

**Kentucky Direct Support
Professional Credential
Application Packet**

For

**Direct Support Professional
Specialty in Community
Access
(DSP-SCA)**

INSTRUCTIONS

Please review the following Qualification requirements. Select the Option which best meets your ability to achieve the DSP-SCA credential.

OPTION	QUALIFICATIONS	DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of a Bachelor's Degree in a Human Services Program of Study from an accredited college or university 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of official transcript demonstrating successful completion of a Bachelor's Degree in a Human Services Program of Study from an accredited college or university
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of a Bachelor's Degree in any field of study from an accredited college or university Completion of 1 year of experience in the field of intellectual/developmental disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of official transcript demonstrating successful completion of a Bachelor's Degree in any field of study from an accredited college or university Resume demonstrating 1 year of experience in the field of intellectual/developmental disabilities
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of 1 year of experience in the field of intellectual/developmental disabilities Submit a completed copy of the Community Access Competency and Skills form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resume demonstrating 1 year of experience in the field of intellectual / developmental disabilities Completion of the Community Access Competency and Skills document
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit a copy of current credential as a NADSP Specialist in Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit a copy of current NADSP-Specialist in Inclusion credential issued by the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals

Please complete the following documents and electronically submit to the Kentucky Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities.

1. Application for Credential (pgs. 4 and 5 of this document)
2. Employer Letter of Verification (copy is provided for your supervisor's use)
3. Signed Commitment to adhere to the Kentucky DSP Code of Ethics.
4. If you are completing the application under Options A or B, your application should include a copy of official transcript demonstrating completion of applicable degree program(s) from an accredited college or university. (You are not required to complete the Community Access Competency and Skills Form).
5. If you are completing the application under Option C, please complete the Community Access Competency and Skills form located on pages 1 through 30 of this packet. If you choose to submit additional information such as participant images or other participant

personally identifiable information with the Competency and Skills form, please include a copy of signed Release of Information statements.

6. If you are completing the application under Option D, please include a copy of your current credential in Inclusion issued by the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals.
7. Submit your completed Application to: KYDSPCP@ky.gov

If you have questions regarding the completion of this application, you may contact one of the following individuals:

[Cheryl Bogarty at Cheryl.Bogarty@ky.gov](mailto:Cheryl.Bogarty@ky.gov)

[Barb Locker at Barb.Locker@ky.gov](mailto:Barb.Locker@ky.gov)

[Kathy Wilson at Kathy.Wilson@ky.gov](mailto:Kathy.Wilson@ky.gov)

KENTUCKY DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL
CREDENTIAL PROGRAM APPLICATION

Date of Application: _____

Desired Credential: _____

First Name, Middle Initial: _____

Last Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

How long have you been employed as a DSP? _____ Years, _____ Months

College of Direct Support User ID: _____

Kentucky DSP Credential Program Application Form

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Most Current Employment Information

Name of Current Employer: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

Date of Hire: _____

Name of Most Current Supervisor: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

EMPLOYER LETTER OF VERIFICATION

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to verify employment of _____,

who is employed by _____

as a Direct Support Professional. I hereby verify that the above named employee:

- Meets the qualifications of Direct Support Professional outlined in 907 KAR 12:010;
- Has completed all training and personnel requirements as stipulated in 907 KAR 12:010; and
- Is considered to be an employee in good standing as demonstrated by performance evaluations.
- The above named employee has a minimum of one year experience in the field of Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).

Please contact me at _____ if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

(Supervisor Electronic Signature)

(Position/Title)

KENTUCKY DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

CODE OF ETHICS

Individuals serving in the field of developmental and intellectual disabilities as Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are essential members of the participant's support team. Each day, DSPs are required to make independent decisions which involve practical and ethical judgments as they support participants in their communities. This requires individuals in the supporting role to analyze and apply values and beliefs, use creativity and out-of-the-box thinking to assist them in the fulfillment of their duties.

The primary role of a DSP is to assist one or more participants requiring supports to lead self-directed lives and actively participate in their communities and nation. The DSP must be able to recognize the societal prejudices and unintended consequences of service delivery systems that form barriers which prevent many individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities from enjoying a high quality of life.

The DSP should embrace the concept of person-centered thinking which follows the path suggested by the unique preferences, gifts, and needs of the participant(s) they support. This implies the DSP works in partnership with the participant(s), and those who love them, toward a life of opportunity, well-being, freedom, and contribution. A DSP becomes involved in almost every aspect of an individual's life, including access to the community, personal finances, physical well-being, relationships at all levels, employment, and every-day choices. Thus, a participant's life can change dramatically with the coming and going of direct support professionals.

As a DSP fulfills the primary duties of his or her position, they are faced with ethical decisions daily. They also feel the conflict that often exists between the principles of their profession and the daily practices that result from numerous organizations, governmental, social, and societal policies and prejudices. The conflicts often result in the shifting focus from person-centered principles to a service-driven focus. Thus, it becomes imperative for a DSP to have a firm ethical foundation that assists him or her in the navigation of the influences that bombard them.

