



SKILL COMPETENCIES FOR PROFESSIONALS AND DIRECT SUPPORT STAFF IN
VIRGINIA SUPPORTING ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS WITH AUTISM

DEVELOPED BY THE VIRGINIA AUTISM COUNCIL

Developed June 1, 2014

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To guide best practice in supporting individuals with autism across the state, the Virginia Autism Council developed the attached list of competencies for professional and direct support staff in all fields of service delivery for adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorder (referred to as autism throughout this document). These competencies are based on consistent findings from the research community. Decades of research have provided a number of best practices effective for the treatment, education, and support of individuals with autism in community-based settings. Additionally, as the research literature continues to expand, there are a number of emerging practices that have been identified. Therefore, these competencies are based on the best and most promising practices that have been identified as critical to address the needs of individuals with autism.

The Virginia Autism Council believes that professionals and direct support staff must respect the individual's and family's beliefs, traditions, values and cultures when providing support. It is imperative that hopes, dreams and desires drive program development, services, and supports. The Virginia Autism Council intends for the competencies to be used within a person-centered approach, keeping the focus on the individual.

What are the skill competencies?

These skill competencies were developed to guide personnel development of professionals and direct support staff supporting adolescents and adults with autism and their families in the Commonwealth of Virginia. These competencies focus on assessment of individual needs and program planning rather than on the diagnosis of autism. This list is not comprehensive of all competencies that professionals should have. Instead, the list includes those competencies that are specific, unique, and/or critical to successfully serve adults and adolescents as they transition to and engage in the adult world.

Who should demonstrate these skill competencies?

It is important to note that no competency area is deemed more important than another area. It is imperative that the competencies be considered as a whole and that all competencies are given equal weight when designing programs for those with autism.

The document addresses essential competencies at two different skill and experiential levels. Because adolescents and adults with autism will engage in a number of environments and may receive supports in any of these settings, direct service staff and professionals can denote any one of the many positions in the adult service environment. The distinction between the two is based on the role of the person as well as the skills and experience of the person.

The two levels are:

1. Direct Support Staff – Refers to anyone directly supporting adolescents or adults in any service setting. Examples include but are not limited to: Day Support, Residential, Employment Staff, Consumer Directed Respite or Personal Care.
2. Professional – Refers to anyone with treatment planning and or supervisory responsibility for adolescents or adults in any service setting. Examples include but are not limited to: Qualified Developmental Disabilities Professional (QDDP), Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP), Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional (QIDP), Qualified Employment Service Organization Specialist, and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

These competencies have been developed for use by a broad range of service providers, working in a variety of roles and settings. As such, it is the responsibility of each individual practitioner to determine which individual knowledge and skill competency statements fall within their individual scope of practice. Each provider is ethically bound to limit his/her client practice to that individual scope. Each provider's individual scope of practice is based on their knowledge and the abilities and skills he/she has gained through personal education and experience. With many providers, their scope of practice is directly linked to professional credentials. Further, providers should be aware of community resources and the role of other service providers and ensure appropriate referrals to qualified providers when an individual's service needs are beyond their scope of practice. A list of recommended providers is included at the start of certain sections.

*A check in a competency area indicates an area in which you should be knowledgeable.

**Some skill competencies repeat in areas because the skills needed for the setting vary. At all times, the individual with autism should be included in the development of their supports and services using a person centered approach. For information on person centered thinking, please go to: www.dbhds.virginia.gov and search Person Centered Thinking for additional information.

The Skill Competencies Tracker

The Skill Competencies Tracker is intended to be used to monitor the professional development of professionals and direct support staff working with individuals with autism. The purpose of the Tracker is to illustrate your evolving skills, abilities and movement towards proficiency in competency areas. This Tracker should be a reflection of your current and emerging self as a professional or direct support staff. Each competency in the Tracker should contain entries that illustrate evidence of your accomplishments.

The Skill Competencies Tracker can be used in three different ways: 1) it is designed to be used by an individual as a self-monitoring device; 2) it can be used by an outside observer or supervisor to document areas of professional development; and 3) it may be used by organizers of professional development activities to document training and development activities provided to professionals and direct support staff.

Professional Development

Professional development refers to attainment of skills and knowledge. Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conferences, workshops, discussion forums, and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. It has been described as intensive and ideally incorporating an evaluative component.

