



## **Job Description**

<b><u>Title:</u></b>	Health Advocate
<b><u>Business Unit/Delegate</u></b>	Easterseals Head Start
<b><u>Reports To:</u></b>	Family Services Supervisor
<b><u>FLSA Status:</u></b>	Non-exempt

### **Mission Statement:**

The mission of Easterseals Head Start 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 Advocate (HA) will work as a member of a team whose primary role is to engage all families as partners to promote their children's healthy development and school readiness. The Health Advocate uses knowledge of the principles of family engagement to support families in their roles as their child's primary educator, encourage parent/child interactions that promote children's school readiness and healthy development, and enhance family well-being.

In this role, the Health Advocate will provide more intensive and targeted support to vulnerable families and families of children special needs in order to assure that our engagement strategies meet their specialized needs. The Health Advocate will also coordinate with the Health Coordinator and the Nutrition Specialist provide support to the families of children with chronic health conditions throughout their entire municipality. This may include, but is not limited to completing Individual Care Plans and administering medication. They will also support the Health Coordinator in assuring that all children in their municipality are up-to-date on EPSDT requirements. They may include, but is not limited to conducting health screenings on children.

The Health Advocate will work as part of the program's broader team to expand family engagement strategies that will create a sense of belonging and shared community among families, with the goal of enhancing the relationships and support that families provide to one another in their shared aspirations for their children and themselves. 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 systems. In addition, the Health Advocate 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 locations as deemed necessary for program operations.

### **Essential Duties & Responsibilities:**

The Health Advocate responsibilities primarily fall within the following core functions, although she may perform other tasks based upon program needs:

- A. Promote Family Environments that Enhance Children's Development
- B. Assure EPSDT Adherence



- C. Support Families of Children with Chronic Health Conditions
- D. Support Families to Meet Self-Identified Goals and Needs
- E. Engage Families to Support One Another
- F. Enhance Program Collaboration
- G. Maintain Accurate and Timely Record Keeping and Reporting
- H. Recruitment
- I. Eligibility, Selection and Enrollment

## **A. PROMOTE FAMILY ENVIRONMENTS THAT ENHANCE CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT**

*Engage families as partners in their children's healthy development and school readiness.*

1. Participate in outreach, recruitment and attendance follow-up activities to engage families in our program; and to motivate their active participation.
2. Engage families in the Family Partnership process in order to build relationships and shared accountability for promoting children's development.
3. Individualize family engagement and relationship-building to be appropriate to families' cultural context, as well as respectful of family circumstances.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Implement a research-based Family Curriculum, Shine On, Families, with a focus on coordination and collaboration with the Early Learning team, that extends the classroom curriculum into the family's home, modeling high quality the adult-child interactions teachers use in their classrooms for families around four Family Life Practices.

## **B. ASSURE EPSDT ADHERENCE**

*Promote a Center environment supportive of preventive health and wellness*

1. Work in conjunction with the Health Coordinator and Nutrition Specialist regarding the completion of required health and nutrition screenings, follow-up treatment, and ongoing support for children with chronic health conditions.
2. Support families to ensure that 100% of children maintain up-to-date physicals, dentals, immunizations, and EPSDT requirements.
3. Assist families to secure medical and dental homes for all children as well as ensure that all eligible children have health insurance.
4. Support families to obtain medical/dental appointments or follow-up diagnostic testing by appropriate health care professionals/specialists and secure necessary treatment.
5. Accompany parents and children to medical or dental appointments when it is determined that this level of support or assistance is required.
6. 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**

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

1. With the assistance of Health Coordinator and Nutrition Specialist, conduct and/or participate in Individual Care Plan meetings for children with identified chronic health conditions and special nutritional needs.
2. Provide individualized/group support to of families of children with poorly managed chronic health conditions and special needs, including appropriate goal setting and follow-up.
3. Execute agency's "best practice" protocols for families with poor managed asthma, obesity, and severe dental concerns.
4. 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 AND NEEDS**

*Engage in a process of collaborative partnership building with families of children receiving (Early) Head Start services.*

1. 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.
2. Provide more intensive weekly face to face or phone contact with vulnerable families on caseload as identified through their self-assessment or family interactions/communication- including home visits Assure that families receive immediate support during times of crisis, and assist with referrals to community based resources to meet counseling, treatment, entitlement or other needs.
3. 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.
4. Analyze self sufficiency data and utilize data/results to plan and coordinate a variety of parent cohort groups that allow families to support one another to achieve self-sufficiency goals.
5. Coordinate or refer families to opportunities for continuing education, employment training and other employment services through formal or informal networking in the community.

### **E. ENGAGE FAMILIES TO SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER**

*Foster a sense of community and sense of belonging among families in order to strengthen social capital*

1. Conduct group and center-based workshops and activities designed to build social capital and create a welcoming program community committed to family engagement in children's learning and development.
2. Cultivate family leadership and support their advocacy efforts through participation in program governance bodies such as delegate Policy Committee and grantee Policy Council, as well as neighborhood and community based advisory groups
3. Work in conjunction with Center staff and families to plan and conduct a wide variety of family engagement activities that provide opportunities for families to support one



another, including, but not be limited to the following:

- Conduct, activities, and campaigns that promote children's school readiness
- Self-Sufficiency Sector Groups
- Monthly Family Engagement Network Meetings

## **F. ENHANCE PROGRAM COLLABORATION**

*Build relationships that will enhance communication and collaboration among internal and external stakeholders*