The Kentucky DSP Code of Ethics should serve and be used as a guide to assist the DSP in decision-making that is person-centered focused and contributes to the ongoing pursuit of securing freedom, justice, and equality for all.

As a Direct Support Professional, I hereby affirm the following:

1. Person-Centered Supports

Each person has the right to direct his or her own life and support(s), and in my role as a DSP, I will maintain a high level of flexibility, creativity, and commitment that is focused on the participant(s) I support. Therefore, I commit to providing person-centered supports which focus on the unique social network, circumstances, personality, preferences, and needs/gifts of the participant(s) and will advocate on behalf of the participant(s) I support when individual preferences, needs, or gifts are neglected or when system needs override those of the participant(s).

2. Promoting Physical and Emotional Well-Being

I will promote the physical and emotional well-being of the participant(s) I support by developing relationships that are respectful, based on mutual trust, and maintained within professional boundaries. Through these relationships I will assist the participant(s) in understanding available options and potential consequences as they relate to their physical health and emotional well-being; challenge others (including support team members) to recognize and support the rights of the participant(s) to make informed decisions involving personal risk; and be vigilant in identifying, discussing with others, and reporting any situation in which the participants I support are at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm.

3. Integrity and Responsibility

I will be responsible and accountable for my decisions and actions which include being conscious of my personal values and how they influence my professional decisions. I will seek advice and guidance from others as needed when making decisions, and affirm to practice and model valued behaviors and responsible work habits by maintaining a high level of professional competency through learning and on-going communication with others.

4. Confidentiality

I will seek information directly from the participant(s) I support regarding their wishes in how, when, and with whom privileged information should be shared while acknowledging confidentiality agreements with participants are subject to state and agency regulations/policies. I also recognize confidentiality agreements should be broken if there is imminent harm to others or to the participant I support. Where the correct course of action is not clear, I will seek out a qualified individual who can help me to clarify the situation and determine the best course of action.

5. Justice

To assure the person's preferences and interests are honored, I will seek to understand the guardianship or other legal representation of the participant(s) I support and help the participant(s) to understand their rights and responsibilities in meaningful participation in decision-making. I will strive to ensure access to needed information, services, resources, and equality of opportunity for each individual I support.

6. Respect

I respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person and treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. I model respect for the human dignity of the individuals I support in my interactions and provision of opportunities and supports in a manner that reflects the individual participant as an integral member of his or her community worth of respect from others.

7. Relationships

I will assist the participant(s) I support in the development and maintenance of meaningful relationships and will proactively facilitate relationships between the participant(s), their family, and friends. I agree to separate my personal beliefs and expectations regarding relationships from

those desired by the participant(s) I support based on their personal preference and will assure the participant(s) have the opportunity to make informed choices in safely expressing their sexuality.

8. Self-determination

I respect and promote the right of participants to self-determination and will assist the participant(s) in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals that will direct the course of their lives by honoring the individual participant's right to assume risk in an informed manner, recognizing each participant has the potential for lifelong learning and growth, and by working in partnership with others to support the participant(s) living self-directed lives.

9. Advocacy

I will advocate for the participant(s) I support for justice, inclusion, and full community participation through avenues such as supporting participants to speak for themselves in all matters where my assistance is needed; promotion of human, legal, and civil rights of all individuals and assisting others to understand these rights; advocating for laws, policies, and supports that promote justice and inclusion for people with disabilities and other groups who have been disempowered; locating additional advocacy services when those that I provide are not sufficient; recognizing that those who victimize people with disabilities either criminally or civilly must be held accountable for their actions; and consulting with people I trust when I am unsure of the appropriate course of action in my advocacy efforts.

DSP Electronic Signature: _____

Date: _____

Community Access Competencies and Skills Form

Employee Name: _____
 Email Address: _____

Agency: _____
 Phone Number: _____

Competency Areas (All must be completed)

Advocacy: *The Specialist is knowledgeable about the diverse challenges facing the participant (e.g., human rights, legal, administrative, and financial) and is able to identify and use effective advocacy strategies to overcome such challenges in the role as an advocate. The Specialist shall:*

Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
1. Knowledge and ability to serve as an educator and role model to members of the community.	<p>John and I were at the local public library researching information about Civil War battles in our local region. John has a habit of straightening material that is left scattered about to make things appear orderly. A community member was very rude and made multiple remarks related to John and his presence in the library. I calmly approached John and suggested we go to the computer section of the library away from the community member. Once he was settled, I returned and calmly approached the community member and informed her John is a member of the community, and as such, he has every right to access the resources available to all citizens. I also spoke to her about John's view that materials should be kept orderly so people can find things they need/want. The community member did not apologize to either John or me, but instead went to the librarian to complain about John. John and I continued our research without further incident and when he asked why the community member didn't like him I told him it was because she didn't know him and she wasn't used to guys straightening up other people's messes. I asked to speak to the librarian privately regarding the incident with the community member. Both the librarian and I agreed that John is a valued patron at the library, that his assistance in keeping materials orderly is greatly appreciated by the staff/volunteers, and the community member's attitude and behavior violated John's individual rights, especially his right to being treated with dignity and respect. As a result of this incident, the librarian asked if it would be appropriate for her to talk with John about how he might become more involved at the library so community members can become better informed and more accepting of individual's with I/DD. I will talk with John and the Person Centered Team about this possibility and if John is interested.</p>	

Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>2. Knowledge and ability to invest in planning effort utilizing long-term strategies that are likely to enhance inclusion for the participant, promote community integration, and identify opportunities for the participant to develop and maintain relationships.</p>	<p>John has a long-time interest in Civil War history. Working with John using library resources, we had identified battlefields within our region as well as local/regional groups who conduct re-enactments on a scheduled basis. John had made plans with the "Confederate Raiders" to be an active member of an upcoming re-enactment. However, he needed to do some strength building exercises to improve his endurance/stamina and mobility. I worked with his OT/PTs to develop an appropriate exercise routine that would continue after his discharge from individual therapy. We met and discussed with John what exercises would be best for him so he could actively participate in the "battles." I was present with John during his last 2 OT/PT therapy sessions to make sure I know how to assist John to continue strength building but also how to warm-up correctly on "battle day." John has taught other members of the "Raiders" how to fall down without hurting themselves and more importantly he leads the group on warm-up exercises before they leave the parking lot to take their places in the battlefield.</p>	

Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>3. Ability to minimize and prepare for common barriers to the development of natural supports.</p>	<p>John sometimes struggles with communicating verbally, so he carries his iPad with him to help others understand what he needs/wants. As we were exploring a variety of ways for him to become involved in community groups with interests in the Civil War, I supported John in learning new and different social skills that he would need when participating in the group activities/events. I taught John how to use his iPad to help people understand what he was trying to say and we practiced the new skills with some of my friends who were willing to help. My friends did not always understand John and so he was able to improve how he communicates with new acquaintances. By teaching him and practicing with people who do not work in the field of I/DD, both John and I learned how to be better communicators. Now he is an active and contributing member of the "Confederate Raiders" and they have learned how to use his iPad to communicate before/during/after the battle re-enactments and during group meetings to discuss history. Three of the members of the "Raiders" who live near John come by and take him to the group meetings; but they are still a little unsure of taking him to re-enactments without supports.</p>	

Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>4. Ability to promote the participant's partnership in the design of support services and in the development of the person centered plan of care; consulting and involving the participant in the support process.</p>	<p>Katherine had never been an active part of her plan of care meetings. She was used to everyone making decisions for her; but she would often demonstrate her likes/dislikes after the plan of care was being implemented. I began working with Katherine on what she liked from her POC and worked to gain her respect and trust. Once she decided that I wanted to assist her in doing things she liked, we started talking about some of the things she didn't like and why. One of the things in her POC was going bowling. She didn't like going to the bowling alley because it was noisy, the floor was slick, and she didn't like to bowl. She always went because others had decided this for her, but usually didn't bowl very well because she was scared she would fall and the noise was overwhelming. She talked about enjoying other things that included fishing and volleyball, both tied to memories of childhood and adolescence. Katherine and I talked about how she should tell her Person-Centered Team what she liked/didn't like so we could spend time looking for ways to enjoy those activities and make new friends. We practiced how to speak up in the POC meeting and how I would be with her if she wanted me there to assist her. At the next POC meeting, Katherine with moderate prompting and cueing from me started talking about her likes/dislikes and a different POC was written. Katherine was excited that she got to choose what she wanted to do and is starting to show interest in making other choices.</p>	

Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>5. Ability to accompany and assist as necessary the participant to speak on their own behalf, encourage the participant to take a lead role in all communication with community members and only provides support as necessary for accuracy and completeness, and provide information to the participant on peer support and self-advocacy groups.</p>	<p>John and I used internet resources at the local library to locate a regional Civil War interest group who participates in regional/local re-enactments. As I looked through the members listed, I realized I personally knew one of the gentlemen from my faith-based community. I contacted him and inquired if John and I could attend one of their meetings. TJ gave the date/time/address of the meeting and John and I attended. Prior to attending the meeting, John and I practiced positive introductions, how to greet gentlemen with a handshake, and how he should converse with people using his iPad. John and I attended the meeting and the group was welcoming, with several members being close in age to John. They didn't always understand John in the beginning, so I would have to assist with interpreting for John. However, after about 3-4 meetings, the group has learned how to communicate with John with very little assistance and they are becoming more comfortable without my presence in the meeting for the complete time. Because John is growing more comfortable interacting with community members, he and I have been researching various ways that he can become a peer support or become involved in a self-advocacy group to increase his own skills in self-advocacy. We are exploring the ARC of Kentucky Advocates in Action as well as the Kentucky Self-Advocates For Freedom. John is planning to attend meetings of both groups before he decides if he wants to join them.</p>	

Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>6. Knowledge, understanding, and ability to provide information about human, legal, and civil rights and other resources; facilitate the participant's access to such information; and assist the participant to use information for self-advocacy and decision-making about living, work, and social relationships.</p>	<p>Please refer to the Skill Story 1 under Advocacy for background information related to the incident. John and I discussed on the way home from the library that some people are not always kind. I used this opportunity to talk with John about how to conduct himself in case I or another support person was not nearby to assist him if someone treated him in a disrespectful manner or he felt threatened or unsafe. For example, if he is at the library and someone treats him disrespectfully how to excuse himself and find the librarian or another library staff member/volunteer. We talked about his rights and how he could advocate for himself when his rights were being violated. This opened the conversation to talking about how to be friendly and what it means to be a friend. John continues to increase the type and number of decisions he makes about being involved in the community as well as the types of individuals he would like to have as friends. He has also hinted that he would like a girlfriend and wants to research an online dating service he saw advertised on television. I asked John to be sure to talk about the dating service idea at his upcoming Person Centered Team meeting so we can support him in making wise decisions.</p>	

Crisis Prevention and Intervention: *The Specialist is knowledgeable about crisis prevention, intervention, and resolution techniques and demonstrates ability to match such techniques to particular circumstances and individuals. The Specialist shall demonstrate:*

Two (2) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>1. Ability to support the participant in identifying and learning alternative coping skills and how to avoid or reduce triggers to crisis.</p>	<p>After gaining the trust and respect of Katherine, we began discussing what things upset her to the degree she becomes frustrated and begins escalating to a stage of crisis. We identified things such as places with a moderate to high level of noise (example: the bowling alley) or situations where she perceives individuals are arguing with increased voice levels. I explored various strategies that might be used to support Katherine during these escalating situations to prevent or decrease the crisis situation for her specifically. Because we are exploring new experiences for Katherine, she and I agreed on a signal system to let me know she was beginning to feel overwhelmed or frustrated so we could discretely find a quiet place for her to regain her composure or exit the situation/event altogether and return home. The signal we came up with was that she would come along beside me and place her hand on my forearm and squeeze. A light squeeze would mean I'm starting to feel overwhelmed/frustrated. The squeeze would get harder if she was reaching a point where she wanted to verbally or physically express her frustration and anxiety. For example, Katherine wanted to attend church. So I began seeking information about various churches, styles of worship, and worship times. We attended one church where the music was more contemporary and there was a band playing. Katherine was seated next to me and using our pre-arranged signal, let me know that the music level was too intense for her and that she needed to retreat. We discretely left the worship sanctuary and found a quiet room where she could still hear the music and the sermon but just not as loudly. Katherine and I talked about the situation on the way home; I reassured her that she did exactly what she was supposed to do by letting me know it was time to leave; and she decided that maybe she should try another place where there was a more traditional setting based upon her memories from childhood. Prior to learning this signal system, Katherine would have typically escalated to a degree where she would have displayed verbal and physical aggression as a way to relieve her frustration/anxiety.</p>	

Two (2) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>2. Knowledge, understanding and ability to assist and support community members and others in understanding crisis, behavior management, coping skills, and treatment planning related to the participant.</p>	<p>Katherine and I explored 3 different church settings until we found a church that had a traditional worship style and the congregation members were both friendly and accepting of Katherine. After attending 4 consecutive Sunday morning worship services, Katherine asked about attending Sunday School with women her age. With Katherine's approval, I arranged a meeting with the pastor to discuss what might be some opportunities for Katherine to become involved with the ladies' activities in the church. Katherine and I met with the pastor and talked about the different opportunities. With prompting and cueing, Katherine asked the pastor her questions and he asked if she would like to meet the Sunday School teacher. Katherine and I arranged a meeting with the Sunday School teacher at the church. With Katherine's approval and with her beside me and adding information, we talked with the teacher about some of the things like loud noises and people speaking loudly as if arguing as some things that upsets Katherine. We also told the teacher about our signal system so she would not be surprised or upset if we needed to leave for a time if Katherine became overwhelmed. After attending Sunday School for a month, the ladies had become very accepting of Katherine and started asking if they could learn the signal system and help Katherine themselves so I could attend Sunday School for my age group if I wanted to. Katherine especially likes 2 of the ladies and so she agreed that they could be her support in the Sunday School class. Katherine and I taught them the signal system and Katherine used it to try them out while I was quietly sitting in another room listening and being "on call" to help. The ladies did well and asked questions afterwards about what they could do differently or better. Katherine is starting to trust her classmates more and more and wants the other members to know the signal system. I am working with the teacher and the rest of the class members on learning the signal system, what are ways to help Katherine such as quietly talking to her; explaining what is happening; how to physically approach her when she is getting agitated that is non-threatening to Katherine; and if they are on outings as a group, how Katherine can be a part of the group. For example, if they go someplace where there might be a lot of noise, making sure that one of the class members has a pair of noise-reducing ear plugs or noise-reducing ear buds that plug into a phone so Katherine can still participate, not be overwhelmed, and can blend-in to the surroundings without calling attention to the fact that she has ear plugs/ear buds to reduce noise.</p>	