While the Skill Competencies Tracker is designed to help the user to monitor professional development activities and opportunities, **it does NOT ensure mastery of the knowledge or skills outlined within the document. This document is NOT intended to serve as a formal evaluation tool. It is designed to help the user record and track areas of strength and need in addition to teaching opportunities that may be targeted appropriately.** The ultimate goal is proficiency of the Virginia Skill Competencies. Proficiency is defined as demonstration of the combination of skills, abilities, and knowledge needed to perform a specific task.

To demonstrate proficiency more than participation in a training activity is needed.

Training Received – is for the purpose of documenting learning experiences and training activities. From these experiences and trainings the person is able to identify and explain the content and procedures involved in the Skill Competency and will begin to apply it in practice.

Implemented Skills - is the integration of learning experiences in which knowledge and skills interact and are applied and the person is able to demonstrate the skill in practice. It is at this level where direct teaching and coaching result in demonstrated abilities and the person is beginning to perform the skill independently and with fidelity and questions are asked to improve performance and gain clarity.

Proficiency Determined - is the consistent and accurate application of knowledge, skills and abilities. It is in this phase the person is able to demonstrate the competency with fidelity across students and contexts and can integrate content within a collaborative team framework. It is recommended for a person to be considered proficient that his or her performance is assessed by someone who is skilled and knowledgeable in the content (e.g. supervisor, lead professional, specialist).

Documentation of Skills, Abilities, and Knowledge

It is with this framework in mind that the Skill Competencies Tracker provides the opportunity to document professional development activities completed and the level of proficiency of each of the Virginia Skill Competencies. The user may document movement through the competencies by indicating the activities completed.

The following provides a list of activities that may be used to document movement to proficiency on the Skill Competencies.

- 1. College Course**
- 2. Conference/Workshop**
- 3. Professional Development Activity / Staff Development**

4. Coaching, Mentoring or Technical Assistance by Skilled Professional

5. Practice of Skill

6. Demonstration of Skill

Review of the Skill Competencies Tracker

As noted, the ultimate goal is movement to proficiency of each Skill Competency. It is recommended that the Skill Competencies Tracker is a fluid document that undergoes continuous updates as skills and abilities are learned and demonstrated. It is also recommended that the person using the Tracker (e.g. professional, direct support staff, supervisor, outside observer) formally review the document twice a year to determine if adequate progress is being made and to identify areas in need of further professional development and support.

Who developed these skill competencies?

The Virginia Autism Council developed these competencies. This council is comprised of people in Virginia who are knowledgeable about autism from a personal and/or professional point of view. Members of the council represent: Commonwealth Autism Services (CAS), Virginia Commonwealth University Autism Center for Excellence (VCU-ACE), Virginia Department of Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TAC), Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), Virginia Institutes of Higher Education, Partnership for People with Disabilities, Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS), Virginia Centers for Independent Living (VACIL), Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, Private Providers including Didlake, Inc. and Chesterfield Community Services Board, Hanover County Public Schools, Southeastern Cooperative Educational Programs (SECEP), Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Center, Virginia Institute of Autism, Autism Society Central Virginia , The Arc of Virginia, parents of children with autism, and individuals with autism.

Particular thanks are owed to those who developed this document, including: Heather Norton, Dawn Hendricks, Cindy Gwinn, and Richard Kriner.

Review

Numerous review processes were developed to consider feedback from experts within Virginia and from the greater community of autism experts. The entire Virginia Autism Council reviewed and contributed to the competencies. Additionally a stakeholder group of autism adult service providers reviewed the competencies and provided feedback.

Resources

Institute on Rehabilitation Issues Monograph No. 32- Rehabilitation of Individuals with Autism

McAfee, J. (2002). *Navigating the social world: A curriculum for individuals with asperger's syndrome, high functioning autism and related disorders*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

McGreevy, P. Fry, T. & Cornwall, C. (2012). *Essential for Living: A communication, behavior and functional skills assessment, curriculum and teaching manual*. Publisher: Patrick McGreevy, Ph.D., P.A., 4767 New Broad Street, Orlando, FL 32814patrick@essentialforliving.com, ISBN: 978-0-9855605-0-8 (Teaching Manual), 978-0-9855605-1-5 (ARP Manual)

