



Job Description

Title: Health and Disabilities Advocate

Supervisor: Health Coordinator

FLSA Status: Non-Exempt

Mission Statement:

The mission of Shine Early Learning is to bring a relentless, collective focus on positive child and family outcomes to close the achievement gap and build a better future together for children, families, and communities served by our Head Start partners.

Job Summary:

The Health and Disabilities Advocate (HDA) will work as a member of a team whose primary role is to engage families to partner with us to promote children's healthy development and school readiness. In their specialized role, the Health and Disabilities Advocates are responsible for working with their team members and the Health and Nutrition Coordinators to assure that all children in their assigned Centers are up to date on EPSDT requirements, receive health follow up on acute and chronic conditions, and have medical and dental homes. They will also provide individualized support to a caseload of families whose children have chronic health and nutrition conditions and special needs. In this role, they will collaborate with Health and Nutrition Coordinators and Early Learning Disabilities Specialists/Disabilities/MH Coordinators to assist with family support, care coordination, goal setting and follow up to align home and school interventions and enhance families' capacity to meet their children's special needs.

This position has been established to strengthen our Head Start program's ability to provide tailored, individualized support to a subset of families whose children's health conditions and special needs often require enhanced knowledge and capacity to navigate community based medical, mental health and special education systems. In addition, the Health and Disabilities Advocates serve a critical coordinating function between service areas in our program by assuring that all staff have the information needed to support the children's health and well-being. The position may involve reassignment of caseload and/or center location as deemed necessary for program operations.

Job Responsibilities:

The Health/Disabilities Advocate's responsibilities primarily fall within the following core functions, although s/he may perform other tasks as required by the program:

- A. Promote Family Environments that Enhance Children's Development
- B. Assure EPSDT Adherence
- C. Support Families of Children with Chronic Health Conditions or Special Needs
- D. Support Families to Meet Self-Identified Goals
- E. Enhance Program Collaboration
- F. Maintain Internal and External Service Coordination
- G. Maintain Accurate and Timely Record Keeping and Reporting

A. Promote Family Environments that Enhance Children's Development

- *Engage families as partners in their children's healthy development and school readiness.*
- Participate in outreach, recruitment and attendance follow up activities to engage families in our program; and to motivate their active participation
- Engage families in the Family Engagement Contract process in order to build relationships and shared accountability for promoting children's development
- Individualize family engagement and relationship-building to be appropriate to families' cultural context, as well as respectful of family circumstances.
- Engage families in individualized, in home and group experiences to enhance parent/child interactions that research shows foster school readiness through consistent family routines, positive guidance and discipline, experience rich home environments and literacy activities
- Utilize in-classroom time and home visits to build deeper understanding of the relationship between children's development and their home environments; as well as to model and coach families in positive parent/child interactions
- Engage all families in assigned Centers in conversations/workshops to help them understand child and family health and wellness, the impact of health disparities, and quality preventive care

B. ASSURE EPSDT ADHERENCE

- *Promote a Center environment supportive of preventive health and wellness*
- Work in conjunction with the Health and Nutrition Coordinators regarding the completion of all required health and nutrition screenings, follow up treatment, and on-going support for children with chronic health conditions.
- Work with Family Services team members to ensure that 100% of children maintain up to date physicals, dentals, immunizations, and EPSDT requirements.
- Support Family Services team members by assisting families to secure medical and dental homes for all children as well as ensure that all eligible children have health insurance.
- Support parents to obtain medical/dental appointments or follow up diagnostic testing by appropriate health care professionals/specialists and secure necessary treatment.
- Accompany parents and children to medical or dental appointments when it is determined that this level of support or assistance is required.
- During peak screening times, assist with coordination of on-site screenings or health workshops by community partners for children and families as needed

C. SUPPORT FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS OR SPECIAL NEEDS

- *Provide targeted support to families of children with health conditions and special needs*

- With the assistance of Health and Nutrition Coordinators, conduct and/or participate in Individual Care Plan meetings for children with identified chronic health conditions and special nutritional needs
- Provide individualized support to a caseload of families of children with poorly managed chronic health conditions and special needs, including appropriate goal setting and follow up
- Execute agency's "best practice" protocols for families with poor managed asthma, Care Plans for obesity, and severe dental concerns
- Establish family support groups to encourage self-help and social connections among families of children experiencing common health concerns or special needs.

