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The Gingerbread House Bossier/Caddo Children's Advocacy Center is a community-based, non-profit organization that works to reduce the trauma experienced by child abuse victims during the investigation, prosecution, and treatment phases of child abuse cases.

### Job Description

**Title:** Child Life Specialist, Child Life Specialist/Family Advocate  
**Reports to:** Chief Executive Officer  
**Supervisors:** Director of Child Life  
**Classification:** Full-Time

**Overview:** The Child Life Specialist increases the capacity of the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) to carry out its mission by providing culturally competent and developmentally appropriate services to child victims who visit the Center, by monitoring child behavior and emotional responses, by providing behavioral intervention and support, and by communicating significant findings to the other members of the Investigative/Multidisciplinary Team.

The children brought to the CAC are often frightened of the interview process because they do not know what to expect from the interview and forensic medical exam or what will occur after they tell the secret they have held inside. The goal of the CAC is to interview these children in a supportive manner, in a comfortable environment, and to complete an interview that will provide any available evidence for court proceedings. The goal of the forensic medical exam is to collect any available evidence of abuse on the child's body, to screen and provide medical care such as STI treatment, and to reassure the child about the well-being of their body. The Child Life Specialists help prepare children for both of these processes.

**Purpose:**

- To reduce systematic trauma to children and their families.
- To facilitate multidisciplinary investigations of child abuse cases including law enforcement, child protective services, the District Attorneys' offices, and medical and mental health agencies.
- To reduce the number of future victims through education.

Child Life Specialists are trained professionals who work with children and families with a goal to reduce stress and anxiety due to recent traumatic experiences or events. These goals are achieved by providing education to the child using age and developmentally appropriate language. When a child has been a victim of abuse it is common for them to have anxiety and even re-traumatization due to having to disclose details of the abuse. The Gingerbread House Child Life Specialist will use developmentally appropriate techniques to educate and familiarize the children with the Gingerbread House, as well as reduce their anxiety.

“Armed with a strong background in child development and family systems, Child Life Specialists promote effective coping through play, preparation, education, and self-expression activities. They provide emotional support for families, and encourage optimum development of children facing a broad range of challenging experiences.” ~Association of Child Life Professionals

### **Minimum Requirements:**

- BA/BS in Child Development, Family and Child Studies or Child Life
- Must be eligible for professional certification by the Child Life Commission within 6 months of hire date. Fully certified Child Life Specialist strongly preferred.
- Direct experience (paid or internship) working with abused children and their families
- Proficient knowledge of child development and related dynamics
- Familiarity with forensic interviewing protocols and procedures
- Skilled in handling sensitive issues in a mature, confidential manner and with integrity and compassion; high level of discretion
- Knowledge of and sensitivity to family systems and child victimization
- Knowledge of the overall child protection and legal system
- Ability to work with children and their families in stressful situations
- Ability to work well with a variety of disciplines and function within team environment
- Excellent communication, mediation, and problem solving skills
- Organizational skills to independently manage workload and related responsibilities
- Flexibility of schedule to suit Center’s needs
- Computer literacy in order to maintain and produce statistical records, internal and external correspondence, and multidisciplinary reports
- Reliable transportation, valid driver’s license, clear criminal background

### **Preferred Qualifications:**

- Master’s degree in Counseling/Psychology, Social Work, Human Service or related behavioral science field
- 2+ years direct experience working with abused children and their families
- Bilingual (Spanish and English)
- Prior training and experience working within a multidisciplinary team
- Knowledge of community-based services for abused children and their families

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **Client Services**

- Meets with children and adolescents who are alleged victims of sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, or have witnessed a violent crime to describe the interview process and forensic medical exam and help lessen stress often experienced by children who have suffered from traumatic situations
- Meets with non-offending caregivers as needed to answer questions regarding the interview Process and forensic medical exam
- Able to testify in court if subpoenaed regarding a case
- Serves as a back-up for intake calls of suspected abuse cases by assessing and providing appropriate guidance, referrals, and follow-up services
- Refers child victims & non-offending caregivers for therapy and victim assistance as needed
- In conjunction with MDT members, including Forensic Interviewers, Family Advocate, Counselors, and other treatment providers, assists with the development of treatment plans for child victims and their non-offending family members
- In collaboration with the Forensic Interviewers and the Family Advocate, maintains accurate, up to date resource and referral information for partner agencies and community-based service agencies
- Operates audiovisual equipment as needed
- Available after-hours on an emergency basis as needed

### **Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), Education, & Training**

- Fosters and maintains a trusting, helpful relationship with MDT members including law enforcement, child protective services, District Attorneys' Offices, and medical / mental health professionals
- Participates in monthly Multidisciplinary Team Case Review meetings and statewide networking opportunities through Children's Advocacy Centers of Louisiana
- Attends individual case staffing meetings when needed
- Assists with coordinating interview schedules with law enforcement and DCFS investigators
- In special circumstances, monitors interviews conducted by law enforcement investigators and provides appropriate feedback and assistance through earpiece microphone
- Maintains awareness of current techniques, controversies, and research in the field of child life, child advocacy centers, and multidisciplinary team investigations (child life recommendations = 50 Professional Development Units every 5 years)
- Provides training, education, and assistance both within the organization and to community agencies and professionals, including school personnel and other civic groups
- Co-facilitates the Parenting Group/Children & Teen Group as needed

### **Administrative**

- Adheres to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations
- Adheres to Personnel Policies and Procedures manual guidelines
- Maintains confidentiality of clients by requiring identification and authorization before releasing client information to third parties
- Maintains documentation of client contacts, progress, and other relevant documentation
- Maintains service statistics information and enters it into case tracking system for grant evaluation purposes
- Attends staff meetings and promotes a team environment
- Positively represents the Children's Advocacy Center in community activities
- Makes recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer regarding program status, development, and improvements

### **Other**

- Maintains and expands skill level and relevant knowledge base through supervision, case review, research, and professional growth
- Helps with fundraisers and special events
- Helps keep the Center clean and organized
- OTHER DUTIES, TASKS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS ASSIGNED BY THE CEO

### **Salary Package:**

- Commensurate with experience, Range \$40,000 - \$60,000
- Health, Vision, Dental, Life Insurance paid for by Agency
- Retirement Benefits with Employer Contribution
- Generous Paid Leave and Holidays
- Agency will pay annual membership fee to the Association of Child Life Professionals
- Agency will provide training on-site and through collaboration with other community agencies
- Agency will allow for attendance, at a minimum, of one nationally recognized conference per year