



## RIVERBEND HEAD START & FAMILY SERVICES JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Social Emotional Specialist  
REPORTS TO: Mental Health Specialist

GRADE: E9  
STATUS: Full-Time/Exempt

**AGENCY MISSION: To empower children and families in Madison County, Illinois to develop positive skills to meet life's challenges.**

This position focuses on supporting the social-emotional development of children, staff, and families through coaching, training, and consultation. The Social Emotional Specialist operates under the guidance of the Mental Health Specialist, with the Social Emotional Specialist functioning as a member of the Agency's program management team. Interpersonal characteristics include caring about team members and the children and families we serve, possessing and utilizing respect, courtesy, cooperation and confidentiality at all times, exhibiting dedication to meeting the expectations and requirements of internal and external customers, managing diversity within the agency, maintaining the integrity and trust of staff, enrolled families and community partners, exhibits empathy and maintains composure during difficult situations.

### ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

The Social Emotional Specialist (SES) will meet all data and program requirements while promoting equity and building adult capacity to support the social and emotional development of infants and young children throughout Madison county. The SES works within a framework of promotion, prevention, and early intervention to foster mental health and social-emotional well-being for children, families, and staff members.

#### 1. Classroom Observations, Consultations, and Coaching

- Conduct weekly classroom visits to provide social-emotional support, modeling, and guidance to teachers and staff.
- Observe classroom environments and collaborate with teaching staff to create emotionally responsive and inclusive spaces.
- Provide child development education related to social-emotional growth and mental health best practices.
- Guide staff in selecting, implementing, and interpreting social-emotional screening and assessment findings.
- Model developmentally appropriate activities and evidence-based strategies for supporting children emotional regulation, self-control, and peer interactions.
- Provide written and verbal strengths-based feedback to classrooms on a quarterly basis, incorporating evidence-based recommendations for continuous improvement.

#### 2. Individual Child and Family-Centered Observations & Consultation

- Conduct targeted observations and assessments for children identified as needing additional support or referred for consultation.
- Collaborate with teachers and caregivers to develop and implement individualized support plans based on assessment findings.
- Conduct consultations with families to address child-specific needs, providing psychoeducation and actionable strategies.
- Participate in multidisciplinary team meetings to coordinate care and interventions for children and families.

#### 3. Individual Child Screening, Assessment, and Referral

- Conduct standardized developmental, behavioral, and social-emotional screenings to assess children strengths and areas for growth.
- Ensure timely referrals for intervention support.
- Follow up on referrals to confirm families receive access to services and to monitor child progress after referrals.



#### 4. Home Visiting with Family Advocates

- Participate in home visits to support Family Advocates with children mental health needs and help families create nurturing environments.
- Model and guide family advocates in developmentally appropriate activities that promote emotional resilience and positive attachment.
- Provide tailored recommendations for caregivers to reinforce children social-emotional development at home.

#### 5. Data Monitoring & Program Compliance

- Document all referrals, observations, interventions, and follow-ups in accordance with agency policies and program requirements.
- Maintain up-to-date mental health data and provide reports to the Mental Health Specialist as requested.
- Ensure fidelity in the implementation of Second Step and other classroom social-emotional curricula, providing staff with support materials and coaching.
- Assist in data collection and reporting for agency assessments and evaluations.

#### 6. Staff Training and Professional Development

- Support initial onboarding for all new staff members on social-emotional and behavioral health practices.
- Lead annual and ongoing professional development sessions for staff, covering topics such as trauma-informed care, de-escalation techniques, positive behavior support, and child mental health awareness.
- Facilitate quarterly classroom team meetings to review behavioral concerns, offer intervention strategies, and provide training tailored to staff needs.
- Stay updated on evidence-based mental health practices and ensure staff are trained on the latest research and best practices.

#### 7. Programmatic Responsibilities

- Provide agency-wide consultation to staff and leadership on mental health, behavioral health, and child development.
- Ensure ongoing communication with caregivers and families regarding mental health and behavioral concerns, providing proactive guidance and intervention strategies.
- Assist in the development and revision of program policies and procedures related to child mental health and social-emotional support.
- Contribute to Community Assessments by identifying trends and needs in children mental health services.
- Assist in setting and achieving RHSFS Strategic Goals, particularly those related to mental health services.
- Recruit participants and co-facilitate the Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee, ensuring strong community engagement and resource alignment.

#### 8. Parent Training and Family Engagement

- Develop and lead parent workshops focused on nurturing social-emotional health, positive discipline, stress management, and preparing children for kindergarten.
- Empower parents and caregivers with strategies to foster emotional intelligence and resilience in their children.
- Ensure parents have access to community resources, mental health supports, and early intervention services.

#### 9. Supervision & Reporting

- Participate in weekly supervision meetings with the Mental Health Specialist to discuss program updates, challenges, and child case management.
- Contribute to federal, state, and local reports, ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements.

Other duties assigned

**EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE:**

Bachelor's degree in counseling, social work, psychology, marriage and family counseling or other related field required; Master's degree preferred. Minimum of two years of applicable experience preferred. Licensure as a mental health professional, eligibility for licensure, or in the process of obtaining licensure is preferred. Must be able to provide their own transportation to and from work and throughout the workday.

**WORKING CONDITIONS:**

Work is performed in a setting with minimal safety issues. Some travel to outside meetings, trainings, conferences, Agency sites, etc. This position requires sitting, standing, bending and minimal lifting.

**Job Type:** Full-time

**Pay:** \$56,988.00 to \$71,234.00 per year/ based on qualifications and experience

Expected hours: 40 per week

**Benefits:**

- Health insurance
- Dental insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Life Insurance
- 401 (k) (Eligibility is after one year of employment)
- 401 (k) contributions by Agency
- Employee assistance program
- Flexible spending account
- Additional life insurance
- Health reimbursement account (deductible assistance)
- Long-term disability
- Paid time off for Full-time and Part-time employees (Vacation, Sick and Personal)
- Holidays
- Professional development assistance
- Referral program
- Tuition assistance
- Mileage reimbursement
- Group Voluntary Accident, Critical Illness, Hospital Indemnity
- Employee eligibility begins the first of the month following 60 days of employment
- Available to full-time employees working 30 hours or more week

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

This job description describes the general nature and level of work performed by the employee assigned to this position. It does not imply that these are the only duties and responsibilities assigned to the job. The employee may be required to perform other job-related duties as requested by their direct Supervisor. All requirements are subject to change over time and to possible modifications to reasonably accommodate individuals with a disability.

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Employee Signature

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Supervisor's Signature

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Date

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Date