National Autism Center. (2009). *National standards report*. Randolph, Massachusetts: National Autism Center. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalautismcenter.org/pdf/NACStandardsReport.pdf>

National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders. (2014). *Evidence-based practices for children and youth with autism spectrum disorders*. U.S. Office of Special Education Programs. Retrieved from <http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/content/ebp-update>

O'Brien, J. & Mount, B.(2006) *Make a difference: A guidebook for person-centered direct support*. Toronto: Inclusion Press

O'Neil, R., Horner, R.H., Albin, R.W., Storey, K., Sprague, J.R., (1997). *Functional assessment and program development for problem behavior (2nd edition)*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Standifer, S. (2009). *Adult Autism & Employment: A Guide for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services Professional*

Wehman, P. (2012). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

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General Autism Competencies

1. General Autism Competencies Statements	Direct Services Staff	Professional	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Understands the characteristics and diagnosis of autism as defined by the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual.					
Lists and explains the defining characteristics of autism (communication/social functioning, patterns of repetitive and restrictive patterns of behavior) and the impact on the individual.	✓	✓			
Lists and explains the associated characteristics commonly present in autism (ex: difficulties with motor skills, theory of mind, and imitation) and the impact on the individual.	✓	✓			
Lists and explains the associated cognitive characteristics and learning styles commonly present in autism (ex: difficulties in executing functioning, attending, planning, abstract thinking, problem solving) and the impact on the individual.	✓	✓			
Describes the continuum of abilities an individual has within the Autism Spectrum Disorder.	✓	✓			
Describes the range of possible behaviors across the lifespan.	✓	✓			
Describes potential courses of development and outcomes in individuals with autism from infancy to adulthood.		✓			
Understands the impact of common medical issues (ex: seizure disorders, chronic otitis media, chronic constipation or diarrhea) and treatments (ex: psychotropic medications and possible side effects, use of special diets) for persons with autism.					

1. General Autism Competencies Statements	Direct Services Staff	Professional	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Assesses and communicates critical health related information to team members, especially collaborating with the individual, parents and medical personnel.		✓			
Identifies health-related resources available to persons with autism.		✓			
Documents medications that individuals are taking and the side effects they might experience.		✓			
Develops and teaches the use of communication tools to assist the person in self-reporting health related concerns.		✓			
Differentiates between self-inflicted injuries and potential abuse/neglect related injuries.	✓	✓			
Understands the implications of ‘dual’ diagnoses (autism and any other diagnosis from the latest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) and co-morbidity.					
Lists behaviors that could indicate the presence of an additional mental health or disability diagnosis.		✓			
Discusses concerns and shares observations regarding possible additional diagnoses with team, which includes the individual and parents, when dual diagnosis is suspected.	✓	✓			
Implements behavioral and mental health recommendations given to the team by specialists such as psychiatrists or psychologists.	✓	✓			
Shares reports of behavioral and symptomatic changes with medical professionals who are supervising care for persons with autism and co-morbid disorder(s).		✓			

Environmental Structure and Visual Supports Competencies

Environmental Structure and Visual Supports Competencies Statements	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Understands the importance of the environment and provides a setting that is safe, structured, and promotes independence.					
Ensures safe environments that allow for the dignity of risk.	✓	✓			
Ensures a positive climate that promotes respect for the individual.	✓	✓			
Ensures the physical environment and materials are structured so the individual can complete activities and routines independently.	✓	✓			
Proactively prepares for sensory responses of the individual to the environment (ex: providing a distinct space for the individual to engage in quiet, calming, or sensory based activities).	✓	✓			
Understands and implements a variety of visual supports and strategies to promote comprehension and independence.					
Ensures the design and implementation of meaningful visual supports and strategies that cross all life settings and are based on individual assessment.	✓	✓			
Ensures the implementation of a variety of visual supports and strategies to communicate information and expectations and increase independence (ex: break cards, rule cards, narratives, and scripts).	✓	✓			
Ensures the implementation of a daily schedule of activities that is individualized by length (ex: full day, part day) and type (ex: objects, photos, icons, words).	✓	✓			
Ensures the implementation of mini-schedules (ex: task analysis) to help the person participate in the environment and complete activities.	✓	✓			
Ensures the use of visual supports and strategies to help the individual prepare for and complete transitions.	✓	✓			

