AGENCY NAME: Gulf Coast Kid's House

ADDRESS: 3401 N. 12th Ave.

CITY: Pensacola

STATE: FL

ZIP: 32503

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

**Purpose or goal of agency:**
Our mission is to facilitate the investigation, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse and neglect and promote child abuse prevention awareness through community education.

**Agency information:**
Gulf Coast Kid’s House, Inc (GCKH) is the only child advocacy center and child abuse prevention center serving as both a physical center for the coordinated response to child abuse and the facilitating agency for the Escambia County Multidisciplinary Team (MDT). GCKH was established in 1998 and opened its doors to provide direct services in 2004. As a child advocacy center, GCKH is a child-friendly facility which houses partner agencies who are able to provide comprehensive, multidisciplinary services to children suspected of having been physically or sexually abused or neglected.

The partner agencies located within GCKH that work together to provide a more unified and comprehensive response to children suspected of having been abused include:

**Investigation teams:**

Law Enforcement – Investigate allegations of child abuse (Escambia County Sheriff’s Office & Pensacola Police Department)

Department of Children and Families, Protective Investigators – Investigate allegations of child abuse

Families Count, Department of Health, Child Protection Team – Provide medical and psychological evaluations for children who are identified as victims of abuse, specialized interviews and referral services

**Prosecution team:**

Office of the State Attorney – Receive information from investigative teams and determine whether laws were broken based on the evidence. File charges against the alleged offender, interview children and families as well as any witnesses and prosecute the alleged offender.
Mental Health Treatment Team:

Lutheran Services Florida- Provide therapy for child victims, siblings and non-offending family members

Family and Victim Advocates:

The family and victim advocates within GCKH are employed directly through GCKH, a local not-for-profit (Families Count) and through the State Attorney’s Office. These advocates educate the family of the investigation and prosecution process and work with the family throughout the case to identify needs and provide resources and referral services.

GCKH and its multidisciplinary team serve a critical role in our community, giving abused children a safe, child-centered place to report the abuse they have suffered and providing timely, effective assistance designed to address the specific trauma each child has experienced. GCKH maintains a database of all client records and reports numbers monthly and semi-annually to the Florida National Child Advocacy Center and the National Children’s Alliance (the CAC accrediting agency). While working with the families, the multidisciplinary team within GCKH, helps families to understand the CAC process and also assists families in meeting immediate needs. For example, GCKH has a family resource room, Jane's Closet, which is fully community supported. Jane's Closet gives our team the ability to supply immediate needs, such as diapers, diaper wipes, clothing, shoes, toiletries and underwear to the families that we serve.

In addition to providing direct services to families in an effective and efficient manner, GCKH facilitates collaboration and communication among partner agencies in the building to produce better outcomes for child abuse cases. The one-house concept and processes allows the partner agencies to have an open dialogue regarding the complexity of abuse cases, any barriers in the case closure and allows for a better understanding of each agency's processes and requirements. Since opening its doors in 2004, GCKH has provided services for over 7000 children in Escambia County.

In 2006, recognizing the need for community education regarding child abuse and child abuse prevention, GCKH implemented a Child Abuse Prevention Task Force. Three programs were adopted to provide community education on matters of child abuse: Stewards of Children, Safety NET (No Easy Target) Kids and Circle of Parents (details to follow).

Intern duties:
Interns will attend case review meetings and track case progress. They can attend trials as appropriate. Additionally, they will help with outreach efforts/abuse prevention education.

Description of what a student would learn from this placement:
By working with GCKH, interns can expect to learn the process for reporting, intervening and investigating child abuse cases.

Agency website:
www.gulfcoastkidshouse.org/