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| **Position Name** | **Child life specialist** |
| **Role Description** | Practitioner focuses on psychosocial needs (including mental, emotional and social needs) and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. They promote coping skills and minimize the adverse effects of hospitalization, health care encounters, and/or other potentially stressful experiences for patients/ and or families |
| **Typical Roles and Responsibilities** | * Support children and their families by using a variety of tactics to help them better understand a process, procedure, or other element of their medical experience, as well to process and cope with such medical situations * Develop age-appropriate strategies to minimize trauma and increase understanding of a medical diagnosis through treatments plans using therapeutic play, education, preparation, and activities that promote growth and development * Provide information, support, and guidance to parents and family members * Advocate for the special needs of children and their families * Collaborate with the health care team to coordinate and manage care * Non-direct patient care tasks, such as presenting learning opportunities to members of the health care team, coordinating student education, and maintaining therapeutic supplies and activity spaces |
| **Key Competencies** | |
| ​**Science and practice supporting holistic early childhood development** | Understand impact of early years and importance of addressing child’s holistic development |
| Apply evidence-based strategies for promoting child and family development (incl. appropriate use of technology) |
| Demonstrate understanding of individual differences and ﬂuctuations in children’s development and learning that must be responded to reﬂectively and appropriately |
| Use appropriate tools and techniques to assess child development; organizing results so information can be used for further assessment and planning purposes in providing timely care and interventions |
| Interact with kindness, warmth and care, expressing respect, appreciation and understanding of individual needs; creating a healthy, welcoming and age-appropriate environments for them |
| Understand and demonstrate respect for processes, protocols and procedures for protecting privacy and confidentiality of the children, respective families and colleagues |
| **Child wellness: health, nutrition,**  **and safety** | Familiar with science regarding healthy early childhood development and use of strategies with children and their parents to support physical growth, emotional well-being, and adequate nutrition |
| Understand the influence of adverse childhood experiences on life-long health and social consequences |
| Familiar with child protection laws, policies and protocols for reporting child neglect, abuse, exploitation or exposure to violence; taking adequate actions when children are under similar kinds of threat |
| Aware of safety issues that affect children and factors and practices that reduce or increase risk to child safety and able to provide first aid / CPR procedures |
| Promote home and community safety in partnership with parents across all spaces to prevent unintentional injuries, disease, or death of the child |
| **Family and community** | Understand the critical importance of the family environment (physical, social...) for child’s wellbeing overall development, functioning, and learning |
| Aware of the importance of high-quality interactions between parents and the child, and between practitioners and parents; able to interact with parents in a timely, transparent, respectful, and accountable manner |
| Establish relationships with parents based on mutual understanding, trust and cooperation; using effective strategies to engage family members with diverse backgrounds using a variety of ways to communicate (e-mail, phone...) |
| Listen to and involve parents in all decisions regarding the child’s safety, healthy development and learning; creates opportunities for parents to strengthen their parental skills |
| Aware of community resources to support child and family development and functioning and accordingly able to partner effectively with key stakeholders |
| **Diversity and inclusion** | Treat all children and their families with fairness, empathy, understanding, dignity and respect; understanding how discrimination based on diversity can impact lives and prospects of children |
| Adapt practices, communication and services to reflect each child’s and family’s characteristics, strengths, beliefs and special needs |
| Use different strategies to make each child and family feel welcomed and respected regardless of their background, language, socio-economic status, ability or gender |
| Address own biases toward children, families and communities to avoid stereotypical or judgmental reactions and to advance child’s development |
| **Professionalism and professional growth** | Identify proudly as an ECD professional and promote professional and personal integrity in all interactions, while aware of relevant professional code of conduct for their profession, if applicable |
| Use professional competencies and standards for ECD practitioners as guidance for own professional development and as a continuous learning process |
| Familiar with effective and evidence-based strategies and tools for improving the quality of their practice and aware of Abu Dhabi’s ECD practitioner competencies and standards |
| Apply information from professional meetings, seminars, workshops, as well as print and digital resources to stay abreast of and deepen professional knowledge |
| **Coordination across practitioner roles and professional settings** | Cooperate and coordinate with others to facilitate children’s and families’ access and transition to services to support overall child and family development and well-being |
| Familiar with variety of practitioner roles across ECD services; cooperating and coordinating with them for joint planning, service delivery and evaluation of outcomes to support child and family development and well-being |
| Demonstrate collegiality and is respectful of each other’s functions, responsibilities, strengths, skills and expertise when working with other practitioners |
| **UAE culture and heritage** | Aware of the UAE’s heritage, culture and Islamic values; demonstrating appreciation and respect in interactions |
| Aware of the diverse cultures, religions, traditions, ethnicities and races that live in the UAE; showing sensitivity while communicating and engaging with the UAE community and promoting core values |