Environmental Structure and Visual Supports Competencies Statements	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Teaches direct support staff, other professionals, and families to implement visual supports and strategies.		✓			
Ensures the use of evidence based practices (ex: modeling, prompting, shaping, cueing, and assistive technology) to teach the individual how to use the visual supports.	✓	✓			
Understands how to measure progress and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.					
Observes behaviors using objective measures and criteria, and records data.	✓	✓			
In consultation with the team, uses data and ongoing assessments to modify strategies as needed to promote independence in various settings.		✓			

Communication Competencies

* The specialist and team leader for communication competencies may need to be a Speech/Language Pathologist depending on the communication needs of the individual.

3. Communication Competencies Statements*	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Understands components of communication and its impact on the day-to-day experience of an individual with autism and how to assess skills for person centered planning.					
Uses informal and formal tools to assess and analyze both receptive and expressive communication (ex: verbal, nonverbal, content, speech, semantics, and pragmatics).		✓			
Determines the functions (ex: request, comment, question, negate) and frequency of communication across all life environments.		✓			
Determines the form of communication (ex: verbal, gestures, visuals) and considers augmentative communication options that are based on the individual’s needs, preferences and strengths.		✓			
Solicits information from the individual and all members of the individual’s interdisciplinary team (anyone who supports, works with, or provides consultation) regarding communication.		✓			
Understands a variety of strategies to increase an individual’s communication abilities.					
Designs and implements a meaningful communication program that crosses all life settings and is based on individual assessment.		✓			
Implements programs throughout all daily activities maximizing communication opportunities.	✓	✓			
Implements effective strategies and supports to enhance communication based on the individual’s learning style (ex: modeling, prompting, shaping, natural environment training and narratives).	✓	✓			

3. Communication Competencies Statements*	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Implements environmental arrangement, routines, and motivational activities to enhance communication.	✓	✓			
Supports vocabulary development within a contextual framework.	✓	✓			
Provides opportunities for and offers choices across the day.	✓	✓			
Provides and is able to instruct others on the team how to provide adequate processing (“wait”) time when communicating.	✓	✓			
Supports development of receptive communication (ex: understanding) within a contextual framework (ex: daily routines and/or right time/right setting).	✓	✓			
Based on the function and frequency of communication, empowers individuals to communicate for a variety of reasons, to a variety of people, and in a variety of settings.	✓	✓			
Teaches direct service staff, professionals, and families to implement the communication program.		✓			
Implements appropriate augmentative communication supports such as object or picture exchange systems, speech generating devices, gestures, signs, texts, among others to promote or enhance communication.	✓	✓			
Understands how to measure progress and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.					
Observes communication behaviors using objective measures and criteria, and records data.	✓	✓			
In consultation with the team, uses data and ongoing assessments to modify strategies as needed to promote communication skills in various settings.		✓			

Social Skill Competencies

4. Social Skill Competencies Statements	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Understands social skill development and the unique social skill deficits and challenges associated with autism and how to assess skills for person centered planning.					
Assesses social skill strengths and needs across environments on an ongoing basis.		✓			
Assesses skills related to understanding and regulating emotions (ex: identify emotions in self and others, self-management).		✓			
Assesses skills related to social interactions (ex: initiating social interaction, maintaining relationships) and reciprocation (ex: joint attention, sharing, turn taking, waiting, accepting feedback, personal space).		✓			
Assesses skills related to sexuality including knowledge, understanding, and behavior.	✓	✓			
Assesses leisure skills.	✓	✓			
Solicits information from the individual and all members of the individual's interdisciplinary team.		✓			
Assesses the individual's ability to understand unwritten social rules in a variety of settings (ex: waiting in line, appropriate use of social media)		✓			
Understands appropriate strategies to increase an individual's social skills.					
In collaboration with the individual with autism, uses circles of support or other techniques to identify their personal relationships (ex: family, friendship, acquaintance, and romantic).		✓			
Develops social skills outcomes and support strategies that are: appropriate, observable, measurable, and functional.		✓			

