**DCFS Description:**

Our goal is to have communities where children grow up safe from abuse, neglect, and dependency, where adults are protected from domestic violence, and where parents can be strengthened in their capacity to keep their family safe.

Families and children may receive parent education, budgeting help, crisis intervention, sex abuse treatment, and mental health therapy.

There are a variety of opportunities to work with child welfare workers to investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect. We provide internship opportunities in the following program areas: intake, child protective service, in-home services, out-of-home (foster care), drug court, domestic violence and adoption.

**Duties:**

* Provide children and their families with services to prevent additional child maltreatment
* May work in Intake, Child protective workers, as a permanency worker
* Be involved with drug court and family supportive services
* Help with transition to adulthood, adoption services, and possibly on a task force

**Qualifications:**

* Interest in Social Services
* Dependable
* team player
* background in family dynamics and challenges
* human development
* case management skills.

Training in case management is a plus. BCI is required as a part of the application process. It is paid for by DCFS.

The following are among the rewarding and challenging service options available to undergraduate interns:

* **Child Protective Services** (CPS): Interns in CPS assist caseworkers who are the first to investigate the allegations received by Intake. CPS workers and interns visit with the family and children to determine the degree of risk the child may be in and decide whether children can safely remain in the home or if they need to be removed.
* **Permanency Workers:** Interns in Permanency participate in one of two separate programs.
  1. In-home: In-home workers and interns work with the intact family to provide needed support. They also facilitate other services, as needed, to help parents create a permanent safe, supportive and loving home environment for their children.
  2. Out-of-home: If children cannot remain safely in their home, they are placed in temporary shelters until appropriate foster home placements can be arranged. These workers and interns assist the children, their biological parents, and foster parents to make progress toward reunification of the children with their parents, if that permanency goal can be achieved.
* **Drug Court Team:** Many of our families come into care because of drug abuse-related child endangerment. Workers and interns on the Drug Court Team work with families who are accepted into the Drug Court program which is administered by the courts.
* **Task Force:** In cases of serious physical child abuse or sexual abuse, our Task Force, a specialized team with expertise in investigating these issues, becomes involved. Interns working with the Task Force assist in the investigation of these particularly sensitive cases, often partnering with the Children’s Justice Center.
* **Transition to Adult Living:** When teens between fourteen and eighteen years of age are removed from their homes, they usually fall under the Transition to Adult Living Program which is designed to assist these youth to develop the independent living skills needed to successfully manage life in the adult world.
* **Adoption Services:** In some cases, the primary goal of reunification cannot be achieved within federally-mandated time frames. In these circumstances the children may be placed in “foster-to-adopt” homes. These foster parents have indicated their desire to adopt children. If the biological parents fail to make the required changes to provide a safe and loving home for their children, then these foster placements may move to adoption. Interns and caseworkers in adoptions services assist children in foster-to-adopt homes and their foster parents before, during, and following the adoptions process.