

## **SOCIAL SERVICE SPECIALIST (ENTRY)**

**6611**

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CLASS**

Under the guidance of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, the SOCIAL SERVICE SPECIALIST (ENTRY) provides counseling, consultation, and treatment planning or conducts group sessions in effective parenting skills to ensure the physical safety and emotional well-being of children in families who are experiencing difficulty. Under guidance, employees in this class also provide services to children who must be removed from the home by recruiting and certifying temporary foster homes and permanent adoptive homes, or functioning in a liaison capacity between agency staff and substitute care providers.

### **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES**

This is the first level of a three-level series. The Social Service Specialist (Entry) is an underfill class for Social Service Specialist positions. The guidance and training received from a supervisor or social service specialist and the close review of work distinguishes this class from the higher level. Employees in this class receive guidance in treatment planning, counseling, caseload management, preparation of personal histories, and case narratives.

Employees receive training and information on Federal laws and guidelines relating to child welfare, community resources used in providing needed services to children and families, and programs designed for the protection of children. The training period for this class is one year, which includes the one year trial service period. Upon completion of training and meeting the minimum qualifications of the higher level, employees in this class are placed into the Social Service Specialist classification.

### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The duties listed below are not inclusive but characteristic of the type and level of work associated with this class. Individual positions may perform all or some combination of the duties listed below as well as other related duties.

Work assignments are usually limited to one of the service areas but may be assigned from a combination of service areas. Upon hire, employees at this level may not perform all duties identified in a service area, but as knowledge and proficiency in providing services increases, additional tasks and responsibilities will be assigned.

#### **1.Foster Care Certification**

Under the guidance and close review of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, evaluate foster home applicants. Interview family and references, observe home conditions and assess applicant's ability to deal with multiproblem children and understanding of child abuse and neglect. Prepare home study narratives and recommend for or against certification. Plan and conduct foster home recruitment activities and provide orientation and training for foster parents.

Inform staff of availability of foster homes, locate placements, obtain feedback from staff and recommend changes to correct problems. Participate on substitute care screening committee, if required. Mediate conflicts between agency staff and foster parents and listen to complaints and concerns of foster parents regarding children in their care. Recertify homes annually.



## **2. Adoption Services**

Under the guidance and close review of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, conduct community meetings and prepare media materials to recruit applicants. Evaluate adoptive parent applicants. Conduct preadoption training sessions and individual and family interviews. Observe home conditions, interview appropriate sources to gain necessary information and collect financial data. Assess applicants' ability to deal with multiproblem children and complicated parent-child relationships.

Summarize data and present information to State Adoption Committee. Consult with staff on suitable adoptive homes for each child. Counsel child and selected family to prepare for the placement, visit home to monitor child's progress and provide counseling and support to both child and family as necessary.

Counsel both child and parent in disruptive placements and supervise permanent planning for the child if adoption is unsuccessful. Provide information regarding child and adoptive family at administrative and court review and make recommendations regarding finalization of adoption process.

## **3. Liaison Activities**

Under the guidance and close review of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, serve as the primary contact for assigned substitute care provider programs. Screen referrals for appropriate placement in substitute care programs. Attend case review meetings to review treatment for children plans and provide advice regarding changes or improvements. Inform providers of policy changes and interpret agency policy.

Attend agency Substitute Care Screening Committee to discuss and review placement of children outside their home and inform the Committee of available openings at assigned provider programs. Resolve differences between agency staff and providers. Provide direct services to children in families receiving treatment services in substitute care programs and assist in agency investigation of alleged abuse or neglect in substitute care programs.

## **4. Parent Training**

Under the guidance and close review of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, interview individuals and families and observe parent-child interactions to assess problems with parenting skills. Develop plans identifying changes to be affected, parents' potential for change, and the maximum skill level the parents can attain. Conduct group sessions to help change behavior and alleviate family problems.

Conduct home visits to assess parents' response to training and provide individual training as needed. Arrange logistics and secure needed support services for parents to attend training. Write progress reports and inform service worker on family situation, parent performance, and progress in program. Testify in court as needed.

## **5. Substitute Care**

Under the guidance and close review of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, gather information to assess family situation and determine appropriate substitute care for child. Obtain psychological, school, medical, behavioral, and other pertinent information to develop initial service plan, including justification for out-of-home placement. Present case to substitute care review

committee. File petitions and present information and recommendations at court hearings. Arrange placement of child in substitute care and attend screening and preplacement visits.

Develop service plans, identifying specific needs of individual family members, the activities to occur and timeframes for each and refer to agency staff or community agencies for needed services.

Counsel individual and family to assist with reconciling relationship. Supervise visits between parents and children and monitor child's progress in substitute care. Prepare written administrative review on each child in out-of-home care. Authorize payments to providers and prepare case narratives and court reports.