4. Social Skill Competencies Statements	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Plans for generalization and maintenance of social skills in a variety of settings with a variety of people including other professionals, friends, and family members.		✓			
Models positive age appropriate social skills in natural environments and community settings.	✓	✓			
Uses specialized social skills strategies (ex: anger and stress management techniques, social narratives, mentoring, shaping, natural environment teaching, video-modeling) to teach social skills, and to foster social interest and interaction.	✓	✓			
Models appropriate behavior for different social contexts and relationships across settings (ex: when interacting with strangers, associates, friends, intimate partners, and significant others).	✓	✓			
Provides individuals information related to sexuality and sexual behavior to promote increased knowledge and understanding, personal fulfillment, and ensure safety.	✓	✓			
Models how to interact and reciprocate for a variety of reasons, with a variety of people, and in a variety of settings.	✓	✓			
Supports emotional understanding and development in a variety of settings with a variety of people.	✓	✓			
With the individual consent, educates and trains peers to interact appropriately and effectively with individuals with autism.	✓	✓			
Provides instruction, support, and guidance to the individual in identifying and dealing with manipulative, coercive, and/or abusive relationships (ex: bullying).	✓	✓			
Teaches direct service staff, professionals and family to implement social skill strategies, social integration and characteristics of autism in a variety of settings.		✓			
Understands how to measure progress and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.					

4. Social Skill Competencies Statements	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Observes social behaviors using objective measures and criteria, and records data.	✓	✓			
In consultation with the team, uses data and ongoing assessments to modify strategies as needed to promote positive social skills.		✓			

Behavior Competencies

*The specialist and team leader in the behavior area may be a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Board Certified Associate Behavior Analyst, Positive Behavior Support Facilitator or a Psychologist with special training in behavior analysis.

5. Behavior Competencies Statements	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Understands factors that influence behavior and the components of behavior analysis (antecedents, behavior, and consequences) and how to provide positive behavior supports.					
Identifies and operationalizes target behaviors for assessment and person centered planning.		✓			
Assists team members, including the family, in prioritizing areas of concern.	✓	✓			
Observes and documents behaviors using objective measures and criteria.	✓	✓			
Completes functional behavior assessment to determine function of behavior and maintaining antecedents and consequences. A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect (structured interviews, checklists, rating scales) and direct (structured ABC data collection) measures of data collection • Analysis of collected data • Development and testing of hypothesis 		✓			
Identifies individualized reinforcement preferences using indirect and direct measures on an ongoing basis.	✓	✓			

5. Behavior Competencies Statements	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
<p>Develops and implements multi-component support plans based on the results of the FBA that emphasize prevention and are socially valid. Plans should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of supports to address factors that may set up or set off the behavior (ex: proactive changes to prevent the behavior from occurring) • Teaching of alternative replacement, coping, and general skills • Implementation of positive consequences to increase the use of the new positive behaviors • Implementation of schedules of reinforcement and differential reinforcement to increase use of positive behaviors • Description of thinning a reinforcement schedule as appropriate • Description of strategies for teaching and promoting desired behaviors • Implementation of reactive and crisis management strategies to support the individual if and when the problem behavior occurs 		✓			
<p>Implements all components of the behavior support plan with consistency in a variety of complex environments under natural circumstances.</p>	✓	✓			
<p>Teaches direct service staff, professionals, and family to implement the behavior support plan in a variety of settings.</p>		✓			
<p>Educates direct service staff, professionals and family on the concepts of factors that influence behavior and the components of behavior analysis.</p>		✓			
<p>Understands how to evaluate the effectiveness of a behavior plan reliably and effectively.</p>					

5. Behavior Competencies Statements	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Collects data to evaluate the plan's effectiveness in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreasing the problem behavior • Increasing the alternative and positive behaviors • Increasing quality of life outcomes • Generalizing skills to new environments 	✓	✓			
Evaluates data and reports on the plan's effectiveness and revise as needed in consultation with the team.		✓			
Develops a plan to generalize behavior to other persons and settings.		✓			

Sensory Competencies

*The specialist and team leader in the sensory area may be an Occupational, Physical, Speech/Language Pathologist, or behavior specialist who has received continuing education in the area of sensory motor processing.

