

JOB DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM: Head Start Program

JOB TITLE: Family Advocate

PAY GRADE: HS-6

JOB SUMMARY

Provide high-quality health, mental health, nutrition, parent engagement, and social services to Head Start infants, toddlers, and preschool children and their families, and to pregnant women and their families. Comply with the Head Start Performance Standards, the Head Start Act, and other applicable regulations. Build partnerships with families to assist them in identifying their own goals, strengths, needed services, and support systems and developing strategies and timetables for achieving their own goals. Responsible for eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS

SUPERVISES: Not Applicable

REPORTS TO: Family Advocate Manager

ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS

- ☐ Bachelor's degree in human services, adult education, family services, early childhood education or other related field; Bachelor's degree in unrelated field and willingness to obtain a Family Services Credential or Certificate within eighteen months of hire;
- ☐ Minimum of one year experience working with adults; and,
- ☐ Minimum of one year experience collecting, organizing, recording, and processing information.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- ☐ Valid driver's license and vehicle with adequate insurance coverage available for daily use;
- ☐ Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Clearance, Child Abuse Clearance, FBI Clearance, and National Sex Offender Registry check prior to hire; and Motor Vehicle Record check;
- ☐ Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse training completed within 90 days of hire;
- ☐ Physical examination prior to hire;
- ☐ Tuberculosis test prior to hire;
- ☐ Computer training and/or documented proficiency with popular word processing, spreadsheet and database software; experience with and/or training in Microsoft Office products, particularly Word, Excel, and Access, is preferred;
- ☐ Physical ability to perform essential job functions with or without any health restrictions, including the ability to stand, walk, or sit for long periods of time, lift and carry up to thirty pounds; have unrestricted use of the upper and lower body, corrected or uncorrected hearing and vision within normal range, and a clear speaking voice; and, other abilities necessary to ensure child safety in the classroom, other group areas, and when in the community, such as, but not limited to the following:
 - Ability to bend, squat, reach, kneel, and climb stairs;
 - Ability to move from a sitting to standing position quickly, safely, and without difficulty;
 - Ability to chase an eloping child;
 - Ability to join in the children's active play including jumping and running indoors and outdoors;

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- Ability to assist children with diapering, toileting, and change of clothing requiring lifting, bending, and squatting;
- ❑ Work non-traditional hours as needed or assigned, including evenings, weekends, and overnight travel; and,
- ❑ Job-related training, as assigned.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

❖ Social Services

- Initiate collaborative partnerships with parents to establish mutual trust and respect;
- In collaboration with other staff, as appropriate, assess each family's need for social services; develop an individualized plan that responds to the family's need; deliver and/or coordinate the delivery of needed social services to each family; review and update;
- Collaborate with other staff, as appropriate, to develop individualized Family Partnership Agreements (FPA) that describe the family's goals, strengths, responsibilities and timetables and strategies for achieving these goals; build upon any pre-existing family plans; review and revisit with families so the FPA remains current and useful; monitor, analyze, aggregate, and report;
- Provide comprehensive community resource information to families, individualizing to respond to the family's needs and concerns to the maximum extent possible;
- Refer families to community agencies/programs; assess accessibility, relevance, and usefulness of assistance received;
- Assist with the establishment and maintenance of ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations responsive to the concerns of the families of children birth through age 5, pregnant women, and their families; participate in community awareness events;
- Conduct home visits with families;
- Visit centers regularly and attend Early Head Start Playgroups and/or Head Start Family Days, in accord with assigned caseload;
- Report on child-family information to program managers; recommend and attend team meetings; follow up with families as instructed; and,
- Report suspected child abuse and/or neglect following program procedures and Pennsylvania law.

❖ Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Attendance (ERSEA)

- Implement, document, and report on the recruitment, selection, and enrollment of potentially eligible children birth through age 5, pregnant women, and their families in collaboration with the ERSEA Coordinator and Family Advocate Manager;
- Receive and process referrals from partner agencies/programs, including eligibility, selection, and enrollment; monitor participation of referred children/women; report on these activities; and,
- Report and follow up with any families experiencing participation or attendance problems.

