I. JOB TITLE: Disabilities/Mental Health/Transition Specialist

II. JOB DESCRIPTION

This is a part time professional position responsible for coordinating/monitoring services for children with disabilities as well as facilitating/monitoring smooth, effective transition processes of all children entering/leaving the Head Start program. Additionally, this position is responsible for coordinating/monitoring the Head Start mental health component. This position is responsible to the Head Start Director.

III. EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED AND CONDITIONS

a. Collaborates with other Head Start employees to ensure a comprehensive systems approach to provide disability, transition, and mental health services to enrolled children and families.

b. Identifies each child in the program who appears to have a disability and ensures that conditions of each child are diagnosed by a qualified diagnostician.

c. Identifies children with atypical behavior or development and provides/facilitates direct services or referrals for additional services.

d. Develops and maintains a system whereby each child with a diagnosed disability is provided such special education services as are needed. Specifically, ensuring services by:
   1. Partnering with the Local Education Agency (LEA) to diagnose suspected disabilities and provide services and/or treatment to children with diagnosed disabilities.
   2. In cooperation with parents and teachers, providing directly or facilitating the provision of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each child with a diagnosed disability.
   3. Providing directly to the child such special education services as are within the area of expertise of the Specialist and
   4. Advocating, facilitating, coordinating, and monitoring services of other specialists external to the program who may be engaged to provide special education services.

e. Ensures the availability of specialized supplies and equipment as needed for children with disabilities.

f. In coordination with center-based, home-based, and management staff, assists all children in their emotional, cognitive, and social development.

g. Contacts/negotiates with a consulting Mental Health Professional for provision of mental health services to children, families, and staff.
h. Collaborates with the consulting Mental Health Professional to identify, observe and plan programs to meet the needs of Head Start children and families.

i. Provides or facilitates training and technical assistance to Head Start employees, parents, substitute staff, and volunteers designed to increase understanding and acceptance of disabling conditions and mental health issues, as well as the implementation of Positive Behavior Support concepts and strategies for classroom and home environments.

j. Encourages collaborative training between Head Start and area public school districts.

k. Communicates regularly with area public school personnel for the purpose of establishing/maintaining positive regard, open dialogue, and smooth transference of child information between Head Start and public school.

l. Supports center and home-based staff in their efforts to communicate and partner with area public school personnel.

m. Prepares written informational items for regular distribution to parents and community partners.

n. Maintains knowledge of available resources necessary to address child/family needs for disability and mental health services.

o. Regularly travels to individual sites within the project area; occasionally travels to out-of-area locations as necessary for training or other events at the request of the director.

p. Maintains confidential records and prepares reports as required.

q. Participates in training to improve job performance as may be assigned by the Head Start Director.

r. Performs other duties as may be directed by the Head Start Director.

s. Needs to be able to lift 40 - 50 pounds.

t. Needs to be able to work some evenings and/or weekends as necessary.

IV. QUALIFICATIONS

Graduation from a four year college/university with a major in Early Childhood Education, Special Education, Speech Pathology, Elementary Education, or Health Services, PLUS experience with children 0-6, OR

Graduation from a two/four year college/university with a major related to Early Childhood Education, Special Education, Speech Pathology, Elementary Education, or Health Services, PLUS two years’ experience with children 0-6, OR

Sixty college hours PLUS five years’ experience as a Head Start/Early Head Start disabilities manager, mental health manager, or other disability/mental health position.

Must have strong skills in the following: verbal/written communication, computer applications (ex. Microsoft Office), time management, organization, recordkeeping, and teamwork. Must be willing to further education as necessary.

V. SALARY ENTRY LEVEL: Chart III