6. Sensory Competencies	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Understands the sensory systems, sensory processing, and sensory motor development.					
Describes the seven senses (visual, auditory, oral, olfactory, tactile, proprioceptive, and vestibular) and the varying patterns of hypersensitivity and hyposensitivity to sensory input.		✓			
Describes the relationship between sensory processing and behavior (ex: demonstrating stereotypical behaviors such as rocking or hand flapping, or triggering fight, flight, or freeze responses).		✓			
Describes the relationship between sensory processing and functional performance in activities of daily living (ex: work, academic, and leisure activities).		✓			
Understands the implications or influences of sensory processing when developing a comprehensive plan.					
Identifies behaviors that might indicate a sensory processing concern that impacts their integration into an environment.		✓			
Observes and assesses sensory processing needs across environments.		✓			
Solicits information from all members of the individual's interdisciplinary team (anyone who supports, works with, or provides consultation, including the individual and the family).		✓			
Develops sensory supports for all life settings that addresses difficulty with sensory processing and functional performance and is focused on proactive strategies.		✓			

6. Sensory Competencies	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Teaches direct service staff, professionals, and family how to implement the sensory supports.		✓			
Teaches individuals who need sensory supports to self-monitor/self-regulate sensory motor needs and requests to have their sensory needs met.		✓			
Understands how to measure progress and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.					
Observes behaviors and collects data using objective measures to evaluate the sensory supports.	✓	✓			
Communicates findings regarding the effectiveness of the sensory supports and collaborates with all team members.	✓	✓			
In consultation with the team, uses data and ongoing assessments to modify strategies as needed to address sensory needs.		✓			

Independence and Community-engagement Competencies

7. Independence and Community-engagement Competencies	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Understands person centered planning (PCP) theory and the application of effective PCP practices for teaming, assessment, planning, and the coordinated delivery of holistic strength-based plans of services and supports to maximize independence, quality of life, and participation in meaningful activities such as community living, employment, life-long education, and recreation and leisure.					
Uses informal and formal tools to assess and analyze skills required in secondary and post-secondary environments.		✓			
In collaboration with the individual with autism and the interdisciplinary team, uses person centered planning to identify outcomes, strategies, supports, and services.		✓			
Understands the potential strength and value in cognitive differences common within the autism community (pattern recognition, orientation to detail, attention to process).	✓	✓			
Builds community engagement to assist the individual in creating activities which build upon their strengths and are rewarding to the individual and of value to the community in which they live.	✓	✓			
Respects the desires, interests, and needs of the individual and family members and incorporates strategies, supports, and services into outcomes.	✓	✓			
Solicits information from all members of the individual's interdisciplinary team (anyone who supports, works with, or provides consultation including the individual and their family) and incorporates strategies, supports, and services into outcomes, while maintaining the desires, interests, and needs of the individual and family members.		✓			

7. Independence and Community-engagement Competencies	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Develops outcomes that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the individual’s present level of performance • Observable and measurable • Age appropriate • Reflective of the interests and desires of the individual • Designed to increase independence in current and future environments 		✓			
Considers and plans for the transition needs of the individual (ex: 2-year to 4-year college, college to employment).		✓			
Develops and implements a transition plan designed to prepare the individual for post-secondary activities (ex: college, employment, and/or community living).		✓			
Selects, designs, and implements supports that are evidence-based or promising practices to teach skills required in the secondary and post-secondary environment (ex: modeling, prompting, shaping, natural environment teaching, visual supports, and task analysis).		✓			
Implements and assists the individual in implementation of adaptive equipment and assistive technology options needed to promote understanding and independence (ex: picture symbols, schedule, electronic devices).	✓	✓			
Teaches direct service staff, professionals, and families to implement relevant components of the individual’s program.		✓			
Supports generalization and maintenance of skills across programs and settings as appropriate.	✓	✓			
Shares useful and pertinent information with the team regularly through collaboration and regularly scheduled meetings and implements and follows-up on team decisions.	✓	✓			

7. Independence and Community-engagement Competencies	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Understands unique skill deficits and challenges associated with autism and strategies needed to increase an individual’s short-term and long-term independence in self-determination skills.					
Develops outcomes to enhance self-determination skills to improve the person’s ability to make choices and decisions and ultimately control their life.	✓	✓			
Selects, designs, and implements a person centered plan with the interdisciplinary team that maximizes skills in self-awareness in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and acceptance of strengths and weaknesses • Recognition of physical and emotional states • Implementation of self-regulation strategies • Implementation of stress-management strategies • Recognition of need for assistance or accommodations 		✓			
Selects, designs, and implements a person centered plan with the interdisciplinary team that maximizes skills in self-determination skills in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting and attainment • Choice-making • Problem-solving • Decision-making • Self-advocacy • Perceptions of self-worth and control 		✓			
Understands the unique skill deficits and challenges associated with autism and strategies required to increase an individual’s short-term and long-term independence in skills of adaptive behavior.					

