

## School Psychology in Israel

### 1. Context of School Psychology

- a. Israel is in the Middle East bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the West Bank. The geography of the country is desert, coastal plains and central mountains. The population is about 7.1 million as of 2006, 81% of this population is Jews and 19% Arabs. The main employment is Public Service, agriculture, manufacturing, finance and tourism.
- b. Israel has 4,395 schools and attendance in schools is mandatory from age 5 to 16 and free through age 18
- c. The local authorities are responsible for School services , including School Psychology
- d. Formal education – institutions at the preschool level, primary, secondary, post-secondary and university levels
- e. Informal education – social and youth activities in various educational spheres
- f. The law covers certain disabilities including, deafness, blindness, and hospitalization, mild to severe retardation, behavior, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, autism, developmental delay and mental illness.

### 2. History and Current status of school psychology

- a. School Psychology began in 1936 when the first Center for Educational Psychology was established in Tel Aviv
- b. Kalman Benyamini initiated the first course of school Psychology in the University implementing a systemic approach to work in schools
- c. 270 municipal and regional services in the country employ 2,100 school psychologists
- d. The country is divided into 6 districts
- e. 40 new services were established in Arab and Bedouin centers employing more than 120 psychologists because the Arab culture was not as open to psychological services.
- f. Have an active role in schools and in the community
- g. Work in the public sector

### 3. Infrastructure for school psychology

- a. The Israel Psychological Association
- b. Membership is voluntary but most practicing school psychologists are members

- c. The council includes 31 members
  - d. 8,600 total psychologists were registered as of 2005
  - e. Many psychologists employed as School Psychologists are not licensed as school psychologist
4. Preparation of school psychologists
- a. Required to show they have studied for at least 5 years and graduated with a master's degree from one of the five universities in Israel
  - b. 2 years of full time or 4 years of half time work under supervision
  - c. Knowledge in following areas: individual diagnosis and evaluation, diagnosis and evaluation of group processes, therapeutic interventions, psychological interventions, participation in in service training programs
  - d. Finally and oral examination covering school system, individual diagnosis and evaluation and therapeutic interventions
  - e. All universities have a master's degree in psychology but only one has an emphasis in school psychology
  - f. They admit 15 students a year at each university
5. Roles, functions and responsibilities of school psychology
- a. Observations in classrooms, consultations with teachers, principals and parents, behavior problems, participation in various frameworks, deciding interventions and crisis response team
  - b. They use Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Kaufman Assessment Battery for children ( they both have been standardized for Israeli population) and they also use the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale for high school students
  - c. Personality tests used are Rorschach and Thematic Appreciation Test
6. Current Practice impacting school psychologist
- a. Financing services in the future
  - b. Inclusive plan for pedagogical, structural and organizational changes and spell out the means of implementing it

- c. Lack of political influence and has been unable to offer a clear image of its input as a group with superior training
- d. Deal with Multidisciplinary teams that may include occupational Therapists, expressive therapists, learning disability specialists and didactic assessors

