Sample Family Partner Role Description  
(Parent/Caregiver)

JOB TITLE: Family Partner (Parent/Caregiver)

REPORTING RELATIONSHIP: Family Partner Program Supervisor

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION: The purpose of this position is to provide active, hands-on peer support to parents/caregivers of children ages 0-18 entering the child welfare system to assist families in successfully reunifying and ultimately reducing reentry to foster care. Effective peer support should be friendly, helpful, accessible and flexible. Peer support may be at agencies, in family homes or in community environments. The role of the Family Partner is to provide peer support for up to 1 year to fully engage parents and caregivers who have been involved in the child welfare system to become effective advocates for their own families and also work collaboratively with DCFS staff to support systems change by increasing parent and caregiver involvement in policy and administrative decisions.

QUALIFICATIONS:
- Must be birth, adoptive, foster, kin parent, relative or non-related family member who has had past personal involvement and successful completion of services through the child welfare, courts and/or alcohol and drug services.
- Experience with program development, direct services, report writing and program implementation
- Knowledge and understanding of child protection services
- Knowledge and understanding of court proceedings and terminology
- Genuine concern and compassion for those with alcohol and drug issues involved in the child protection and court systems
- Genuine interest in keeping children safe from abuse and neglect
- Sensitivity to cultural, ethnic and economic diversity
- Ability to work within systems protocols
- Desire to promote needed changes in the systems that affect at-risk parents, caregivers, children and youth
- Ability to work within systems and communities to educate and recruit Family Partners
- Working knowledge of computer and basic office software programs’ skills
- Ability to articulate ideas, concerns and thoughts verbally and in writing
- Alcohol and other drug free with a minimum of two years in recovery.

2011 Parents Anonymous® Inc.
DUTIES OF THE FAMILY PARTNER RELATED TO WORKING WITH FAMILIES:

I. Engagement Skills
   1. Decide collaboratively with the Family Partner Program Supervisor details about the initial engagement meeting with the parent or caregiver.
   2. Introduce yourself as a peer who is a caregiver who has had direct experience with a child serving system (i.e., child welfare, mental health, probation) and explain the role of the Family Partner.
   3. Encourage the parent or caregiver to share their own story including their culture, beliefs, and situation.
   4. Consider the parent or caregiver’s story to identify family strengths, and what parts of the Family Partner’s story would be helpful for the parent or caregiver to hear.
   5. Effectively share your own story in a way which builds connection, confidence, and hope for the parent or caregiver relevant to the family’s culture, beliefs and situation.
   6. Explore with the parent or caregiver potential supports (family or friends) and what might motivate them to work collaboratively with you, their social worker and other service providers to fulfill their case plan in order to reunify with their children as quickly as possible.
   7. Explore the parent or caregiver’s situation regarding the need for rest, relief, and safety and work collaboratively with the Family Partner Program Supervisor to develop and support a stabilization plan.
   8. Secure agreement from the parent or caregiver about the Family Partner meeting with them regularly to help them develop their own solutions to issues, attend meetings on their behalf including Team Decision Making Meetings (TDM) in order to assist them in successfully achieving the goals of their case plan.

II. Implementation Core Skills
   1. Begin meeting with the parent or caregiver regularly and consistently in order to encourage and support an understanding of the parent or caregiver’s perspective of their family’s situation and vision for the future.
   2. Actively listen to the parent or caregiver’s perspective to help identify the strengths of the parent or caregiver; assist the parent or caregiver in recognizing and verbalizing their own strengths.
   3. Participate with the parent or caregiver and Social Worker in planning and developing a case plan that includes required tasks and timelines.
   4. Assist the parent or caregiver in working with the Social Worker to reach agreement about underlying unmet needs that may be driving the situation in the family. Clarify unmet needs versus service provision.
   5. Participate with the parent or caregiver and Social Worker in brainstorming a wide range of interventions to prioritize needs, while also considering the potential family strengths that will match interventions.
   6. Volunteer for tasks if the Family Partner’s strengths match the intervention
   7. Assess the level of support that is needed by the parent or caregiver based on the families support network, their ability to involve their support network at times of need and in TDM’s, and the ability of the parent or caregiver to be heard by others.
   8. Work with the parent or caregiver to develop plans/strategies of how the Family Partner can support the parent or caregiver during meetings to ensure the parent or caregiver’s culture,
beliefs, experience, voice and choice are heard by the Social Worker and TDM members and are incorporated into the case plan.

