



FOSTER & ADOPTIVE CARE COALITION

FOR EVERY CHILD... A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Educational Advocacy

Department:	Specialized Support	HR Approval:	March 5, 2025
FSLA Status:	Full-Time, Exempt	Reports to:	Director of Educational Advocacy

Summary of Position

The Educational Advocate plays a critical role in providing educational support and advocacy for youth in foster care, those adopted from foster care, and children in guardianship arrangements from the foster care system. Serving as a key resource for caregivers, educators, and child welfare professionals, the advocate works to ensure that each child's educational needs are met, empowering families to navigate complex systems effectively.

Key Responsibilities:

1. **School Placement & Educational Support:** The advocate works with the child's Educational Decision Maker to ensure appropriate school placement and access to necessary educational services.
2. **Special Education & Evaluations:** Supports the acquisition of educational evaluations and ensures the implementation of special education services as required by law.
3. **Disciplinary Advocacy:** Upholds the rights of students during disciplinary proceedings, ensuring fair treatment and due process.
4. **Mental & Behavioral Support:** Connects students to essential behavioral, emotional, or mental health resources to promote educational success.

Collaborative Efforts: The Educational Advocate bridges gaps between foster/adoptive parents, educators, and child welfare professionals, fostering improved communication and understanding. The advocate works to empower caregivers by providing resources, referrals, and emotional support, ensuring that children receive the support necessary for academic achievement and personal growth.

Trauma-Informed Approach: The advocate takes a holistic, family-centered approach, focusing on individualized plans, cultural competency, and leveraging natural supports to ensure that each child's unique needs are met.

Address
1750 S Brentwood Blvd., Suite 210
St. Louis, MO 63144

Phone / Fax
Office: 800.FOSTER.3 (314.367.8373)
Fax: 314.241.0715

Website
www.foster-adopt.org



Key Functions:

- **Initial Assessment:** After an intake consultation, the advocate conducts a thorough assessment, including school observations, interviews with school staff, and potential direct interviews with the child.
- **Individualized Service Plan:** A comprehensive plan is developed, outlining goals and existing support, which guides the advocacy process.
- **Collaborative Action:** The advocate works closely with school teams, service agencies, and the family to address educational concerns, facilitate IEP meetings, and ensure proper documentation is in place.
- **Ongoing Support & Monitoring:** Once goals are achieved, the advocate maintains periodic check-ins and follow-ups to ensure long-term success, including home visits or additional observations.

Through advocacy, support, and collaboration, the Educational Advocate enhances the educational stability of children in foster care, reduces barriers to success, and helps caregivers become more informed and confident advocates for their children. This program fosters educational outcomes, personal growth, and a stronger sense of self for each child, ensuring they thrive academically and emotionally.

Essential Functions & Responsibilities

Assessment & Data Collection:

- Conduct comprehensive assessments of the educational needs of referred children within their natural home environment by engaging in open communication with both the student and their family.
- Attending Family Support Team (FST) meetings, collaborating with the child welfare team, and participating in discussions with school professionals—either in-person or through virtual meetings.
- Collect data via school observations to understand the child’s educational environment and needs.

Goal Development & Advocacy:

- Partner with the child and family to develop educational goals and create a service plan.
- Utilize knowledge of Special Education processes, laws, and child development to advocate for the child’s educational needs.

Meetings & Collaborations:

- Actively participate in school meetings (e.g., IEP meetings, diagnostic staffing, and hearings) to support the child and family in reaching program goals, attending most meetings in person.
- Communicate and coordinate with the child, caregivers, and professional team to monitor progress and adjust as needed.

School Preparation & Support:

- Prepare families for school meetings and hearings by reviewing goals, outlining information, and preparing questions.

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- Support families in obtaining make-up schoolwork for illness or suspension and addressing school-related concerns (e.g., homework routines, textbooks).

Resource & Referral Services:

- Provide wraparound services by identifying and connecting families to community resources (e.g., after-school programs, tutoring, summer camps, family court services).

School Partnership:

- Foster positive relationships with local schools and share trauma-informed educational practices with school staff and parents to enhance collaboration.

Documentation & Record Review:

- Request, review, and analyze educational records and relevant documents (e.g., psychological evaluations, court reports) to support the child’s educational progress.
- Prepare letter templates (e.g., to request Special Education evaluations or IEP meetings) and share with families or FSTs as needed.

Billing & Administrative Tasks:

- Complete daily billing in a timely and accurate manner, ensuring compliance with funding requirements.
- Maintain up-to-date records, including work calendar and activity log, and manage time effectively.
- Navigate various software systems (e.g., Salesforce) to collect and track program data as required.