❖ Parent Engagement

- Implement a comprehensive, individualized, and developmental parent engagement and education program responsive to parent needs, concerns, and requests, and that supports parents in their role as the primary influence in their children's lives;
- Encourage parent volunteerism throughout the program; welcome parents to program sites as visitors, observers, and participants;
- Provide parents regular opportunities to work together and with other community members

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on activities they helped develop and in which they expressed an interest;

- Encourage parents to take an active role in making community services more responsive to their goals and needs;
- Promote full child–family participation in program activities and assist with monitoring and resolution of any problems;
- Assist parents, including pregnant women, with the process of transition into Head Start from home or another setting, within Head Start, and from Head Start to kindergarten or another setting; and,
- Prepare and enable parents to become their own and their child’s advocate.

❖ Health

- Encourage, monitor, and record the timely delivery of medical, dental, mental health, and nutrition services to Head Start children;
- Support the timely delivery of prenatal health and education services to enrolled pregnant women in collaboration with the Health Coordinator;
- Promote child and family wellness and the establishment of a medical and dental “home” for each Head Start infant, toddler, and preschool child and each pregnant woman;
- Provide physical, dental, mental health, and nutrition education activities that are responsive to the ongoing and expressed needs of parents as individuals and members of a group;
- Collect and enter into program software Head Start health indicators such as Medical Assistance, CHIP, and other insurance coverage, participation in WIC, incidence of health problems and their treatment; monitor and report;
- Coordinate with health services providers to maximize resources; and,
- Review Head Start child and parent medical and dental information with the Health Coordinator on a regularly scheduled basis.

❖ Program Operations

- Implement the Head Start family services delivery section of the Head Start Work Plan in accord with program policies, procedures, and all applicable regulations and requirements;
- Compile, analyze, and report on the following: child and family demographics; health, nutrition, and social services strengths and needs; and community resources and gaps in resources for the annual program planning process;
- Encourage volunteerism and assist with program volunteer activities;
- Support any program research studies; implement any identified program improvement strategies;
- Ensure comprehensive, timely two-way communication between parents, Head Start staff, and, as appropriate, community individuals and organizations;
- Transport children and parents to health and/or social services or other program-related appointments or to Early Head Start Playgroups as required;
- Pursue professional development opportunities and attend training as assigned;
- Participate in staff meetings; and,
- Perform all tasks as assigned.

❖ Recordkeeping

- Collect child and family data and enter in program software; monitor, update, and prepare data reports for program use and the annual Program Information Report;
- Maintain accurate, objective, timely and confidential records documenting all family, staff, and agency contacts; disseminate appropriately; and,
- Document recruitment and enrollment activities.

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REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES

- ❖ Knowledge of the following:
 - Head Start Performance Standards, the Head Start Act, and other applicable regulations and laws;
 - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Early Childhood Quality Standards;
 - Relevant Pennsylvania regulations and their application, especially child abuse and neglect requirements for mandated reporters;
 - Current social, economic, and health problems;
 - Community resources available and relevant to low-income pregnant women, infants, toddlers, preschool children, and their families, and their access and use;
 - Family systems support principles and methods and their implementation;
 - Individual and group behavior and effective ways of working with both;
 - Type, organization, and use of standard office files and recordkeeping procedures; and,
 - Microsoft Office Suite, including but not limited to Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, Power Point, and Publisher components.
- ❖ Skill in the following:
 - Working within complex management and services delivery systems collaboratively with other members of the Head Start team;
 - Providing case management services to Head Start families;
 - Helping pregnant women and the parents of infants, toddlers, and preschool children advocate and make decisions for themselves and their families;
 - Oral communication, such as speaking, listening, and interviewing;
 - Writing and communicating, including knowledge of English grammar, spelling, and punctuation as they would relate to the production of reports, as well as in communicating with a variety of individuals and groups;
 - Using a keyboard and personal computer;
 - Building positive relationships; and,
 - Use of recordkeeping and reporting systems, including automated management information systems.
- ❖ Ability to perform the following:
 - Work cooperatively with others;
 - Understand and follow oral and/or written instructions, some of which may include multifaceted procedures;
 - Collect, organize, record, and process information quickly and efficiently;
 - Prepare and maintain written records and reports;
 - Be creative, resourceful, and flexible;
 - Recognize emergencies and areas where action is necessary;
 - Establish and maintain effective, collaborative partnerships with staff, parents, Head Start and grantee staff, and community agencies;
 - Demonstrate respect for individuals and groups with varied cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities or backgrounds;
 - Project a positive image of the program and the agency;
 - Work independently of direct supervision; and,
 - Maintain confidentiality and a professional demeanor at all times.