

Family Support Specialist – Worcester/No. County

Parent/Professional Advocacy League is a small but impactful nonprofit working to make things better for children with emotional, behavioral and mental health needs and their families. PPAL works with families across the state who need help navigating services in behavioral health, juvenile justice and education. Our work depends on people who are committed, caring and self-motivated and can be both a self-starter and a great team member.

The Family Support Specialist (FSS) is responsible for providing support to families that increases their ability to find and obtain services for their children and families. The FSS, after training and orientation, will provide family-to-family support, education, advocacy, coaching, information, referrals and follow-up to families. The FSS will also lead support groups for families in the area. This is a part-time 10 hour/week position

The Family Support Specialist **must** have the experience gained by raising a child or youth with emotional, behavioral or mental health needs. Must have transportation. Bilingual candidates preferred.

Duties and responsibilities:

- Work with families to clarify the problem(s); provide emotional support; identify needs and strengths; and identify resources including appropriate levels of services, entitlements, community resources and other natural supports.
- Facilitate support groups for families including outreach and follow up
- Assist families in accessing supports and services by sharing information about resources and supports; making phone calls to connect families with resources; providing guidance in completing forms and applications; supporting families to fully understand their rights; reviewing documents such as IEPs or reports with families to ensure they fully understand documents; empowering families to effectively articulate their concerns and needs; and educating families on laws, policies and procedures.
- Educate and empower families by providing skill building, coaching and advocacy
- Prepare parents to represent the voice of families who have children with mental health needs on various committees.
- Partner with other members of the team to create and maintain a centralized, updated directory of behavioral health resources, including support meetings, screening and referrals for treatment, family education groups therapeutic and/or pro-social recreation, volunteer training opportunities and other services designed to meet the needs of their family.



July 2022

- Partner with other members of the team to identify training needs of families and other stakeholders
- Maintaining data in PPAL's data base, call log and other data systems.
- Work with PPAL staff on special projects

Qualifications:

- Personal, lived experience as a parent or primary caregiver who has navigated multiple child-serving agencies, including but not limited to mental health, juvenile justice, addiction treatment services, child welfare and special education is required.
- Prior experience assisting other families to obtain appropriate services and supports for their child and family members is desirable
- Ability to articulate the experience and perspective of a parent/caregiver of a child with complex needs to build rapport with families.
- Ability to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with a variety of people, especially families
- Proven ability and experience to work with diverse cultural, religious, racial, educational, socio-economic, gender expression and alternative cultural backgrounds.
- Ability to exercise good judgment, courtesy and tact in handling problems.
- Excellent follow through and ability to consistently document activities
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Demonstrated excellent organizational and time management skills.
- Comprehensive knowledge of Microsoft Office and comfort with technology
- Strong computer skills and the ability to efficiently utilize internet search to identify resources.

Must have access to transportation and driver's license. Spanish Bilingual Preferred
Must have a strong desire to support PPAL's mission of improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and families. Must have access to car- some driving required.

Interested candidates should submit their resume and a cover letter which includes your personal experience with children's mental health to info@ppal.net. This position is anticipated to begin in July 2022.

This is a 20 hour/week position with a salary range of \$20 to \$22 per hour



Email: info@ppal.net
Web: <https://ppal.net/>