



**International Network for School Social Work**

<http://internationalnetwork-schoolsocialwork.htmlplanet.com>

Contact [mhuxtable@olympus.net](mailto:mhuxtable@olympus.net)

## **Electronic Newsletter June 2022**

Editor: Marion Huxtable

**"We can do it on our own! Together, the better!"**

**A project to improve children's daily life skills organized by KASSW  
Ji Eon Oh & Kyung Hyun Park (KASSW<sup>1</sup>)**

### **Background of the Project Development**

In one study, about half (46.8%) of elementary school children in Korea after COVID-19 were found to stay at home without an adult guardian during weekdays when they did not go to school, confirming that there was a large gap in care. When some children, for the first time in their lives, were left at home without a guardian, they could not eat or exercise properly, and mistreated the stove causing a fire that killed a younger sibling. In this situation, new roles and functions for school social workers arose. After some discussions among several officers, the KASSW headquarter decided to develop and distribute programs to help children who have been neglected since COVID-19 learn basic daily life skills and strengthen their support systems with friends, family, and teachers.

### **The structure and contents of the program**

At the end of 2020, when the Community Chest of Korea recruited organizations to carry out the 'Social Vaccine Project for After COVID-19', KASSW was selected to operate a three year-project from 2021 to 2023. For the project, KASSW organized a team with the researchers and experienced school social workers to develop the whole process and the program. The program was named "We can do it! Together, the better!", abbreviated to "Hon-Jal, Gat-Jal!". KASSW held a workshop for the school social workers to explain how to carry out the program. In 2021, the first year, the program was piloted in 10 elementary schools in the second half alone, and as a result of the evaluation, it was found to be very effective in all areas as expected. Accordingly, we expanded the program to 35 selected schools in 2022.



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<sup>1</sup> The Korea Association of School Social Workers

The underlying principles of the program are to respect child leadership, develop children's capabilities, practice relationship-oriented practice, and practice resilience, while mobilizing support from significant adults such as parents and teachers, and providing case management services if necessary. Specific activities in the program were divided into four areas: eating, health management, clothing, and housekeeping. Each area consisted of one-on-one interviews



with school social workers and children plus group activities operated for three or more children at schools. In addition, school social workers were asked to actively use the social support system by reporting progress to parents and homeroom teachers resulting in encouraging messages being sent to students. After all the activities, students invited close friends or family to present what activities they have been doing, what they have learned from each other, how they have grown, and to share compliments and appreciations to those who helped.

### **Project results and participants' impressions**

Those who participated in the program expressed their thoughts and feelings, which are as follows. A student said "Through this program, I learned there are many things I can do on my own, and I gained confidence by hearing compliments from my friends, teachers and parents." A parent said "I was sorry that I couldn't find time and methods to teach my children to take care of themselves at home. But this program was very practical and helpful. I am proud to see the children doing it alone even if they were a little clumsy."



A principal said "The students seem to be enjoying the program and looking more energetic and confident. I appreciate the school social worker for creating a meaningful opportunity for our students, teachers and the parents to do something for children



during and after COVID-19. It was a small thing but big at the same time." A social workers said, "It also was an opportunity to reflect and grow as a school social worker". According to the post-project evaluation study, almost all of the students participated with interest, their level of satisfaction was very high, and their degree of confidence and ability to express their thoughts improved. Students felt that their friendship was strengthened and their parents' interest and support increased through small group activities among peers. Teachers saw that students' ability to adjust to school life increased and that the project provided

an opportunity for communication and collaboration between school and home.