D. Support families to meet self-identified goals: *Engage in a process of collaborative partnership building with families of children receiving center-based (Early) Head Start services.*

- Utilize family self-assessment information to assist families with self-identified goals to enhance self-sufficiency in areas such as education, employment, housing, and access to community resources
- Identify and access services and resources responsive to family interests and goals and follow-up with parents to ensure that services met their expectations and needs.
- Analyze self sufficiency data and utilize data/results to plan and coordinate a variety of parent cohort groups that support one another to achieve self-sufficiency goals.
- Coordinate or refer families to opportunities for continuing education, employment training and other employment services through formal or informal networking in the community.

E. Enhance Program Collaboration: *Build relationships that will enhance communication and collaboration among internal and external stakeholders*

- Work side by side with health, early learning and disabilities and other members of the family engagement team to support families to be fully engaged in all aspects of our program
- Develop effective communication and collaborative strategies with teaching teams to encourage family engagement in home learning activities, including individualizing activities based upon family interests and children's developmental status
- Establish and maintain working relationships with community partners to strengthen access to resources and training identified as priority goal areas by families

F. MAINTAIN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SERVICE COORDINATION

- *Promote effective communication and collaboration on behalf of children with chronic health conditions and special needs*
- Conduct regular case conferences with Health and Nutrition Coordinators and Early Learning/Disabilities Specialists/Disabilities/MH Coordinators to assure seamless communication and support to families on caseload
- Assist families with navigating medical, mental health, special education and other service systems, providing support to advocate for high quality care, and

when necessary, identify more appropriate providers to meet children's special needs

- Participate in the IEP/IFSP process and meetings with Part C, the LEA and Child Study Teams.
- Work with MH/Disabilities Coordinator and teaching teams to set and update goals to assist families with developing advocacy skills and to align instructional/behavioral strategies between home and classroom setting
- Develop a working knowledge of community resources; conduct visits with major agencies for service delivery updates and the development of relationships that will increase access and services to families. This position will have a specific focus on agencies that provide medical, dental services, nutrition or health and wellness and disabilities services.

G. MAINTAIN ACCURATE AND TIMELY RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

- *Manage workload to assure accurate and timely documentation*
- Assure accurate data entry of immunizations, health scheduling events, and health follow up events in the data software program.
- Establish and maintain accurate records as deemed necessary in each child's electronic and hardcopy file.
- Maintain accurate, up to date record of immunizations on State required immunization cards for health department annual audit.
- Document efforts to assist families to identify their strengths, needs and self sufficiency goals through completion of Family Strength Assessment, Family Partnership Agreement, and case notes.
- Document efforts to support parents to establish strong community ties, such as finding a medical or dental home.
- Record, monitor and follow up on referrals for support services for reporting requirements.
- Submit reports as needed and requested, such as monthly summary tracking reports, etc.
- Monitoring and maintaining up to date PIR data (in conjunction with Director of Analysis)

Job Requirements:

- AA/AS in family and child development, public health or health services, social work, early education or a related field. BA/BS preferred.
- Bilingual preferred, but not required
- A passion for achieving positive child and family outcomes through high quality family engagement
- Experience, training, and skill assisting the parents of young children to advocate for their families
- Pass physical examination, background check, and fingerprinting screen.
- Advanced computer literacy in email, word processing and internet navigation.
- Must have reliable personal transportation as travel from site to site is required.

We are an equal opportunity employer, committed to creating a diverse and healthy workplace.