1. 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.
2. Establish regular coordination and communication with Health, Nutrition and Disabilities team members in order to provide more intensive support to families of children with chronic health conditions and special needs, including targeted goal setting, and assistance with building family advocacy skills to navigate community systems of care for their children
3. Work in coordination with Health and Nutrition team members to assure that all children on caseload are up-to-date on EPSDT requirements, including receiving timely evaluation and treatment for identified concerns.
4. 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.
5. Establish and maintain working relationships with community partners to strengthen access to resources and training identified as priority goal areas by families

## **G. MAINTAIN ACCURATE AND TIMELY RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING**

*Effectively manage workload and ensure accurate record-keeping and documentation*

1. Maintain accurate electronic and hard copy records and case notes to support positive child and family outcomes.
2. Document efforts to assist families to identify their strengths, needs and self sufficiency goals through completion of Family Success Roadmap, Family Engagement Contract, and case notes.
3. Record, monitor and follow-up on referrals for support services for reporting requirements.
4. Submit reports as needed and requested, such as monthly summary tracking reports, etc.

## **F. RECRUITMENT**

*Assure timely follow-up on program inquiries and maintain updated tracking system of potential enrollees*

1. Follow-up and maintain updated tracking system for program phone and walk-in inquiries
2. Assist family service leadership with scheduling, planning and coordinating recruitment activities through the year

## **G. ELIGIBILITY, SELECTION AND ENROLLMENT:**



*Ensure the eligibility, selection, and enrollment processes adhere to Head Start Performance Standards and Shine Early Learning Integrated Service Plan and Policies and Procedures*

1. Review all applications received and work directly with families to ensure that all necessary enrollment/intake forms are completed and obtained in a timely manner for all children/families assigned to their center(s).
2. Determine the eligibility of children/families, ensuring that all family documentation is accurate and complete
3. Work with the Family Services Coordinator to enroll children and families based on selection criteria.
4. Maintain an up-to-date and accurate wait list of eligible children to enroll in the event of attrition.
5. Maintain the funded enrollment level, work with Family Services Coordinator to fill vacancies as they occur, and analyze enrollment data to inform the planning process.
6. Keep up-to-date and knowledgeable of ERSEA requirements that are communicated through the Office of Head Start communications such as Information Memorandums, Policy Clarifications and Program Information documents.

#### **H. ATTENDANCE:**

1. As schedule permits, provide clerical support in attendance entry and follow-up
2. Assist the Family Services Coordinator to track centers whose Average Daily Attendance falls below 85% and to maintain Action Plans

#### **Non-Essential Duties:**

- Participate in staff meetings, conferences, training sessions and workshops as assigned.
- Maintain confidentiality in regards to staff and family information.
- Fulfill role as mandated reporter as stated in Child Abuse and Neglect Policy.
- Perform any other work-related duties as requested by your supervisor.
- Be present at work in order to provide consistency of services.
- Be a contributory team member in a positive/productive manner.
- Demonstrate commitment to mission, values, and policies in the performance of daily duties.
- Performs any and all other duties as assigned.

#### **Job Specifications:**

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to carry out each essential duty in a satisfactory manner. The job specifications listed below are representative of the education and experience as well as the knowledge, skill and/or ability (KSAs) required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

#### **Requirements:**

- Associate's or Bachelor's Degree in Public Health, Social Work, Human Services, Family Services, Counseling or a related field preferred, OR AA or BA in another



field with a commitment to complete Family Services/Certificate/Credential within 18 months of hire.

- Registered Nurse
- Physical exam and background checks are required for this position.
- Travel required locally or long-distance up to 10% of the time for work-related meetings and functions.
- Must have a valid driver's license and reliable transportation.
- Bilingual (Spanish/English) preferred

**Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities:**

- 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
- Ability to effectively communicate verbally and in writing
- Experience working in low income diverse communities preferred
- Demonstrated computer literacy skills, using MS Office applications and other basic data systems including internet navigation.
- Must be honest, dependable and able to meet deadlines.
- Self-motivated and able to work independently.

**Physical Requirements:**

- Ability to sit most of the time with some bending and reaching.
- Ability to stand, walk, and bend periodically.
- Ability to engage in repetitive movement of wrists, hands, and fingers – typing and/or writing.
- Ability to work frequently at close visual range (i.e. preparing and analyzing data and figures, accounting, transcription, computer terminal, extensive reading).
- Ability to receive and respond to oral communication.
- Ability to exert up to 10 pounds of force to lift, carry, push, pull, or otherwise move objects.

**Work Environment:**

- Work is generally performed in an office environment.
- Noise level in the work environment is moderate to occasionally loud (examples: business office with computers and printers, light to moderate traffic, human voices).
- Standard office equipment generally used includes:
  - Telephone
  - Personal Computer (monitor, keyboard, and mouse) or Tablet
  - Printer/Photocopy Machine
  - Calculator
  - Fax Machine

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*Employee's Signature*

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*Date*



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*Supervisor's Signature*

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*Date*

*Easterseals policy is to provide equal employment opportunity to all qualified applicants and employees regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, genetic information, veteran status, status as a special disabled veteran, or any other protected criteria as established by federal, state, or local laws. This policy applies to recruitment and hiring, training, promotion, compensation, benefits, transfer, layoff, termination and all other terms and conditions of employment. Employment decisions at Easterseals are based solely upon relevant criteria, including an individual's capabilities, qualifications, training, experience and suitability.*

*Easterseals requires all employees to follow its COVID policies and requirements.*