

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CLASS

The SOCIAL SERVICE SPECIALIST 1 provides counseling, consultation, therapy, and treatment planning or conducts group sessions in effective parenting skills to prevent family breakdown and to ensure the protection, physical safety, and emotional well-being of children in families experiencing difficulty. The Social Service Specialist provides protective services to children who must be removed from the home by implementing permanent plans for the children, recruiting and certifying temporary foster homes and permanent adoptive homes, and functioning in a liaison capacity between agency staff and substitute care providers.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

This is the second level of a three-level series. The knowledge and expertise required to provide a wide variety of services to families and children experiencing difficulty and the general supervision received distinguishes this class from the lower level.

Absence of responsibility for conducting case review and audits, providing consultation and technical assistance and coordinate the work of Social Service Specialist staff distinguishes this class from the higher level.

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 may be limited to one service area or may include a combination of service areas.

1.Foster Care Certification

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 treatment, investigate complaints, monitor care of children, and provide other necessary services. They also meet regularly with service providers to offer consultation or check for compliance with requirements. Employees in this class are in regular contact, in person and by phone, with medical professionals, mental health workers, and other community professionals to obtain and/or provide information to assist in treatment process and with juvenile court staff to discuss case plans and goals, and assess treatment services in preparation of court hearings. Employees have regular contact with attorneys to discuss client rights, needs, and services.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Employees in this class work under the general supervision of an administrative superior who assigns cases verbally and in writing. Work is reviewed through conferences and review of written case records and reports to ensure that services are appropriate and in conformance with rules and policies. State and Federal laws and regulations mandate specific timelines and procedures for dealing with children in substitute care and provide guidelines for conducting abuse investigations, obtaining court involvement, and filing petitions for termination of parental rights. Administrative Rules and agency policies are used to ensure compliance with agency standards and determine appropriate actions required.

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 behavior management techniques.
 Basic knowledge of early childhood development and family dynamics.
 Basic knowledge of family counseling techniques.
 Basic knowledge of human emotional and behavioral disorders and how they impact family relationships.
 Basic knowledge of conflict resolution and crisis intervention techniques.
 Basic knowledge of community resources useful in providing service to children and families.

Skill in interviewing to gather data needed to assess needs of individuals and families.
 Skill in providing counseling to clients.
 Skill in preparing written case narratives and reports.
 Skill in developing appropriate service plans for clients.
 Skill in communicating on a one-to-one basis and in groups to provide information, advice, and give assistance.
 Skill in conducting social service assessments.
 Skill in interpreting and applying laws, rules, and guidelines.
 Skill in working with volunteers and community agencies.
 Skill in setting goals and organizing and prioritizing work.
 Skill in communicating with angry, disturbed, and aggressive clients.
 Skill in training parenting skills.

Some positions will require the following knowledge and skills:

General knowledge of human sexuality.
 General knowledge of the dynamics of child abuse and neglect.
 Basic knowledge of functioning of juvenile and criminal court systems.
 Skill in obtaining information on abuse from young children.
 Skill in testifying in court.

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.

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