A. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF AGENCY SETTING
The Child Development Center provides home and community-based services to seven western-Montana counties (Flathead, Lake, Lincoln, Mineral, Missoula, Ravalli, and Sanders) operating from offices in Missoula and Kalispell. Evaluation and Diagnostic clinics are located in Missoula, Kalispell, Bozeman and Helena. In addition, the agency offers a learning center and clubhouse for autism training and social activities in both Missoula and Kalispell, as well as a satellite meeting house in Hamilton. All services are provided through a family-centered, multidisciplinary team.

B. DESCRIPTION OF CLIENT GROUP
The Child Development Center serves western-Montana families with children who are considered to be at risk for delays in development (cognitive, psychosocial, speech/language, physical) or who have a diagnosed developmental disability. The Center works with each family to promote the development of their child from birth through age twenty-one. Most services—including developmental screenings, diagnostic evaluations and early-intervention—are provided at no cost to families.

C. LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
The Child Development Center is an ideal placement site for a B.S.W. practicum student who enjoys working with children, families and a multidisciplinary team of professionals.

- Practice professional conduct in a nonprofit office environment
- Work with a diverse population of clients and colleagues
- Experience federal, state and local policies and funding in action, affecting day-to-day operations
- Gain Intake experience (gradually progresses to independent Intake):
  - Employ information-gathering tools and techniques with families, healthcare practitioners, childcare providers, and educators
  - With substantial training and supervision, consult with families to identify strengths and areas of need in order to guide them through the process of accessing our services, as well as referring them to external resources, that can empower them for their child(ren)
- Become an active member of the evaluations and diagnostics team:
  - Learn to administer developmental screening instruments and write up social assessments
  - Collaborate with agency and community professionals (e.g., child development experts; psychologists; social workers; pediatricians, neonatologists and other medical specialists; speech/language, occupational and physical therapists)
  - Provide input on family service/intervention plans when appropriate
- Observe and, when appropriate, participate in home-visiting appointments
- Receive ongoing training in child development
- Receive exposure to the developmental disabilities professional community
- Receive information and hands-on experience to help prepare for competency exam questions
D. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS
Students who wish to be considered for a practicum placement with the Child Development Center must submit a 1 – 2 page letter expressing their interest in working with our agency, including the contact information for one academic and one personal or professional reference. We will make two-semester placements only. All B.S.W degree-required courses (except the course tied to the practicum) should be completed prior to beginning the practicum. Upon acceptance and prior to beginning the practicum, a background check will be required.

The Child Development Center has some basic expectations of practicum students:

- Adhere to all agency policies and procedures and act in accordance with the law
- Understand and adhere to client confidentiality
- Show up on time, properly groomed and professionally dressed
- Interact with all colleagues, clients and community partners in a professional and respectful manner, keeping in mind that you represent both your academic program and the Child Development Center and, furthermore, are possibly interacting with potential future employers
- Graciously accept and respond to productive criticism related to practicum work
- Be confident asking questions and sharing ideas in order to maximize and, to some extent, self-design your practicum experience
- Be a self-starter who does not require constant supervision
- Demonstrate competent computer and organizational skills
- Regular participation in Tues a.m. staffing and Wed a.m. and/or p.m. evaluations is essential!
- Strong writing skills are a must!