Two (2) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>3. Knowledge, understanding, and ability to recognize signs of a health or behavior crisis and implement appropriate supports or obtain help in a timely manner.</p>	<p>John does not always verbalize that he is not feeling well nor that he is suffering from headaches that have been attributed to side effects from medication and related to weather conditions. Through observation and data collection, I have become able to recognize some of John's behaviors that cue me he is suffering from one of these headaches and that he needs a change in the routine or schedule for the day. One of the behavioral cues that John is either starting or is in the midst of a headache is his withdrawn appearance and his constant search for a chair or couch with arms in a darkened area of the room where he can prop his head in his hand. He may be watching other people while sitting there, but he is not engaged in conversations or any activities and he demonstrates a loss of interest in communicating with others using his iPad. If he is at home, he is not engaged in the activities of the house and goes to his room where he keeps the lights off, the curtains closed, and his music is turned down low. Another signal is his change in music – during these times I have noted that he listens to more calming music similar to that played during meditations or more of a new age sound that is soothing and relaxing. When I note these changes, I seek assistance from the agency's medical program director according to agency policies/procedures in getting John the appropriate pain medication prescribed by his physician. I ensure that we change our schedule to accommodate John's health care needs. I also continue to collect data, primarily through observation of John's behavior, to determine if there is a pattern associated with his headaches and if so, explore with the Person Centered Team ways that we can better support John through these times so that he doesn't have to miss attending meetings with the "Raiders" or other events/activities that are important to John.</p>	

Two (2) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>4. Knowledge, understanding, and ability to teach and support the participant in learning and practicing healthy coping skills such as boundary setting, self-identifying, self-monitoring critical information, self-advocacy, stress management, emotional regulation, and frustration tolerance during participation in community events/activities.</p>	<p>Katherine is increasing her participation in church and her involvement with her Sunday School class members is increasing to the stage where at least 2 of the members are asking to take her to breakfast or lunch one Sunday a month without paid supports. Therefore, we are working on other skills. One of the keys to going out to public restaurants is the noise level. I have researched different approaches that I might be able to use to teach Katherine additional coping skills in the area of stress management and frustration tolerance. I located a website that provided information used in classrooms to teach students these skills and I contacted the local school district's special education director to see if there would be a teacher who would work with Katherine and me on learning some of these skills. The teacher she recommended and I share a mutual acquaintance and she agreed to help us learn stress management and frustration tolerance strategies so Katherine can expand her community participation. We are meeting with the teacher on a weekly basis to learn a new skill, practice it, and then try another one. Some days Katherine does really well and there are others where she reverts to previous behavior patterns. I have observed that on the days she reverts to previous behavior patterns she has been at Day Training all day with SJ, who is also a housemate. Since Katherine has only recently started (last 6-9 months) practicing self-advocacy skills; she does not always know how to deal with SJ. I mentioned this to the teacher and so we are exploring ways for Katherine to self-monitor her frustration level when she is around SJ and how to distance herself emotionally and physically from SJ in a somewhat limiting environment. I have also noted that on those days Katherine's demeanor changes once she and I get away from the residence and we begin practicing new skills on our way to different activities that Katherine has chosen to explore or become involved with. I will discuss my observations and noted patterns of behavior with Katherine and her Person Centered Team to see if we need to make any changes in the Plan of Care.</p>	

Facilitation of Services: *The Specialist is knowledgeable about a range of participatory planning techniques and is skilled in facilitating the development, review, documentation and maintenance of the participant's access and involvement in integrated community settings as defined in the participant's person centered Plan of Care. The Specialist shall demonstrate:*

Five (5) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>1. Knowledge, understanding, and ability to implement the person centered Plan of Care, utilizing communication preferences and positive behavioral and instructional strategies and techniques appropriate for the participant in the development of friendships, relationships, and community building.</p>	<p>Stephanie is an avid reader of young adult novels. While she is an avid reader she primarily communicates non-verbally and often becomes frustrated when people do not understand what she is trying to tell them. As the Person Centered Team developed her Plan of Care, we explored ways to increase Stephanie's presence and participation in the community that somehow related to reading. I had been supporting Stephanie for almost 2 years, so I have an understanding of how she communicates, what her gestures mean, and what her limited vocalizations mean. I talked with Stephanie about joining a book club at the local library where a small group reads a book and discusses it on a weekly basis. I did this by explaining what a book club does, how she could participate, and how going to the library to hear what other people think about a book could help her learn new things. Her body language indicated that she wanted to try this: smile (more like a big grin), nodding her head yes, and arm gestures that indicated she was getting excited about reading new things and meeting new people. As I talked with Stephanie about exploring the book club idea, I also talked to her about how she and I needed to become better communicators so other people understand what we are trying to say. That means we need to learn how to use our body language better and work on pronouncing our words better. When I approach Stephanie with a "we" attitude, she is more willing to participate and learn because she believes she is helping me and that I am not trying to fix her. Stephanie and I practice communication skills with other direct support professionals as well as with members of my family who don't know her communication style very well. This is helping her increase her tolerance level so she can be successful as a book club member.</p>	

