

## Playcare Assistant

Do you love working with preschool-aged children? Can you identify behavioral problems in children to determine the right course of action in a safe, nurturing, and effective way to assist the child best? If so, this might be an excellent career choice for you!

Fort Bend Women's Center has over 40 years of providing healing and hope to survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in the Greater Houston Area. As United Way- Funded Partners, we aim to guide survivors as they heal from abuse. We equip them with the emotional, psychological, and practical skills and resources to create a hopeful, safe, independent life free of abuse. Our services are free of charge and open to ALL survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault – regardless of gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation, or identity – because we believe EVERY survivor deserves the chance to thrive. Therefore, FBWC provides outstanding and innovative programming that is brain health based. We operate services within a positive reinforcement framework that increases hope and social connectivity to reduce the negative impact of trauma, often from lifelong abuse. Our mobile services, client services, and programs aim to foster client self-determination and accountability. We are data-driven and use evidence-based traditional and innovative services.

Adjusting to life in a shelter can be challenging, especially for children. The PlayCare Assistant is not easily frazzled, especially during crises, while maintaining a safe and positive learning environment (in The Sunshine Club and Rainforest Room) by preparing an age-appropriate curriculum, creating hands-on activities, and using various innovative teaching methods to promote children's development. By applying our Core Values (**S**pirit, **P**assion, **I**ntegrity, **R**espect, **I**nnovation, and **T**eamwork), the PA nurtures basic cognitive learning skills in preschool-aged children that demonstrate leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills in a manner that encourages and empowers children to seek remedies for positive change. In addition, the PlayCare Assistant shows tenacity and thoroughness, with the ability to solve practical problems and deal with various situations simultaneously to effectively communicate with parents about the child's progress or issues identified.

An enthusiastic personality with vigilance and emotional maturity is a MUST because we assist families struggling for self-sufficiency, and the shelter should not be a toxic environment. Hence, residents are always in crisis mode; their children are coping with the crisis, making crisis live where the PlayCare Assistant works. It is a rewarding job that requires a great deal of optimism in injecting "Care" into PlayCare Assistant by acting as the "eyes" of the shelter to create a safe space for the children and reporting findings directly to the Youth Team Lead. The PlayCare Assistant also displays the ability and willingness to make appropriate independent decisions and responds compassionately to persons served while maintaining appropriate and professional boundaries. As a team player who can roll up their sleeves and get involved in everything from big projects to mundane, simple tasks, the PA displays original thinking and creativity by meeting challenges with resourcefulness, generating suggestions for improving workflow, and developing innovative approaches and ideas.

The PlayCare Assistant works a regular, predictable schedule, arrives at their assigned shift early enough to receive progress updates from the Youth Team Lead, and is willing to stay late if required. This is imperative because The Fort Bend Women's Center shelter is operated 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and all team members need to be on the same page to address our client's needs best. The PlayCare Assistant commits to non-traditional hours when necessary to reach goals, completes tasks on time, or notifies the appropriate person with an alternate plan. The PA will effectively communicate

with co-workers to pass on relevant information regarding the children's cases to establish and maintain trust and appropriate collaborative relationships with clients. The PlayCare Assistant exhibits sound and accurate judgment, supports and explains reasoning for decisions, and includes the right people in decision-making when necessary. The PA works respectfully and nonjudgmentally with clients while employing a victim-centered, strengths-based, and trauma-informed perspective. PlayCare Assistants use appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication to de-escalate crises by applying strategies for addressing conflict while moderating one's verbal and nonverbal reactions to communications with clients and coworkers. By the PA providing curriculum and developmental structure, the Child Mentors are free to help children navigate their experienced trauma. The PlayCare Assistants play a vital role in advocating for children residing in the Shelter.

### **PlayCare Assistant Skills**

- Builds trust.
- Multi-tasker with good organizational skills.
- Personality fits well in a team-oriented work environment.
- Patient and compassionate.
- Develops rapport.
- Active listening skills.
- Cultural competency.
- Develop realistic action plans.
- Set goals and objectives.
- Deadline and solutions-oriented.
- Speaks clearly and persuasively in positive or negative situations.
- Listens and asks for clarification.
- Responds well to questions.
- Writes accurately, respectfully, clearly, and informatively.
- Follows instructions.
- Responds to management direction.
- Takes responsibility for own actions.
- Keeps commitments.
- Self-care routine in place to prevent vicarious trauma.

### **Daily Tasks for the PlayCare Assistant**

- Utilize up-to-date and various teaching methods (stories, media, crafts, art, indoor and outdoor games) to connect with children at their level.
- Enforce established rules and guidelines that are outlined in the resident guidebook.
- Prepare snacks.
- Retrieve and serve meals from the kitchen.
- Fill out the required paperwork, such as
  - case notes,
  - service sheets,
  - diaper changes,
  - meal/snack feedings,

- bottle feedings,
- naps,
- dispensing medication forms,
- accident reports, and
- illness reports.
- Collect required data (CBC) for age-appropriate assessments.
- Complete assigned duties and documentation by the end of each shift.
- Respects client confidentiality and autonomy.
- Uses time efficiently to prioritize and plan work activities.
- Edits work for spelling and grammar.
- Attend and actively participates in all meetings.

### **Additional PlayCare Assistant Responsibilities**

- Responsible for the safety and supervision of children in Play Care.
- Cleaning and general maintenance of The Sunshine Club and Rainforest Room.
- Become certified in CPR and First Aid and renew when required.
- Complete other assigned duties.
- Possesses strong time management skills during busy and slower periods throughout the day.
- Applies basic strategies for good communication.
- Supports client's self-determination and informed decision-making.
- Demonstrates ongoing efforts to improve skills in effective verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Willing to learn new communication strategies, such as motivational interviewing.
- Plan for additional resource needs.
- Ability to handle multiple competing priorities with a wide variety of responsibilities.

### **Qualifications and Education Requirements for PlayCare Assistants**

- Ability to work shift schedule of Monday-Friday, 3 pm – 8 pm
- Previous work experience with children dealing with trauma (preferably domestic violence, sexual assault, or Autism) is a plus but not necessary.
- Knowledge of child development.
- High School diploma or GED or related field or equivalent experience.
- Travel may be required in Greater Harris and Fort Bend areas.
- One year of experience working with children.
- Able to bend, stand and lift to 50 lbs.
- Have a valid Texas Driver's License and carry auto liability insurance as required by the State of Texas.
- Satisfactory completion of criminal background checks and drug screening.
- View video [How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime | Nadine Burke Harris - Bing video](#)
- View video [Your body language may shape who you are | Amy Cuddy - YouTube](#)
- View video [Understanding Apathy Through Cognitive Dissonance | Hattie Seten | TEDxBrookings - YouTube](#)

- View video [The power of positive reinforcement | Wendy Smith | TEDxPlymouthUniversity - YouTube](#)
- View video [The Power of Positive Thinking | Helen Peterson | TEDxDhahranHighSchool - YouTube](#)