## **6.Family Service**

Under the guidance and close review of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, gather background information to assess the extent of the family problems, answer telephone inquiries or complaints and screen potential clients. Meet with family and other sources to determine family needs, required services and eligibility. Explain agency's role and responsibility to family and advise on alternative services.

Develop service plans for eligible families, identifying individual family members' needs, services to be provided, activities to occur and timeframes for each. Refer to agency staff or community agencies for needed services. Maintain ongoing contact with service providers to monitor and assess client's progress. Provide individual and family counseling to improve quality of life for children and prevent the need for placement outside the home. Inform courts of family situation and treatment progress and make recommendations for children in the home. Prepare case narratives and court reports.

## **7.Permanent Planning**

Under the guidance and close review of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, observe home conditions and assess problems and needs of families where children have been removed from their home. Develop permanent placement plans for children in substitute care. Prepare service agreements outlining conduct and involvement expected of parents for children to return home. Provide direct counseling, refer parents to professionals or arrange services with other agencies or community resources.

Make regular home visits to assess client progress and adherence to service plans. Decide whether to replace the child in home or pursue other permanent placements. Refer cases to terminate parental rights when warranted. Record client activities and prepare court reports and summaries for termination of parental rights. Testify at court hearings.

## **8.Family Therapy**

Under the guidance and close review of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, interview parents, children, and other appropriate sources to identify needs of families in crisis where the child's removal appears imminent. Develop treatment plans, including assessment of family needs and goals. Provide intensive short-term counseling and conduct family therapy sessions to strengthen family, avoid child abuse or neglect, and prevent need for substitute care. Arrange services with other agencies or community resources and recommend further treatment. Complete paperwork on treatment and patient progress.

## **9.Sex Abuse Therapy**

Under the guidance and close review of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, conduct individual intake interviews with family members affected by sexual abuse to assess treatment needs. Conduct specialized interviews with victims to assist in completing complex sexual abuse cases. Plan, prepare, and conduct therapy treatment programs for each group being treated. Recruit and train professional volunteer therapists to participate in treatment programs. Provide play therapy and individual counseling or refer to other professionals. Serve as resource in the community for information regarding sexual abuse and testify as an expert witness at court hearings.

### **10. Protective Services**

Under the guidance and close review of a supervisor or experienced social service specialist, investigate reports alleging child abuse or neglect. Interview children and parents to collect evidence of abuse or neglect, conduct risk assessment to determine validity of report and decide on appropriate action to ensure safety of children. Obtain medical treatment, initiate court action, or arrange for substitute care placement for children when necessary. Identify specific needs of family, refer to appropriate resources and provide individual and family counseling to rehabilitate the family. Assemble case narrative and reports and testify on abuse/neglect cases in court hearings.

### **RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS**

Depending on assigned tasks, employees in this class are in regular contact, in person and by phone, with clients to provide counseling and other necessary services and with the general public, school, and law enforcement personnel, physicians, and other community professionals to gather background information on assigned cases. Employees in this class meet regularly with other agency staff to discuss child placement issues, provide information on available resources, provide client assessment information, or refer cases for appropriate supportive services. They also meet regularly with service providers to offer consultation services or check for compliance with requirements. Some employees in this class meet occasionally with juvenile court staff to discuss case plans, goals, and recommendations; with substitute care providers to discuss progress of children on assigned cases; or with adoption committee to present information on adoptive applicants.

### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED**

Employees in this class work under the close supervision of a Social Service Specialist Supervisor who assigns work verbally and in writing. Work is closely reviewed during training period for accuracy and conformance to policies and procedures through conferences and review of reports and case records. State and Federal laws and regulations, Administrative Rules, and agency policies are used in providing services to clients and are interpreted to both clients and service providers.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Because of the need to insure public safety, positions in this class at Children's Services Division (CSD) require a criminal history check and a record free of founded abuse referrals. Some positions in the class require the willingness to travel to client homes, private care facilities, foster homes, or court hearings and to work extended or weekend hours as necessary.

### **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (KS)**

Basic knowledge of methods for providing social services to clients.  
Basic knowledge of early childhood development.

Skill in communicating on a one-to-one basis and in groups to provide information, advise, or give assistance with a variety of socioeconomic groups.

Skill in preparing written reports.

Skill in reviewing and assessing information against established rules.

Skill in setting goals and organizing and prioritizing work.

**Some positions in this class may require one or more of the following:**

Basic knowledge of human behavior management and parenting techniques.

Basic knowledge of physical, behavioral, and emotional disorders and how they affect family relationships.

**NOTE:** The KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS are required for initial consideration. Some duties performed by positions in this class may require different KS's. No attempt is made to describe every KS required for **all** positions in this class. Additional KS requirements will be explained on the recruiting announcement.

Adopted 4/90

Revised 11/93