Five (5) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>2. Ability to discuss outcomes of interactions and events with the participant and members of the person centered Team to determine what, if any, changes may need to be made in the participant's person centered Plan of Care.</p>	<p>I continuously review the POC and the forms that Stephanie's Case Manager suggested we use on developing friendships and relationships in the community to make sure I am on the right track with what the Team (including Stephanie) decided. Using my personal network of friends who are avid readers and the local librarian, I researched and located a book club that meets weekly. Stephanie and I began attending the book club meetings when they started reading and discussing a new book. I quickly learned from observing and from talking with the club members that they enjoy using iPads and audio books to help with their discussions. Stephanie and I talked about how it might be helpful to use an iPad or something similar to not only download and read her book but to also communicate with other people. I was able to borrow an iPad for a day that had books downloaded on it for Stephanie to just explore. I was also able to show her how we could find different apps to help communicate with other people. Stephanie's eyes lit up and when she found a way to communicate using the iPad, I couldn't get her to quit "talking." I contacted her Case Manager and asked how we could get Stephanie an iPad as quickly as possible and explained the changes that this one day of using an iPad had made. It was like Stephanie had been waiting for me to catch on that she had a lot to say but couldn't get it out so I could understand. The CM worked with me and we obtained an iPad for Stephanie as quickly as possible. After we found Stephanie had a lot to communicate to us, the CM and I agreed the Team needed to meet and revisit her POC to make changes. Stephanie continues to learn new ways of communicating with her iPad and the Team has improved communication among Team members so we can better support her with new experiences and developing new relationships.</p>	

Five (5) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>3. Knowledge, understanding, and ability to provide regular opportunities for the participant to remain bonded to family and community and to experience a variety of valued social roles.</p>	<p>Based upon my review of Stephanie's life history, I learned that she had not communicated with family members since her placement with our agency. I spoke with her Case Manager about the lack of family connection and learned Stephanie's parents were older at her time of placement and couldn't make regular visits and so chose to discontinue direct communications with her because they thought it would be easier for Stephanie. Since her placement at our agency Stephanie's guardianship was assumed by DAIL upon the death of her parents. Using what little information I found in Stephanie's life history, I researched and found that Stephanie had relatives who lived within a 50 mile radius but it was very likely they didn't know where she lived. Working with Stephanie's CM and guardian, we contacted the extended family members and inquired if they would be interested and willing to re-establish connection with Stephanie. One of Stephanie's cousins was very willing to re-connect with Stephanie. We arranged for the two of them to meet and become acquainted since they had not seen each other for many years. After multiple meetings and after many conversations with Stephanie, she now visits with her cousin on a routine basis. These visits began with just a few hours to day-long and now include weekend visits without paid supports. Stephanie has fast become acquainted with multiple members of her biological family and looks forward to her "Cuz" weekends where she stays with her cousin and her family from Friday evening until Sunday evening at least once every 3 months. There are occasions when there may be additional day-long visits if there are special events taking place. However, the additional visits sometimes require my participation to assist Stephanie in connecting and developing new friendships and relationships. For example, I attended a high school reunion with Stephanie to support her in communicating with individuals from her past while I also networked with individuals to locate potentially "new" friendship possibilities for Stephanie.</p>	

Five (5) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>4. Knowledge, understanding, and ability to describe natural supports and include the concepts of interdependence, decreased reliance on paid supports, and increased inclusion in the community.</p>	<p>When I began working with Stephanie, I really didn't understand what it meant to develop natural supports and inclusion in the community. When I attended training where community belonging and developing friendships/relationships in the community was discussed, I realized that taking Stephanie to places in the community to go shopping or to get a haircut was not exactly inclusion. Even though the hairstylist knows Stephanie by name and knows how she likes her hair cut and styled, it really didn't mean that she had a relationship or friendship. Stephanie's CM also attended the training with me and so we began using new forms to help Stephanie and her Team develop a plan of care that provides her with new experiences in the community, becoming involved with groups/organizations/clubs of interest to her, and developing friendships/relationships that lead to Stephanie not always relying on direct support staff to go with her to meetings, events, activities. As I noted in Item 3, Stephanie has become reconnected to members of her biological family. In essence, her cousin and her cousin's immediate family have become natural supports over the course of approximately 9 months. Her family took the time to learn how to communicate with Stephanie (having an iPad helped), what she likes/dislikes in terms of food/noise levels/physical contact/quiet place when overwhelmed, how to assist her with daily living skills (bathing, dressing, personal appearance), and what to do when Stephanie becomes upset or possibly becomes sick while with them. By taking time to help Stephanie's family members learn these things, Stephanie has gained a valued role as a family member, is becoming included in her family's network of friends, and paid support has faded in this area. Stephanie's family has also learned how to provide meaningful and relevant information to direct support staff when she returns from a weekend visit to assist staff in meeting Stephanie's needs.</p>	

