

Developmental Disabilities Direct Support Professional (DSP) and Supervisor Competencies Checklist

(for DD Waiver providers of Agency-Directed Personal Assistance, Agency-Directed Companion, Agency-Directed Respite, Center-based Crisis Services, Community-based Crisis Services, Crisis Support Services, Community Engagement, Community Coaching, Group Day Services, Group Home Residential, Independent Living Supports, In-Home Support Services, Sponsored Residential, Supported Living Residential, and Workplace Assistance)

The Developmental Disabilities (DD) Direct Support Professional (DSP) and Supervisor Competencies Checklist ensures consistent skills among staff supporting individuals in Virginia's DD waiver programs. **Direct Support Professional (DSP)** refers to staff providing daily assistance with personal care, social support, and other activities so individuals can live self-directed lives in the community. The checklist aligns with DD waiver orientation requirements in [12VAC30-122-180](#) and covers three required competency areas:

- Person-centered skills, values, and attitudes
- Understanding and following service requirements
- Supporting health and wellness

The Supporting health and wellness Competency must be confirmed “competent” before a DSP works without a proficient staff member present. “Competent” reflects the minimum acceptable ability; “proficient” means consistent, ongoing demonstration.

The checklist documents training received, observed skills, and the staff's ability level. Training can occur through 1:1 instruction, group training, or formal education, and providers must maintain evidence of training, as well as the appropriate Assurance for all staff. Observations validate skill presence. Staff progress through four levels: basic understanding, developing, competent, and proficiency confirmation.

Scoring definitions include:

- **Basic understanding:** The staff is able to communicate a fundamental understanding of the skill or action
- **Developing:** The staff is in the process of establishing the ability or is showing some, but not all, aspects of the skill or action in practice
- **Competent:** The staff demonstrates all of the skills or actions in column two, but not on a routine basis as appropriate to the skill or action. Competency refers to the minimum required for acceptability
- **Proficiency Confirmation:** The staff demonstrates all aspects of the skill or action on a routine basis in practice as appropriate to the skill or action. Proficiency establishes an ongoing level of ability; a DSP or Supervisor is able to describe the skills to someone else; minimal supervision needed.

DSPs and supervisors are deemed competent once all related skills and behaviors have been confirmed and indicated on the checklist, including noting as not applicable (NA) in the comment column if an action related to any skill does not apply in the current role. Proficiency is established when the skills are observed over time and each area must be confirmed as proficient within 180 days. Each competency must be dated and initialed by the supervisor for DSPs or the agency director (or designee) for supervisors.

Competencies must be reconfirmed annually through a signed attestation and maintained in staff files for review. If a DSP or supervisor is deficient in any competency, the provider must document corrective actions, and the date ability is restored per 12VAC30-122-180. Agencies with DSPs or supervisors who fail to meet orientation or competency requirements will be referred to DMAS Program Integrity, which may include financial repayment to Medicaid.

A new checklist is required every five years, or sooner if competencies are revised, restarting the five-year cycle.

Person-Centeredness Competency

Demonstrates person-centered skills, values and attitudes

Training Received:	☐ 1:1 ☐ Group ☐ Formal Education
Start Date (hire date):	
Date confirmed proficiency:	
Approver's initials:	

Skill	Observation Indicators	DSP	Supervisor	3a. Implemented Skills: All skills below must be marked as proficiency confirmed within the 180-day period following hire.	3b. Comments: This column is for entering comments that support progress toward confirmation of proficiency.
1.1 Facilitates interactions with others in natural settings with persons without disabilities (other than those paid to support the individual)	☐ Demonstrates including individuals in conversations (e.g. with cashiers, neighbors, salespeople, hairdressers) ☐ Assists in communication with parents and family (e.g., phone calls, visits, letters) ☐ Assists in getting to know neighbors	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
1.2 Supports individuals to participate in naturally occurring community activities that reflect the individuals' preferences	☐ Names at least 3 possible community activities that address what is important to the people they support ☐ Assists with developing community interests (e.g., strengthening friendships, going places liked, using local businesses)	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
1.3 Communicates understanding of what is important TO	☐ Articulates what's needed for people they support to be happy, content, and fulfilled	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
1.4 Communicates understanding of what is important FOR	☐ Articulates what's needed for health, safety and value in community for the individuals they support	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
1.5 Communicates effectively with individuals about support being provided	☐ Asks permission before touching ☐ States steps about to occur when providing supports ☐ Uses respectful language/ tone	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:

1.6 Demonstrates respect for each person through the use of person-first language or identity-first language, based on the person's preferences	☐ Refers to people by name rather than disability ☐ Speaks directly to the person ☐ Demonstrates active listening	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
1.7 Recognizes behavior as a form of communicating	☐ Gives 3 examples of how actions convey messages (e.g. damaging property can mean a person feels pain or boredom)	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
1.8 Involves individuals in choice throughout their days	☐ Provides choice of clothing ☐ Provides choice of foods ☐ Provides choices about where to go ☐ Provides choices about who to go with ☐ Provides choices about when to go ☐ Provides choices about free time	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
1.9 Supervisory skill: Serves as a model for Direct Support Professionals by demonstrating respectful communication	☐ Models respectful communication by using a polite tone with clear instructions ☐ Models including people supported in conversations ☐ Models active listening	n/a	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:

Following Service Requirements Competency

Understands and follows service requirements

Training Received:	☐ 1:1 ☐ Group ☐ Formal Education
Start Date (hire date):	
Date confirmed proficiency:	
Approver's initials:	

Skill	Observation Indicators	DSP	Supervisor	3a. Implemented Skills: All skills below must be marked as proficiency confirmed within the 180-day period following hire.	3b. Comments: This column is for entering comments that support progress toward confirmation of proficiency.
2.1 Describes the service being provided	☐ Conveys the purpose of the service provided in accord with the service definition	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
2.2 Describes outcomes, support activities, and instructions on Plans for Supports for individuals supported	☐ Locates individual support plans and instructions; ☐ Describes the plans for the person(s) they support ☐ Can describe identified and potential risks and follow protocols and strategies to support the person	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
2.3 Maintains required documentation that is timely and factual	☐ Completes documentation correctly ☐ Completes documentation within required timeframes; Writes a signed, dated note that meets Medicaid requirements by including ☐ the support provided, ☐ person's response to the support, and ☐ any additional actions needed	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:

2.4 Works cooperatively with individuals, families, co-workers, professionals and others	☐ Consistently demonstrates punctuality for planned meetings; Demonstrates respectful communication with ☐ individuals, ☐ families, and ☐ other professionals; ☐ Incorporates supervisory feedback into improving approach and support provided.	•	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
2.5 Supervisory skill: Communicates the expectations and responsibilities to the DSPs they supervise	☐ Describes DSP role effectively; ☐ Provides clear instructions to those they supervise	n/a	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
2.6 Supervisory skill: Provides DSPs with guidance or takes remedial action to the extent necessary to ensure: a) provision of services and b) necessary documentation	☐ responds professionally to concerns with performance by following agency procedures around performance management ☐ maintains documentation per policies ☐ minimizes or eliminates related risks to those supported	n/a	•	☐ basic understanding ☐ developing ☐ competent ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:

Two confirmations are required for the Competency 3 section. All DSP and DSP Supervisors must be confirmed as “competent” in all of the skills in Competency Area 3 prior to working in the absence of staff who have been determined proficient in this area. Competence is established when all observation indicators in column two have been observed. Proficiency must be confirmed within 180 days of hire or original contract date for contracted staff

Supporting Health & Wellness Competency

Demonstrates abilities that improve or maintain the health and wellness of those they support

Training Received:	☐ 1:1 ☐ Group ☐ Formal Education
Start Date (hire date):	
Date confirmed proficiency:	
Approver's initials:	

Skill	Observation Indicators	DSP	Supervisor	3a. Implemented Skills: All skills below must be marked as proficiency confirmed within the 180-day period following hire.	3b. Comments: This column is for entering comments that support progress toward confirmation of proficiency.
3.1 Conveys a basic understanding of the health information for the people they support	☐ Describes the identified health and behavioral support needs for each individual and their role in providing support to each person	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.2 Conveys an understanding of the steps needed to ensure medications are provided as prescribed to include providing medications or contacting qualified staff who can provide medications	☐ Successfully locates medication and side effect information according to agency standards; ☐ Demonstrates ability to administer medication by the right dose, method and person; ☐ Describes process for reporting unusual health events according to agency procedures	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.3 Correctly follows nutrition plans and meal preparation guidelines (including the use of thickeners, special textured food preparation such as pureed and chopped consistencies and uses the correct utensils) for all individuals supported	☐ Demonstrates steps needed to prepare foods according to individual needs ☐ Provides supports correctly according to individual plans	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.4 Operates and maintains adaptive, orthopedic, and communicative equipment correctly	As appropriate, correctly uses ☐ communication devices, ☐ locking wheels on wheelchairs, ☐ making walkers available, ☐ using mechanical lifts correctly, ☐ cleaning wheelchairs and checking them for safety, ☐ applying splints/socks	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:

3.5 Demonstrates providing proper oral hygiene for the individuals they support	☐ Provides support with oral care consistently and correctly based on individual needs ☐ Describes the importance of and ways to maintain good oral health	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.6 Explains the process for observing and reporting changes in behavioral or health status to include: a. How to monitor and document changes b. When to call a supervisor c. When to call REACH/Emergency Services d. When to call 911 (medical or police)	☐ Describes role in monitoring and documentation up to and including the appropriate notification of the health or behavioral event ☐ Describes role in notifying a supervisor when non-emergent changes in health and/or behavioral status occur ☐ Provides two examples (one medical and one behavioral) of circumstances that require a 911 call ☐ Describes role in contacting 911 immediately when serious health events occur ☐ Describes role in contacting REACH/Emergency Services immediately when serious behavioral events occur ☐ Explains process of scheduling, keeping, and following through on all health appointments	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.7 Demonstrates an understanding of the requirements of adhering to privacy requirements	☐ Describes standards of confidentiality and ethical practice (i.e. adheres to policies for release of information, shares information on as needed basis, etc.)	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.8 Accurately records health data/information (e.g. seizures, falls bowel movements, intake/output, etc.)	☐ Records data per agency requirements ☐ Demonstrates the ability to accurately report health data provided to health professionals to complete assessments (e.g. accurate vital signs).	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.9 Implements health and behavioral plans as written	☐ Assists with completing personal care (e.g., hygiene and grooming) activities. ☐ Assists individuals in implementing health and medical supports	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:

