

Family Support Specialist (FSS)

POSITION SUMMARY:

The Family Support Specialist (FSS) will develop and maintain relationships with families and ensure that they receive comprehensive services through their participation in the program. Comprehensive services include health and social services, disabilities, early childhood education and care services, and a range of parent development training opportunities at the site. The FSS is also responsible for conducting community outreach efforts to identify and develop relationships with community-based organizations that provide other needed services to families.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

- The FSS reports to the Program Coordinator (PC).

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEY TASKS:

- Develop and maintain meaningful, productive relationships with families.
- Recruit and enroll families into the program.
- Secure informed consent for family participation in program evaluation/CSP research activities.
- Conduct periodic home visits to assess family resources and needs.
- Refer and link children and parents to needed services.
- Maintain enrollment throughout the program year through various recruitment strategies.
- Work in collaboration with other program staff and specialists to monitor, track, and coordinate services for children and parents.
- Assist parents with understanding and implementing the Family Partnership Agreement in order to encourage and promote their overall development, including achievement of self-sufficiency, as well as positive developmental outcomes for their children.
- Collaborate with staff to facilitate children's transitions.
- Assist with outreach to families and recruitment of infants and children with disabilities into the program.
- Assist in planning parent activities, encourage parent participation in program activities, and obtain feedback from parents regarding the level of satisfaction with the services they receive.
- Collaborate with Mental Health Specialist (MHS) or refer to specific resource agencies to ensure the health and nutrition needs of infants, children, and families are addressed.
- Communicate with education and care staff regarding infant/child's progress in the classroom.
- In collaboration with the classroom teacher, implement protocols to follow up on absenteeism.
- Collaborate with the MHS and/or mental health resource(s).

- Administration
 - Maintain records and document services in a timely manner.
 - Enter service data into management information system.
 - Participate in the local and statewide evaluation, and ensure compliance with CSP requirements.

- Participate in coordinating the staffing of all families with their caseload and case studies.
- Attend family support team meetings, staff meetings, staff trainings, collaborations, and planning meetings.
- Promote and Maintain Parent Involvement
 - Promote parents' overall involvement and participation in program governance.
 - In collaboration with the classroom teacher and PC, facilitate parent support.
 - Promote family involvement in center-based services, home-based services, and other program activities.
- Community Involvement
 - Develop relationships with other community-based service providers targeting the needs of families served.
 - Identify services currently available and those needed by families enrolled in the CSP.
 - Participate in recruiting volunteers from the community.
 - Work collaboratively with community-based organizations serving families in the CSP.

EDUCATIONAL AND WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS:

- A Bachelor's Degree in Social Work or a related field. Experience working with families in a community-based Head Start or family support /resource program preferred.
- Experience working with children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

REQUIRED WORK EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS/ABILITIES:

- Ability to establish supportive relationships with children and families from diverse backgrounds
- Ability to utilize reflective supervision
- Ability to work within an interdisciplinary team as a cooperative and supportive team member
- Ability to manage work in an environment that can be interrupted by violence
- Knowledge of community resources and capacity to develop community cooperation to ensure that families receive comprehensive services
- Knowledge of Head Start Performance Standards
- Ability to communicate with parents in their primary language

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

- Must have good written, verbal, communication and organizational skills.
- Must become knowledgeable about current Head Start and CDE childcare and preschool guidelines, including the rules and regulations affecting the families served.
- Must be able to operate a computer and other office equipment.
- Must have a valid driver's license and valid vehicle insurance.
- Must be fingerprinted for criminal background check.
- Must be able to travel within the community (i.e., parents' homes, community agencies, etc.).
- Must be able to alter work schedule to accommodate parent availability.