Five (5) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>5. Ability to provide culturally appropriate support, consistent with the participant's choices, perspectives, and expectations when identifying and arranging community access/activities.</p>	<p>Justin and I come from very different community settings. I relocated from a suburban setting to a more rural location; whereas Justin has always been in a rural environment. Therefore, our perspectives and expectations are a little different and through trial and error I have learned how to support Justin in a rural setting. That means I had to learn how to talk with local community members, how to dress to blend into the local environment, and how to support Justin to blend into the community. For example, I played high school sports which were very competitive. Justin wanted to become involved with a team playing softball in the local parks and recreation league. Some of his high school peers played in the league and he wanted to be a part of their team. I had to overcome my skeptical nature because I believed all leagues were extremely competitive and that it was highly unlikely that his high school peers would accept him on the team and if they did only place him in the roster but not actually let him play. I was wrong. I contacted the Parks and Recreation Director and inquired about the various teams that were developing for the upcoming seasonal league. He gave me contact information for the coaches and I began making calls and setting up appointments. Justin would keep telling me who exactly he wanted to be on the team with. Not just any team would do. Using the local phone directory, I found the telephone number of one of the guys he wanted to play softball with. When I contacted him I introduced myself and said I was calling on behalf of Justin. He immediately knew who Justin was and began asking all kinds of questions about how he was doing, what he was up to, etc. When I mentioned that Justin wanted to play softball on his team he immediately said yes without hesitation and he wasn't the coach. I was not expecting this reaction, nor was I expecting him to tell me when/where practice was. I was still skeptical since this would not have been the reaction I would have typically received in my past. Justin and I began "practicing" and searching through his clothes to find the "right" things to wear to a softball game. Actually, we had to do a little shopping to get appropriate attire, including a ball cap. When we arrived at practice, I introduced Justin and myself to the coach. He was ready for us and actually had a team shirt for Justin as well as a team cap. Justin's expectations greatly exceeded mine. He made the right choice of team mates and is very much a valuable member of the softball team. They make sure he is included in the batting rotation, has an assigned base runner, and is always paired with someone in the outfield. I learned that in this particular rural community, high school friendships are valued and winning is not always important. Justin's team has both wins/losses but the guys make it more about the fun of playing than winning. I am learning not to discount Justin's perspectives or expectations because of my experiences and I have learned that I actually enjoy being in a rural setting.</p>	

Five (5) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>6. Willingness and ability to learn about the community in which the participant lives and/or works.</p>	<p>I relocated to this community from a different state, so I was very unfamiliar with local resources, groups, associations, clubs, or communities of faith. I not only needed to know about what was available for the individuals I support, but I also needed to learn about the local community and its offerings for my family and me. I met with our agency's Supported Employment Specialist to learn about different part of the community as well as having conversations with other direct support professionals. Each would give me a name or number of someone to call if I was seeking information about a particular interest. I also used web-based resources to gather information about local organizations, chapters of state/national associations, and educational resources such as the local community/technical college. I contacted and talked with various groups – Humane Society, Adult Learning Center, Athletic Booster Club at the local high school, Parks and Recreation Director, and local community college public affairs to learn about various opportunities available to community members. I maintain a list of contacts on a variety of topics and have developed a professional/personal social network that I frequently use to facilitate the involvement and social inclusion of participants I support.</p>	

Five (5) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>7. Ability to work with others to create effective, long-term supports in the use of natural supports and fades the necessity for community access supports on a routine basis.</p>	<p>I assisted Jeremiah to become a part of a group that meets weekly to play video games. Initially Jeremiah and I started going to GameStop to check on new games and/or trade in some of his old games for either newer versions or entirely new games. Jeremiah began chatting with the clerks and over the course of 2 months he became known as a "regular." During one of the conversations, one of the clerks (Dave) mentioned that a group of guys meet at the store weekly to play video games, try out new games, and just hang out. He invited Jeremiah to join them that week since they were playing a game similar to the one he was purchasing. Jeremiah was hesitant but said he would think about it. I encouraged him to try it and assured him I would be with him. We began attending the weekly games and over the course of 3 months Jeremiah had become a master at the games. The group had a tradition of posting the top 3 scores each week. Jeremiah's name is consistently in the 1st two slots and he has earned the nickname "Top Dog" from the group. After about 3 months of working on developing friendships and achieving a respected place in the group, two of the group members (including Dave) approached me about picking Jeremiah up at home, playing games, and going out to eat afterwards. We discussed this with Jeremiah and he was ready to go places without me. So arrangements were made for Jeremiah to start attending the weekly "get-togethers" without paid staff. This included making sure the guys had contact information if they needed assistance, information about how to support Jeremiah when going to different restaurants, and what to do if Jeremiah had a medical/behavioral crisis. These were all things that Jeremiah agreed they should know and are things that I would expect my circle of friends to know about me. We did a slow fade of paid support over a 4 week period and now Jeremiah attends game night without paid support.</p>	