9. When accompanying parent or caregiver to meetings with other agency representatives and community service providers (i.e., TDM, meetings with social worker or school personnel), the Family Partner will assist the parent or caregiver in explaining their perspective, culture, and beliefs in a way that increases understanding by others.

10. Share information with the Social Worker, TDM members and other service providers about the parent or caregiver’s experiences and perspective on being heard by them.

11. Actively participate as needed, by speaking up and through actions, to support the parent or caregiver’s perspective during meetings (i.e., meetings with the Social Worker, TDMs).

12. Provide individualized, peer-to-peer support to parents or caregivers on a regular basis, according to the identified needs of their family.

13. Attend and participate in TDMs, meetings with the Social Worker and other relevant meetings as requested by the parent or caregiver.

14. Develop plans/strategies with parent or caregiver to ensure the concerns of their family are heard and understood.

15. Under the supervision and guidance of the Family Partner Supervisor, support, and/or implement proactive responses to family in crisis, both during and after business hours as designated in the safety/crisis plan.

16. Connect the parent or caregiver and other family members with identified community resources; Assist in introducing and engaging the family with the community resource, ensuring they can access the service after transition.

17. Discuss with the parent or caregiver and other family members the effectiveness of the interventions. Support the parent or caregiver in communicating information regularly to their Social Worker about the effectiveness of the interventions/process related to the case plan.

18. Work with parent or caregiver and other family members to continue to address the unmet needs initially discussed with the Social Worker.

19. Recognize, celebrate and document family strengths and successes

IV. Transition Skills
1. Help introduce the transition phase of Family Partner services to the family.
2. Discuss the transition planning phase with the family related to their culture and beliefs, their vision and their identified needs.
3. Practice implementation and rehearse crisis responses with the family.
4. Continue to assist the family in accessing needed resources/supports.
5. Celebrate the family accomplishments with a Transition/Family Achievement Portfolio and event that highlights their progress always considering the family’s culture.

DUTIES TO IMPLEMENT SHARED LEADERSHIP® ACTIVITIES AT THE POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT LEVEL. The Family Partner role is also intended to implement parent/caregiver and professional partnership activities at the policy and program levels. The Family Partner will work in shared leadership® with DCFS and the Family Partner Program management staff in all aspects of the program planning, implementation and evaluation on the expansion of the Family Partner Program including co-training of new Family Partners. In addition, this position will also work in shared leadership® with the DCFS management to ensure the family perspective in incorporated into all policy and administrative decisions. Duties will include representation on decision-making bodies or committees established to implement strategies identified in the System Improvement Plan to improve the child welfare system.

TRAININGS AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILY PARTNERS – Parents Anonymous® Inc. will provide the

2011 Parents Anonymous® Inc.
following supports to each Family Partner:

- Initial 5-day Training Institute on the Family Partner Program policies and procedures and roles and responsibilities
- Weekly group supervision to discuss and provide guidance and direction on assigned cases (may include role play, coaching, job shadowing, etc.)
- Individualized monthly supervision to further discuss direction on assigned cases
- Individualized training, technical assistance to assist with program operational tasks such as Family Partner recruitment, trainings, presentations to DPSS and CSD staff to promote program, program planning, development, implementation and evaluation
- Bi-monthly in-service trainings
- Monthly Family Partner Support Group meetings
- Consultation to prepare for participation in program and policy decision-making bodies at the county and state level and debriefings following each meeting.

I have read the above Role Description, have had the opportunity to ask questions and understand the nature of my role and its importance in meeting the agency’s goals and objectives. I understand that the specific functions of this role may change from time to time to meet the evolving needs of the agency.

__________________________________________________________________________
Employee Name Print/Signature __________________________ Date ________________