



Family Support Specialist

Delta Gamma Center's mission is to help children who are blind or visually impaired reach their full potential through family-centered, specialized services and community support.

POSITION SUMMARY

Family support at the Delta Gamma Center (DGC) gives children a brighter future. Family support helps parents and children grow together by building confidence, reducing stress, and promoting the well-being of the children and families.

The Family Support Specialist provides family support services to families of children birth through high school graduation; however, the majority of families served will have children enrolled in DGC's early intervention program. Family support as part of our early intervention service model (birth-three) involves a holistic, multidisciplinary team approach to build the family's capacity to care for their infants and toddlers and promote their growth and development.

Family-centered services are unique to each family's situation and support each family's self-determination and full community inclusion. The goal of these services is to identify and address families' strengths, interests, and priorities to facilitate their capacity, confidence, and competence in promoting optimal development and learning of their children with visual impairments.

Individual and group family support and activities are provided in the natural environments where families live, work, and play; at the center; and by utilizing technology as appropriate to best meet the needs and hopes of the families.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Develops and maintains meaningful relationships with families and ensure they receive comprehensive services to meet their needs and goals
- Respects the unique interests, culture, needs, and priorities of each family and child and builds on their individual strengths and abilities
- Conducts initial and ongoing assessments to determine child and family needs and identify barriers and strategies to overcome those barriers
- For families served through the Early Intervention program, collaborates with the EI team (parents, educators, and therapists) to develop, and monitor child and family goals and the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)

- Consults and collaborates with EI team professionals to assure high quality and coordinated service delivery to achieve IFSP goals and to assist with problem-solving to overcome barriers
- Plans and provides individual family support services responding to expressed needs and goals of each parent and caregiver o Supports parents, caregivers, and other professionals to address parenting and child development needs
- Provides short-term counseling to support the emotional needs of family members including problem-solving and crisis intervention
- Supports caregivers in navigating various systems (health, mental health, education, social services, public benefits, etc.) to access needed resources through education, referrals, coordination, and advocacy
- Assists and coaches the family to increase their awareness, knowledge, and confidence in promoting the child's optimal learning, development, and overall well-being
- Plans and facilitates/co-facilitates child-parent playgroups and in-person and virtual knowledge and skill-building workshops and support and peer networking groups for parents, caregivers, siblings, other family members, and other professionals
- Collaborates in the planning and participates in family social and recreational activities
- Collaborates with DGC program staff, other service providers, and community partners to provide continuity of care and linkages to resources
- Stays up to date on and maintains information on the availability of community resources to support families and children sharing information with families and staff as needed
- Supports the family and the child in preparing for transitions, including transitions to preschool, and kindergarten, transitions between schools, the transition to adult services, and transitions to other community-based programs
- Supports parents with educational advocacy and training related to eligibility for special education services appropriate Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals and services, and effective implementation of the IEP as needed
- Provides oral and written reports of assessments, and progress updates to parents, team members, management, and funders

- Prepares required client documentation (assessment reports, progress notes, goal monitoring, etc.) and maintains service, attendance, and billing records in compliance with DGC, licensing, funder, and early intervention system requirements
- Attends DGC and EI team meetings and consults and partners with other agencies/professionals and coalitions as needed
- Stays current on best practices, evidence-based interventions, emerging trends, and technologies by reviewing professional journals and research, participating in professional associations, and/or attending workshops and conferences
- Other duties as assigned such as assisting with other DGC activities for families and older children, special events, etc.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Master's degree in social work from an accredited school or equivalent experience, a valid LCSW is strongly preferred
- Three-five years of experience working with families and children with disabilities, including experience with the birth-five population is required, experience with visual impairments is a plus
- Experience working in a home-based setting and/or navigating special education is preferred
- Understanding of and commitment to a family-centered service model and strengths-based approach is a requirement
- Strong knowledge of key systems (health, mental health, education, social services, public benefits, etc.) and St. Louis regional community resources
- Enthusiasm, and empathy for children with special needs, their families, and professional caregivers
- Excels at communicating and collaborating with children and families and professionals (especially medical and special ed) from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds

- Ability to initiate and maintain effective working relationships with families, especially those who may at first appear to be unwilling or unapproachable
- Flexibility in scheduling to meet needs of families and program; ability to establish and maintain professional boundaries while building a strong relationship
- Training and/or credentials in telepractice (telehelp/health/mental health) and competence in utilizing necessary technology are a plus
- Capable of functioning independently to effectively meet deadlines and other service requirements seeking supervisory consultation when necessary
- Ability and willingness to travel independently to provide home and community-based services as assigned
- Competence in learning and using new technology including computer and mobile apps, video conferencing tools, and case and outcome management systems; proficient in the use of MS Outlook, Word, and Excel

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

- Full-time (37.5 hours per week); requires some evening and weekend hours
- Enroll as a DGC provider with Missouri and Illinois early intervention systems
- Complete specialized training and other requirements to obtain/maintain required certification and/or licensure and early intervention credentials
- Complete training related to working with infants and toddlers, visual impairments, and providing home visiting services as needed
- Background check, drug screen, and health certification completed upon offer of employment (background checks and health screenings completed annually)
- Family support is provided in the natural environment (at home and in the community), at DGC, and by utilizing technology (i.e. email, phone, video chat/conferencing, online social networking, and training tools)
- Must have a car and maintain a valid driver's license, auto insurance, and acceptable driving record to meet travel requirements of the service area

- Must be physically able to lift or move 30-50 pounds; push/pull and lift equipment and supplies; assist children by bending, crouching, kneeling, sitting in chairs and/or on the floor and reaching in all directions; and stand, sit or drive for long periods

REPORTS TO
Program Director

TO APPLY

1. Submit a cover letter explaining why you are interested in this position and how your personality, skills, and professional experience make you the ideal candidate for the position outlined in the job description.
2. Submit a resume outlining your professional experience and achievements, education, and relevant training and credentials, and
3. Email cover letter and resume to **employment@dgkids.org** or fax to 314.776.7808.