

STAFF ASSISTANT (CHILD LIFE)

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: Under general supervision, incumbents of this class work at the Westchester Medical Center and are responsible for providing a scheduled program of therapeutic, medical and diversional play and activities to an assigned group of pediatric patients to promote normalization of the environment, positive adaptation to the hospital, optimum development of children, adolescents and families, to maintain normal living patterns, and to minimize psychological trauma. Incumbents function as members of an interdisciplinary treatment team, managing all aspects of clinical and environmental issues, and conduct assessments of patient development, patient and family coping skills, and social supports. Incumbents provide opportunities for gaining a sense of mastery, for play, for learning, for self-expression, for family involvement, and for peer interaction. Patient responses and progress are communicated via rounds, staff meetings, case conferences, and documentation in the patient record. Supervision may be exercised over volunteers and students. Does related work as required.

EXAMPLES OF WORK: (Illustrative Only)

Assumes direct responsibility for the welfare of all assigned patients;

Provides opportunities for and facilitates a variety of play and activities for acutely, chronically and critically ill children, individually and in groups, which promote self-healing, self-expression, understanding and mastery;

Develops individual treatment plans based upon assessments of the child's development, temperament, coping style, medical plan and available social supports, and evaluates and revises the treatment plan as needed;

Utilizes therapeutic play techniques and other means of communication, both verbal and non-verbal, as a diagnostic and treatment tool, and to interpret the child's perception of his or her diagnosis and treatment;

Supports family bonds and utilizes family strengths in the care of the child;

Uses developmentally appropriate methods in preparing children and families for diagnostic, treatment and operative procedures;

Provides emotional support during identified stress points;

Utilizes stress reduction techniques to facilitate adaptive coping;

Creates and implements activities to assure continuity in the child's normal life experience, i.e., personal and holiday celebrations, school programs, etc.;

Provides parent education on child development and reaction to illness, injury and hospitalization;

EXAMPLES OF WORK: (Illustrative Only)

Provides consultation to the health care team on the impact of environmental factors on the child, and the developmental status and individual needs of children, to promote adaptation to hospitalization and treatment;

Documents observations, behaviors, treatment plans, assessments, progress, and teaching in the medical record;

Recognizes child and family anxiety and communicates needs to interdisciplinary team to meet child/family psychosocial needs;

Attends and participates in rounds, seminars and conferences for the purpose of continuously updating professional knowledge and enhancing program effectiveness;

Assists in training and supervising volunteers and students;

Maintains play areas and equipment to create an attractive, clean, comfortable, and accepting environment, and assists in ordering supplies and equipment;

Conforms to all health and safety requirements;

Uses computer applications or other automated systems such as spreadsheets, word processing, calendar, e-mail and database software in performing work assignments;

Accesses protected health information (PHI) in accordance with departmental assignments and guidelines defining levels of access (i.e. incidental vs. extensive).

May perform other incidental tasks, as needed.

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND ATTRIBUTES: Good knowledge of growth and development of individuals ages 0-21; good knowledge of the effects of illness, injury and hospitalization on children and their families; good knowledge of family dynamics and interpersonal communication; knowledge of group process and behavior management; knowledge of therapeutic play and activities; basic understanding of children's illnesses and medical terminology; ability to assist patients in coping with the stress of hospitalization, illness, death, and/or loss; ability to function as a member of the health care team; ability to assess and interact with patients and families using theories of human growth and development, family systems and cultural background; ability to work individually with children or in groups; ability to effectively use computer applications such as spreadsheets, word processing, calendar, e-mail and database software in performing work assignments; ability to read, write, speak, understand, and communicate in English sufficiently to perform the essential duties of the position; sound judgment; flexibility; resourcefulness; creativity; tact; integrity; respect for cultural, religious and economic values and beliefs; physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE: A Bachelor's Degree* or Master's Degree* in Child Life, Psychology, Recreation, Early Childhood Education or closely related field.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENT: Must be eligible** for certification as a Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS) by the Child Life Council at time of temporary appointment and must be certified at the time of permanent appointment. Candidates must provide a copy of the letter admitting them to the proximate exam for CCLS as proof of eligibility for certification.

**SPECIAL NOTE: Any incumbent of this position who fails the certifying examination for the CCLS credential twice will no longer be eligible for continued employment in this classification.

*SPECIAL NOTE: Education beyond the secondary level must be from an institution recognized or accredited by the Board of Regents of the New York State Education Department as a post-secondary, degree-granting institution.