



## CHILD ADVOCATE

### Where Small Voices Can Be Heard

The mission of the Child Advocacy Center is to respond to child abuse through a team approach designed to reduce trauma, seek justice, and provide hope and healing for children and their families.

*“Excellence is achieved by caring more than others think is wise, risking more than others think is safe, dreaming more than others think is practical, and expecting more than others think is possible.”*

### SUMMARY OF THE POSITION

The role of the Child Advocate is to provide immediate and ongoing support to children and families in crisis throughout the investigation and prosecution of the case as outlined in the National Children’s Alliance Standards for Accredited Members.

### ESSENTIAL DUTIES

#### **Welcomes, Supports and Engages the Child and Non-Offending Caregiver**

The Child Advocate is responsible for welcoming the child and non-offending family members to the Child Advocacy Center and creating a safe and supportive environment that is free of judgment. The Child Advocate typically conducts a pre-interview phone call to the non-offending caregiver to ease their anxieties and answers any questions or concerns. Once the family arrives at the CAC, the Child Advocate provides the child(ren) with an initial tour and orientation.

#### **Connects, Listens and Provides Initial and Ongoing Support**

The Child Advocate provides immediate emotional support to the child and non-offending caregiver(s) during a time of crisis by providing on-site advocacy during a forensic interview or medical evaluation conducted at the Child Advocacy Center and complete the Trauma Assessment Tool. The Child Advocate works with the non-offending caregiver(s) to identify their most urgent needs for themselves and their families and to assist in helping to find resources to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and safety for the their child. During the initial meeting with the non-offending caregiver(s), the Child Advocate begins to assess their level of support for the child following the disclosure and identify other risk factors that if present, might compromise their protective abilities such as domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health issues, and history of their own childhood victimization.

Through direct follow-up, either by phone or home visit, the Child Advocate regularly monitors the safety of the child and reports any concerns to the investigating officer or caseworker should the support of the non-offending caregiver be diminished or the child’s safety compromised. The Child Advocate also provides immediate and ongoing education to the non-offending caregiver(s) on the dynamics of abuse and the coordinated multidisciplinary response. The Child Advocate assists the non-offending caregiver(s) to rebuild a safe and stable home by providing access to trauma focused,

evidence based mental health treatment and other services such as protection orders, housing, public assistance, domestic violence intervention and transportation.

The Child Advocate provides timely updates to the child and non-offending caregiver(s) on the status of the investigation and prosecution and seek answers to their questions or concerns. The Child Advocate provides information regarding the rights of crime victims to the child and their non-offending caregiver(s) including information about crime victim's compensation

### **Updates Case Tracking System and Statistical Data**

The Child Advocate updates the Child's Case Record and the case tracking system with documentation that is fact-based, clear, concise and timely. The Child Advocate also updates spreadsheets needed to provide accurate statistical data to funders.

### **Provides Outcome Measurement System (OMS) for Ongoing Program Evaluation**

The Child Advocate plays a critical role in ongoing program evaluation by providing the non-offending caregiver(s) the opportunity to provide feedback through our Outcome Measurement System (OMS).

### **Responds to General Information Telephone Calls and Community Referrals**

The Child Advocate provides information and referrals to the general community who contact the Child Advocacy Center with concerns of possible abuse or neglect and follows up with Community Referrals from NDHHS to provide appropriate referrals for services, including a forensic interview when indicated.

### **Criminal Justice Advocacy and Support**

The Child Advocate works closely with the members of the multidisciplinary team to stay current on the investigation and prosecution of the case and share any concerns or needs identified by the child victim or non-offending caregiver(s). The Child Advocate helps the non-offending caregiver(s) secure transportation to interviews, court, treatment and other case-related meetings. The Child Advocate accompanies child and non-offending caregiver(s) when necessary, to legal proceedings and meetings associated with the prosecution of the case, provide Court School and support the child throughout the court process through sentencing including assisting with a Victim Impact Statement.

### **Working as Part of Multidisciplinary Team**

The Child Advocate must earn the respect of the multidisciplinary team and foster open and positive relationships with law enforcement, NDHHS Children and Family Services, and the prosecuting attorney while promoting best practices for child abuse investigation, prosecution and treatment in Southeast Nebraska. The Child Advocate must be familiar with the [Lincoln/Lancaster County Child Abuse and Neglect Investigation Team Protocols](#) and actively participate in regular case review.

The Child Advocate responds to after-hour forensic interview requests and provides on-site advocacy and support to the child victim and non-offending caregiver(s).

### **Ongoing Professional Development**

The Child Advocate must successfully complete a minimum of 24 hours of initial instruction as outlined in the National Children's Alliance Standards for Accredited Members and must demonstrate participation in ongoing education in the field of victim advocacy and child maltreatment consisting of a minimum of 8 contact hours every 2 years.

## **Leadership and Collaboration**

Leadership exists within all levels of our organization. We expect the Child Advocate to ensure culturally competent services are provided to all families we serve without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, gender or sexual orientation. We also expect the Child Advocate to read and comply with the policies and procedures of the Child Advocacy Center as outlined in the Employee Handbook and Setting the Standard: Procedure Guidebook for Best Practices and take a leadership role in making sure other staff do the same. The Child Advocate must promote a positive image of the Child Advocacy Center in the community and participate in special events and fundraising efforts.

## **SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The employee customarily and routinely exercises independent discretion and judgment in the performance of his or her duties and supervises volunteers and interns as assigned.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

**Education:** A bachelor's degree in social work, psychology, human services, criminal justice or related field is required. Bilingual (Spanish/English) is preferred.

**Experience:** Two years of professional experience working with children and families who have either experienced or witnessed trauma is preferred. Previous professional experience in working with the criminal justice or child welfare system and as a member of a multidisciplinary team is preferred.

## **OTHER**

Exempt employees must be able to work flexible hours and to be on-call for emergency situations. Evening and weekend hours are routinely required. All employees must have access to a vehicle, possess a valid driver's license and provide proof of insurance. The position does involve travel throughout Lincoln and Southeast Nebraska. All employees must submit to a criminal history background check prior to being hired and annually at the time of their performance evaluation.

## **FUNDING FOR THIS POSTION**

100% of the Child Advocate's time is devoted to allowable activities under Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. Specifically, providing services which immediately respond to the health and safety including but not limited to, crisis intervention services; emergency food, clothing, transportation and temporary shelter for victims; and other emergency services intended to restore the victim's sense of security. Also services that include evaluation of mental health needs. Also, services directed to the needs of victims who participate in the criminal justice system. These include advocacy on behalf of crime victims; accompaniment to criminal justice offices and court; transportation to court; child care or respite care to enable victims to attend court; notification of victims regarding court dates; case disposition information; parole procedures; and assistance with victim impact statements. Also, services that assist victims with managing practical problems created by the victimization such as acting on behalf of the victim with creditors and employers; providing parenting and/or life skills classes that help to stabilize a victim's life; assisting victims with applying for compensation benefits; assisting the victim to recover property that is retained as evidence and helping to apply for public assistance.

We have two Child Advocates who are funded 100% by VOCA and two Child Advocates who are funded in part from Lincoln/Lancaster County United Way.

**REVISED**

June 1, 2018

*This job description is meant to describe the general nature and duties that may be required of this position within the Child Advocacy Center. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all duties and responsibilities associated with this job. Nothing in this job description restricts your supervisor's right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to this job at any time. All employment relationships at the Child Advocacy Center are of an at-will nature and may be terminated at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice. This job description does not constitute a contract of employment.*



I have received a copy of my job description and understand the expectations of my position at the Child Advocacy Center.

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Signature

Date