7. Independence and Community-engagement Competencies	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Develops outcomes to maximize adaptive behavior skills in current and future community environments that lead to increased safety, independence, personal sufficiency, and meaningful participation.		✓			
Selects, designs, and implements a person centered plan with the interdisciplinary team that targets improved adaptive behavior across all programs and settings.		✓			
Implements supports throughout all daily activities and in the natural environment to maximize opportunities for generalization and maintenance of skills while maintaining personal dignity (ex: safety awareness, grooming, cooking, etc.)	✓	✓			
Understands unique skill deficits and challenges associated with autism and strategies required to increase an individual's short-term and long-term independence in a post-secondary education setting.					
Selects, designs, and implements a person centered plan with the interdisciplinary team to maximize academic performance required in the post-secondary setting (ex: literacy and math).		✓			
Selects, designs, and implements a person centered plan with the interdisciplinary team to maximize functional skills required in the post-secondary setting that lead to increased safety, independence, personal sufficiency and meaningful participation (ex: social skills, communication, work habits, organizational skills, way-finding, and goal setting).		✓			
Identifies and assists the individual in advocating modifications and/or accommodations on educational tasks in accordance to the individual's strengths and needs to promote understanding and independence while maintaining the integrity of the learning activity.		✓			

7. Independence and Community-engagement Competencies	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
With the person's consent, educates peers and professionals about autism and the individual and teaches them to provide support as needed in a dignified manner.		✓			
Understands unique skill deficits and challenges associated with autism and strategies needed to increase an individual's short-term and long-term independence in employment and career development.					
Selects, designs, and implements a person centered plan with the interdisciplinary team to facilitate a successful transition to employment (ex: early Vocational Rehabilitation engagement and on-the-job training while in high school).	✓	✓			
Uses informal and formal assessment tools to assess and analyze the individual's vocational strengths, interests, needs, and the impact of autism related characteristics on employment activities (ex: vocational evaluation and situational assessments).	✓	✓			
Develops outcomes that will prepare an individual for employment and promote continued success in the employment arena (ex: on task behavior, getting ready for work, interviewing, hygiene, transportation, coping skills, and social skills).		✓			
Uses an array of career exploration strategies (ex: job shadow, mentoring, discovery, unpaid work experience, internship, and paid work experience) to increase individual's awareness of and exposure to a range of jobs and career opportunities.	✓	✓			
Selects, designs, and implements a person centered plan with the interdisciplinary team to maximize performance in work activities (ex: productivity, work quality standards).	✓	✓			

7. Independence and Community-engagement Competencies	Direct Services Staff	Professional Staff	Training Received	Implemented Skills	Proficiency Determined
Selects, designs, and implements a person centered plan with the interdisciplinary team to maximize functional skills required for employment that leads to increased independence, personal sufficiency, self-reliance, and meaningful participation (ex: social skills, communication skills, work habits, organizational skills, way-finding, and goal setting).	✓	✓			
Selects, designs, and implements strategies and job coaching interventions that are evidence-based or promising practices to teach employment related skills (ex: modeling, prompting, shaping, visual supports, and task analysis).	✓	✓			
Identifies and advocates for modifications and/or accommodations of work task requirements in accordance to the individual's strengths and needs to promote independence and self-reliance while maintaining the integrity of the task.	✓	✓			
With consent of the individual, educates work colleagues and supervisors about autism and the individual and teaches them to provide support as needed in a dignified manner.	✓	✓			
Educates and assists the individual in identification and preparation for employment advancement and career development.	✓	✓			
Understands how to measure progress and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.					
Observes behaviors using objective measures and criteria, and records data.	✓	✓			
In consultation with the team, uses data and ongoing assessments to modify strategies as needed to promote ongoing skill development.	✓	✓			