

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Description of Services

The University of Maryland School of Social Work has collaborated with the West Side community to reach out to vulnerable families who have difficulty meeting their children's basic needs. Highlights of the available services include the following:

- **Community-based outreach** – Our program offices are located at 1701 Madison Avenue. We strive to see families when and where it works for them. This may include clients' homes, clinic waiting rooms, children's schools, church basements, front stoops, or our offices.
- **Community activities** -- Education is an issue that affects all of the families with whom we work. Family Connections participates in Citywide, a special education advocacy coalition geared toward voicing parental concerns, taking issues to the office of special education, linking people with resources and services, and improving special education services in Baltimore city. We also work in collaboration with other community to bring parents, teachers, administrators, and community members together to look at educational and school system issues in the city in an effort to work towards change. We are working to involve staff members as well as families in trainings and activities that focus on systemic issues in the school system.
- **Family-focused, strengths based services** – We work with the family as they define their own network. We help them to identify and build on their strengths to meet their needs. We work with individual children and adults, dyads (parent-child, mates, sibling pairs), families and groups.
- **Individualized services** – We conduct comprehensive assessments that guide the development of intervention plans, which help families meet their unique needs. Some of the problems that may need to be addressed include: food, clothing, housing, employment and training; mental health; substance abuse; domestic violence; parent education and support; school behavior and performance; health and illness; and child behavior in the home and community.
- **Service coordination** – We work with and on behalf of our families to enable them to access services from a wide variety of community providers. Further, we carefully coordinate those services to prevent duplication and to insure that identified needs are being met.



University of Maryland School of Social Work
1701 Madison Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21217
Program Center: 410-706-8716
Referrals: 410-706-3672

REFERRAL CRITERIA

All of these criteria must be met:

- The family lives in Baltimore's West Side

OR

Child attends a school on Baltimore's West Side.

- There is a child between 5 and 11 years of age living in the household.
- The child has lived with the primary caregiver for at least six months and is expected to remain with the primary caregiver.
- The family is not currently involved with Child Protective Services.
- The family is willing to participate.



At least one of the following basic needs are not being met:

- Inadequate/delayed health care
- Inadequate nutrition
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inadequate clothing
- Unsanitary household conditions
- Unsafe household conditions
- Unstable living conditions
- Shuttling
- Inadequate supervision
- Inappropriate substitute caregiver
- Inadequate nurturing
- Isolating
- Witnessing violence
- Permitting drug/alcohol use
- Permitting other maladaptive behavior
- Delay in obtaining needed mental health care
- Chronic truancy
- Unmet special education needs

At least two of the following must be present:

Caregiver

- Employment
 - A. Over Employed
 - B. Newly Employed
 - C. Unemployed
- Mental health problem
- Alcohol or drug problem
- Serious health challenges

Child

- Behavior or mental health problem (e.g., ADHD, truancy, vandalism, depression)
- Physical disability
- Developmental disability (e.g., speech and language disorder, mental retardation)
- Learning disability
- Alcohol or drug problem

Family

- Homelessness
- Domestic Violence
- More than 3 children in the household