number was revealed.

School-based family counseling is a mainpoint for enhancing student well-being and academic success. It involves families in the counseling process, addressing not only individual needs but also broader familial dynamics that may impact their development. This collaborative approach fosters a positive school environment and enhances students' chances of achieving personal and academic goals. By involving families in the counseling process, schools can address various factors that may impact a student's overall development. This holistic understanding of a student's needs allows counselors to provide tailored support that extends beyond the classroom, ensuring a positive school environment and a positive student experience. Overall, school-based family counseling is a vital component in fostering a positive and supportive learning environment.

### **Conclusion**

With the fact that the negative effects on children arising from all these include the school, some models have been developed and tried to be implemented. However, the models put into practice sometimes did not yield the desired results. Although some researchers think that family problems should be solved within the family, this solution does not give

positive answers. Therefore, researchers have created a model, SBFC, in which school and family cooperation will be together. SBFC helps by examining children's interactions with both family, school and environment within the framework of the general scope. At the same time, it provides solutions to family problems by creating a moderate environment with families. The fact that SBFC is school based can eliminate the hesitation of families and make it even more functional. It can achieve better results for children and families.

According to Gerrard and Soriano (2013), positive results were obtained in a study using the SBFC model. At the same time, according to the study conducted by Kelchner, Lambie, and Campbell (2020), since SBFC is a study conducted at school, the family therapist can create a safe environment. More positive results can be obtained in this environment. According to Gerrard and Soriano, this interaction strengthens bilateral relationships as the family is supported by the school.

SBFC is an important model for both the child, the family and the school in accordance with its definition. Although there are few studies conducted in Turkey, studies conducted in different countries emphasize the necessity and importance of SBFC support.

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