



Family Support Specialist

[Join Our Team at DGCKids](#)

DGCKids empowers children who are blind or visually impaired and their families through early intervention, family support, youth programs, and vision screening. We create opportunities for children to grow, connect, and thrive with their families and community.

[Position Summary](#)

The Family Support Specialist helps parents and children grow together by building confidence, reducing stress, and promoting the well-being of the children and families.

Family support services are eligible to families with children that have a visual impairment birth through high school graduation. Services are provided in a combination of one-on-one support, as well as large and small group sessions. Services support a holistic approach to build the family's capacity, so parents feel comfortable and confident raising a child with visual impairment.

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.

Individual and group family support services are provided in the natural environment; 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
- 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, consults and collaborates with the EI team (parents, educators, and therapists) to develop, and monitor child and family goals and assist with problem-solving to overcome barriers and satisfy the outcomes in the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)



- Plans and provides individual family support services responding to expressed needs and goals of each parent and caregiver
- 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
- 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 DGCKids, licensing, funder, and early intervention system requirements
- Attends DGCKids and EI team meetings



- Participates and collaborates with other agencies/professionals providing family support services, including but not limited to, local coalitions
- 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 DGCKids 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
- 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, 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 DGCKids provider with Missouri early intervention program
- 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 and pre-employment drug screen completed upon offer of employment (background checks 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 be willing to travel throughout the Centers 50-mile service area to meet clients in their homes
- Must have a reliable 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

Senior Director of Programs



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 **lrohr@dgckids.org** or fax to 314.776.7808.