



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Early Childhood Department
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To: James Hall, Chief Operating Officer
From: Lisa Van Thiel, Early Childhood Coordinator
Cc: Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer
Date: August 23, 2020
Re: Rationale for development of Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant Coordinator - job description decoupled from Early Childhood Social Worker

The Social worker position in the Early Childhood Department has evolved over time from a contracted position to a part-time position in 2007 before finally becoming a full-time job in 2012. The Social Worker position in the Early Childhood Department has historically been grant funded. The responsibilities of this job have grown over time – most recently with the opening of the Cardinal O’Connell Early Learning Center in 2018. Additional responsibilities for managing the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant (CFCE) were a result of the Early Childhood Coordinator taking on Principal responsibilities.

In January of 2020, the Early Childhood Social Worker gave notice; accepting a position at the Greenhage Elementary School. This provided the Early Childhood Department with an opportunity to decouple the Social Work Position from the CFCE Grant Coordinator. Decoupling the positions created two different jobs with different expectations. Given the expansion of Parent Child Plus Model to 60 children in 2018, along with additional responsibilities for supervision of staff, playgroups, outreach, and parenting education, a full time position is needed. CFCE responsibilities do not require someone with an MSW, but rather knowledge of child development, and experience developing and evaluating early learning opportunities. The CFCE Coordinator must also provide professional development and supervision to staff. Additionally, an identified need for a social worker at the Cardinal O’Connell Early Learning Center and collaborating agencies participating in the Commonwealth Preschool Partnering Incentive have necessitated access to a social worker. The full-time Social Worker position has been posted.

As of 2020, Lowell’s CFCE grant supports 60 families through Parent Child Plus and offers Early Literacy Playgroups and parenting education to families in the community through eight playgroups providing touchpoints to over 250 children and families. As our CFCE and PCHP programs have grown, so has the need for a Coordinator with a background in early childhood development to lead and provide oversight to staff implementing programing in accordance with CFCE grant priorities and the Parent Child Plus Model.

The Early Childhood Department has decoupled the Social Worker from CFCE Coordinator position. Please note the differences in the qualification, duties, and salary in the **Chart A**. In closing, it is not possible for one person to continue the responsibilities outlined in both job descriptions. I implore the school committee to approve this new position reflecting the duties outlined in the job description as outlined in the grant. Not filling this position will overburden other staff in the Early Childhood Department taking away from their own responsibilities. Please assist the Early Childhood Department in aligning job qualifications, descriptions, and duties. We ask that you approve the proposed job description in order to provide the Department with the staffing needed to match responsibilities. Funding for the position is fully covered through grant funding.