MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALIST
JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Requirements

Baccalaureate or advanced degree from an accredited college or university in psychology, social work, or a related field;
Must be a licensed or certified mental health professional with at least 3 years experience and expertise in serving young children and families;
Must have the following:
Knowledge of treatment strategies in the area of child behavior management;
The ability to work with teachers in implementing child behavior management strategies;
Knowledge of strategies in the area of family crisis interventions;
The ability to work with families in a supportive manner throughout the diagnostic and referral processes;
The ability to work with staff to improve their own mental health and to empower them, in turn, to provide supportive services to children and families;
The ability to broker services or to provide counseling and treatment for children and families with diagnosed problems;
Must be able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing;
Must have basic computer skills;
Must have own transportation, have a valid driver’s license, and vehicle insurance as required by Louisiana law.

Nature of Work

Hours of work and schedule are determined on an annual basis, based upon program needs and availability of funds.
The mental health specialist will make regular, periodic, on-site visits to the programs operated by Regina Coeli Child Development Center (RCCDC) in the six parishes of Ascension, Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington.
The mental health specialist shall be involved in planning, developing, and implementing the mental health program as outlined in the RCCDC written work plan.
The mental health specialist shall be supervised and evaluated by the executive director.
Training and technical assistance will be provided by the executive director and through additional training opportunities approved and funded by the employer.

Job Duties and Responsibilities

Learns the Head Start Program Performance Standards, the RCCDC written work plan, RCCDC Discipline Policy and Procedures, and all other RCCDC policies and procedures as well as the program’s goals and philosophy.
Implements the goals, policies (including the Discipline Policy), and activities designed to meet the mental health objectives as outlined in the Head Start Program Performance Standards.
Completes regular and consistent mental health observations on identified children deemed “at-risk” at all centers to enable the timely and effective identification of intervention in family and staff concerns about a child’s mental health.

Solicits teachers’ information, observations, and concerns about children’s mental health.

Discusses and identifies with teachers appropriate responses to children’s behavior.

Designs and implements program practices responsive to the identified behavioral and mental health concerns of individual children or groups of children in consultation and coordination with teachers, resource teachers, center directors, education specialists, health specialist, disabilities specialist, and early interventionist as needed.

Solicits parental information, observations, and concerns about their child’s mental health.

Shares staff observations of their child with parents.

Discusses with parents their child’s behavior and development, including separation and attachment issues.

Discusses and identifies with parents appropriate responses to their child’s behavior.

Promotes discussions and education on how to strengthen nurturing and supportive environments and relationships in the home and at the Head Start program.

Promotes children’s mental wellness by providing group and individual staff and parent education on mental health issues.

Assists resource teachers in providing special help for children with atypical behavior or development.

Evaluates and utilizes other community mental health resources as needed.

Provides referrals for children and families to appropriate mental health services.

Assesses resources for payment of mental health services and accesses the Head Start budget for mental health funds as a last resort.

Approves all purchase orders for Head Start funding utilized for mental health services.

Works cooperatively with other service area specialists and center directors in a team effort to implement the program’s philosophy and goals.

Protects all children from physical punishment or verbal abuse by anyone in any program activity, and immediately reports any such incident to the center director or person in charge.

Attends all training opportunities and administrative staff meetings as provided.

Performs any other task deemed necessary by the executive director.

**Job Classification and Compensation**

This position will be assigned to the pay plan based on the degree of the incumbent.

This is an exempt position, defined as an administrative position which is exempt from the hourly wage and labor laws.

The incumbent shall work the number of hours necessary to complete all of the tasks required of this job description.

Approved by RCCDC Board 2/11/2004
Approved by RCCDC Policy Council 2/17/2004