



# Children's Services of Virginia, INC.

## Placement Description

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The intern shall be assigned to a case manager and his/her work must be supervised by a supervisory level staff member. There shall be a two-day orientation session to the program. The intern may be assigned up to four cases.

The intern must develop an understanding of the operating manuals of this agency and that of the state. He/she must be exposed to the work with children, families, outside agencies, as well as the operation of this program.

## Intern or Field Placement Responsibilities/Opportunities

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- Assist and coordinate the work with foster parents in their work with foster children and the birth families of children, delivering services to foster parents.
- Provide direct services to foster children and their birth families
- Participate in pre-service and continuing education for foster parents. The student may be required to present training at these training sessions.
- Assist on an as-needed basis in recruiting new foster families.
- Complete all assigned paper work on time.
- Assist in preparing clients and families for placement and for discharge.
- Participate as needed in the intake placement process.
- Maintain on-going case management responsibilities.

## Contact Information

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Read about students' experiences at this site below:



*Fall 2016 – Melissa Einhorn*

Children’s Services of Virginia (CSV) is a private treatment foster care agency that has three offices throughout the state: Winchester, Fredericksburg, and Harrisonburg. CSV works to place children in nurturing and supportive foster homes when their birth homes are no longer safe and conducive to successful child development. While there are a total of five principles that comprise CSV’s philosophy, the one that pertains to my experience most is as follows: “we believe that each child has the right to quality life that provides parental guidance, structure, and proper motivation.” This statement does not mention which type of parent, birth or foster is needed but simply that a parental figure is required to help the child to learn and grow. The staff is dedicated to serving their children and families and provides emergency placements to as many children as possible that enter into foster care. CSV believes that a child should be able to reside in their birth home as long as that is safe; but while all children enter care with the goal of returning home, this is not always feasible. Therefore, the child’s goal may then be switched to adoption, a process that CSV also then orchestrates.

The agency provides emergency, respite, short-term, and long-term foster placement for children of all ages and backgrounds, including infants, teen mothers, and sibling groups. Unfortunately, CSV is not always able to place all children due to a limited number of families and an increasing number of children entering the foster care system. Should they be unable to place a child in a CSV home, the child may then be referred to another office or a different agency.

Through my time at CSV, I have been able to see a variety of aspects of the foster care system. My experiences included attending Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court hearings, helping to transport foster children, attending family partnership meetings, and participating in the home study and foster parent approval process. The most interesting part of my time was being able to attend foster parent training; I was able to complete the training along with the new prospective foster families. This process was particularly exciting as I am very interested in who chooses to foster and their motivations so I am grateful to have had the opportunity to meet with and learn about these families. I was also then able to watch as those families completed the home study process and were either accepted or denied to be CSV foster parents.

A significant portion of my time was spent coordinating CSV’s first open house event in which prospective families could learn about foster care and how they could become team members of CSV. This process involved contacting families that had previously expressed



interest in learning more about CVS and foster care opportunities. In addition, I designed and distributed advertising materials in Harrisonburg and the surrounding area to encourage others to attend the open house in the hopes of piquing their interest in the foster care process. My supervisor gave me complete control of the planning and implementing of this event and allowed me to determine the details of how it should be enacted. While there was not as large a turnout as I had hoped, this task gave me the experience of coordinating and implementing a community event, a skill that I can now take onto future careers.

Another component of my time was spent formulating a database of the hundreds of prospective families CSV has encountered throughout the years. While this was a tedious process, this information is ultimately beneficial as it will be used by CSV for years to come in their recruitment process. I was also asked to design advertising and recruitment materials for all three CSV offices to share in their respective areas. This task was initially difficult due to my general lack of knowledge on how to complete these assignments but the CSV staff was supportive of my efforts and pleased with the final products. Through this process, I was able to learn an important skill that I will be able to take with me to whatever position I may find myself in later in life.

While I was able to participate in numerous events and meetings that built my knowledge of the foster care system, there were also days that were significantly less involved than others, when staff did not need my assistance or there were not meetings for me to shadow. I took advantage of this time to do my own research on foster care and to read files on children and families that CSV serves. This helped me understand that a career in foster care is not necessarily as directly involved as I had thought but that workers also need to dedicate a fair amount of time to working in their offices on reports and contact notes. This is an essential component of the work as it chronicles relevant information to insure that the process is being implemented in the best interest of the child. My study of case files also gave me a broad perspective of the circumstances and needs of children and families who enter the foster care process.

CSV has been a safe and welcoming environment that has made it possible for me to grow as both a professional and as an individual. With such a small staff, I was able to get to know everyone in the office on a personal level, which motivated me to want to work harder to meet their standards. Everyone, including my supervisor, was always supportive of my efforts and always willing to answer my questions. It was apparent that the entire office wanted to see me succeed and enjoy my time at CSV. I believe that the atmosphere of CSV is what benefitted



me the most during my field placement semester. This environment truly allowed me to feel comfortable and supported so that I could focus on learning as much as possible in the time that I had at CSV.

CSV is a perfect site for anyone interested in social work or who would like to learn more about a career in child welfare. Before this internship, I had wanted to learn about social work and the foster care system but did not have any immediate motivations to work directly in this field after graduation due to the trauma that one would hear of and witness. However, now I feel far more confident in my abilities, my future, and myself. My time at CSV has provided me with various experiences to participate in the entire process of the foster care system so that I now have a more comprehensive understanding of how this system functions.