Internal Referrals & Collaboration:

- Make internal referrals to agency services such as Family Works, Little Wishes, and support groups.
- Collaborate with colleagues and contribute ideas for best practices within the team and the organization.

Training & Professional Development:

- Be receptive to training, coaching, supervision, and feedback, demonstrating adaptability and teamwork.
- Participate in team and agency meetings, attending most in-person (or virtually during restrictions).

Placement Stability & Family Support:

- Visit the child and family in home or in the community to address concerns impacting placement stability, ensuring follow-up support is provided.

Professional Documentation & Reporting:

- Complete professional, thorough, and timely documentation (e.g., intake forms, assessments, progress notes, and closing summaries).
- Follow procedures for meeting, calling, and consulting with a supervisor.

Cultural Competency & Communication:

- Respect and demonstrate understanding for diversity, engaging effectively with individuals of all backgrounds.
- Respond promptly to communication from families and professionals, maintaining respectful and professional interactions.

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Non-Essential Functions:

- Assist with administrative tasks and volunteer responsibilities as needed.
- Support other agency programs to achieve organizational goals.
- Perform other duties as assigned, with or without accommodation

Qualifications & Requirements

Education

Master's degree in education or related field required.

Experience

- **Proven Experience in Collaboration:** Demonstrated ability to collaborate effectively with multi-disciplinary teams, leveraging innovative strategies to overcome challenges and ensure successful outcomes for children and families.
- **Expert Knowledge of Education & Foster Care Systems:** In-depth understanding of the education system, including Special Education processes, child development, and educational laws, paired with experience navigating the foster care system.
- **Minimum of 2 Years Relevant Experience:** At least 2 years of professional experience working within or alongside the education and foster care systems, preferably with direct involvement in advocating for youth in foster care or those with educational barriers.

Skills & Competencies:

- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite and Salesforce (or similar software).
- Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Ability to build relationships with families and community resources.
- Creative problem-solving skills.
- Excellent organizational and time-management abilities.
- Experience working in multicultural environments and understanding diverse family needs.
- Knowledge of Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education policies.

Additional Requirements:

- Automobile, automobile insurance, and valid driver's license required.
- Occasional transportation of children/families.
- Must maintain confidentiality and have a clean criminal history.
- Must fulfill mandated reporting responsibilities in Missouri.
- Demonstrates integrity, accountability, and commitment to high ethical standards.
- This position requires passing background checks (references, Family Care Safety Registry, Form 1-9, etc.).

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Agency Accountability:

- Complete daily activity logs and maintain an updated Outlook calendar.
- Adhere to the Coalition's Shared Values, Employee Code of Conduct, and Social Work Code of Ethics.

Working Conditions:

- Flexibility required, with evening and weekend hours as needed.
- The Coalition office is considered home-base with primary office hours Monday-Friday 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM. This position requires work outside of those hours to meet the needs of clients and program expectations.
- The physical requirements of this job include sitting, standing, walking, climbing stairs, lifting to 25 lbs., and pulling and/or pushing on occasion.
- Work performed in both community and office settings. **We serve Saint Louis City and County, St. Charles City and County, and Jefferson County. Some assistance with Lincoln, Warren, and Franklin County school districts may also be provided.**
- Use of an insured vehicle is required for local travel.

Agency Shared Values

Employees of the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition agree to hold themselves and their colleagues to the following values:

- We insist on fairness and respect. We are deliberate in ensuring everyone has safety, opportunity, access, and support to be heard.
- We are family. We are connected and support one another in meeting the needs of our own families and the families we serve. We assume the best and are committed to each other.
- We celebrate differences and harness its power. Every viewpoint is heard and honored. We are stronger because of our differences.
- We are intentional about knowing better and doing better, using innovation and solution-focus approaches with courageous passion and excellence.
- We respect, leverage, and engage everyone's unique strengths and talents so each individual can contribute to their full potential.
- We are an agency built on integrity, maintaining a culture of trust, respect, transparency, and honesty. We walk in our truth and uphold ethical standards.
- We stand up for each other and what is right for our clients and stakeholders with truth, vulnerability, and accountability.
- We develop and maintain authentic relationships by being flexible and open-minded and maximizing the strengths of each individual in the team to accomplish the best outcome for our children and families. Everyone contributes to leadership.

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Job Description Acknowledgment

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, reviewed, and fully understand the job description for this position. I am aware of my responsibilities and the expectations outlined, and I am committed to fulfilling the essential functions of this role.

Printed Employee Name:		Date:	
Employee Signature:			

Chief Program Officer:		Date:	
Employee Signature:			

Chief Human Resources Officer:		Date:	
Employee Signature:			

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