3.10 Maintains a safe environment	☐ Assists person with household management (e.g., meal prep, laundry, cleaning, etc.)	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.11 Adheres to safety procedures	☐ Follows evacuation procedures correctly	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.12 Follows universal precaution procedures minimizing risk to self and others.	☐ Handwashing with soap for at least 20 seconds.	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.13 Describes role in recognizing and reporting abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation (A, N, E)	☐ States three possible signs of A, N, E (i.e. one for physical, sexual or verbal/psychological abuse; one for neglect; and one for exploitation) ☐ States three proactive things providers can do to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation of individuals by their employees ☐ States steps needed to report suspected A, N, E to DBHDS and the Department of Social Services within 24 hours and as required by agency policies	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:
3.14 Supervisory skill: Provides guidance to Direct Support Professionals on identifying individual-specific changes that may indicate the need for an emergency response or team meeting	☐ Explains DSP role effectively in identifying potential concerns and responding in agreement with agency standards ☐ Ensures that Direct Support Professionals know and follow emergency protocols when emergencies occur.	•	•	☐ basic ☐ understanding ☐ developing competent* ☐ proficiency confirmed	Comments:

If at any time a DSP or DSP Supervisor is found to be deficient in any competency area, the provider must document actions taken and the date that restoration of ability is confirmed pursuant to 12VAC30-122-180. Proficiency is confirmed as indicated by signatures and dates signed below.

Employee's Printed Name

Employee's Signature

Date

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials Date

These competencies must be updated annually by the supervisor for DSPs, or the agency's director (or designee) for supervisors. Providing a signature and date of review below confirms that the DSP or supervisor continues to meet these competencies. The following updated form may be utilized for three consecutive years before a new checklist is needed for updates. **A new competency checklist form must be completed in the fifth year.**

If at any time a DSP or DSP Supervisor is found to be deficient in any competency area, the provider must document actions taken and the date that restoration of ability is confirmed pursuant to 12VAC30-122-180. Proficiency is confirmed as indicated by signatures and dates signed below. **Signatures below indicate proficiency confirmed for all applicable skills above.**

YEAR 1

Use these additional signatures to reconfirm competencies that were remediated during year one after initial checklist confirmation, if needed.

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

The following pages provide a way to record years two, three, and four.

Annual DSP Competencies Assurance

I have observed that the employee continues to meet DBHDS-standards by demonstrating the skills and behaviors listed above. If at any time a DSP or DSP Supervisor is found to be deficient in any competency area, documentation will support the actions taken and the date that restoration of ability is confirmed pursuant to 12VAC30-122-180. I understand that a new checklist is required at least every five years to include within one year of checklist revisions that include changes to these skills and/or competencies. My signature below indicates continued competence in the foundational competency, as well as the following advanced competency areas:

YEAR 2

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

Use these additional signatures to reconfirm competencies that were remediated after year two checklist confirmation, if needed.

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

Annual DSP Competencies Assurance

I have observed that the employee continues to meet DBHDS-standards by demonstrating the skills and behaviors listed above. If at any time a DSP or DSP Supervisor is found to be deficient in any competency area, documentation will support the actions taken and the date that restoration of ability is confirmed pursuant to 12VAC30-122-180. I understand that a new checklist is required at least every five years to include within one year of checklist revisions that include changes to these skills and/or competencies. My signature below indicates continued competence in the foundational competency, as well as the following advanced competency areas:

YEAR 3

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

Use these additional signatures to reconfirm competencies that were remediated after year three checklist confirmation, if needed.

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

Annual DSP Competencies Assurance

I have observed that the employee continues to meet DBHDS-standards by demonstrating the skills and behaviors listed above. If at any time a DSP or DSP Supervisor is found to be deficient in any competency area, documentation will support the actions taken and the date that restoration of ability is confirmed pursuant to 12VAC30-122-180. I understand that a new checklist is required at least every five years to include within one year of checklist revisions that include changes to these skills and/or competencies. My signature below indicates continued competence in the foundational competency, as well as the following advanced competency areas:

YEAR 4

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

Use these additional signatures to reconfirm competencies that were remediated after year four checklist confirmation, if needed.

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

- ☐ Person-centeredness
- ☐ Following service requirements
- ☐ Supporting Health and Wellness

Supervisor's Printed Name

Title

Supervisor's Signature

Initials

Date

Complete a new checklist for Year 5.