Five (5) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>8. Ability to assist the participant in identifying training/educational opportunities to promote the participant's capabilities.</p>	<p>Jeremiah enjoys gaming, but he also enjoys fixing things like cars. He has a great skill working with engines. Jeremiah and I were discussing cars one day as we headed to meeting his gaming buddies. He talked about how it would be cool to be able to work on cars and small engines but he didn't think he could do that since he had never gone to school to learn those things. While he was busy playing games that evening, I contacted one of my friends who works at an auto dealership in the service department to find out what the requirements are for someone to work on car engines. I told him that I knew someone who would be great but who hadn't been to formal training, so he gave me contact information of a local private automotive repair shop who might be able to assist me. (Later he told me he thought I was talking about me and changing my career.) I contacted the owner the following day after discussing with Jeremiah. I scheduled an appointment for Jeremiah to meet and talk with the owner to see if this was something that he was interested in pursuing. The owner met with Jeremiah and explained all the things that he needed to learn in a way that motivated Jeremiah. He also offered to let Jeremiah come to the shop and shadow some of the guys for a few days just to make sure he wanted to get in auto repair work. Jeremiah took advantage and after a few days decided that he really didn't want to work with automobiles because he really couldn't physically lift and bend the way he needed to. But he asked if he could do work on small engines like lawnmowers and boat motors. So I contacted a local business that repairs small motors and scheduled a time for Jeremiah to explore this idea. We met the owner and although he didn't offer to let Jeremiah shadow him or his crew, he did give Jeremiah a tour of the shop and talked to him about what he would need to learn to be a good small engine repairman. Jeremiah and I had a great conversation on the way home that afternoon. He decided that he wanted to talk with his Team about going to a technical school so he could learn how to repair small engines.</p>	

Five (5) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>9. Ability to collaborate with vocational and educational personnel to support the participant to achieve vocational and educational success.</p>	<p>Once Jeremiah decided he wanted to learn how to repair small motors, the Team met and amended his Plan of Care. I contacted the local high school guidance counselor to get information about technical schools in the area where Jeremiah could visit and explore enrolling in a certificate or degree program. The guidance counselor was very helpful and provided me with a list of technical schools within a 100 mile radius. Jeremiah and I talked about the list, the locations, and what it would mean if he went to a school that was 100 miles away from his home. He narrowed the list down to 2 schools. One was a part of the Kentucky Community & Technical College System located within a 30-minute drive from Jeremiah's house and the other was a private school that was an hour drive from Jeremiah's house. Jeremiah and I visited both locations and talked to the admissions counselors. Jeremiah decided that the KCTCS technical program was better because it was close to home and they were friendlier. Jeremiah and I completed the application for admission and then scheduled an appointment to meet with the admissions counselor. We met and discussed with the admissions counselor and the campus disability coordinator some of the accommodations that Jeremiah would need under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Jeremiah was accepted into an applicable Certificate Program and is currently completing coursework to be able to work on small engines. I have also talked with a Rehabilitation Counselor at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to see what supports and services are available for Jeremiah to continue his pursuit of being employed as a small engine repairman.</p>	

Participant Empowerment: *The Specialist is knowledgeable of the process of self-determination and enhances the ability of the participant to lead a self-determining life by providing the support and information necessary to build self-esteem, assertiveness, independence, and skills necessary to develop and maintain natural supports and community relationships. The Specialist shall demonstrate:*

Two (2) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>1. Knowledge, understanding, and ability to use methods in daily practice that increase's the participant's opportunities for inclusion, including: presence, choice, competence, respect/valued roles, participation and belonging.</p>	<p>I've provided paid supports for John for the last two years. I know him well. He knows me well. I'm paid support, but I love him like a son. I encouraged John to sign-up for a weekend retreat for single men at his church. He agreed to go. I talked with the retreat coordinator and did an informal introduction of John. A month before the retreat, John and Mr. Simpson met one another and spent time together. John was able to share his concerns about going on a retreat without paid support. Mr. Simpson was really good with him. He shared about his first time going on a retreat. As a result, we came up with a plan of action that John agreed to follow if he became anxious, angry or fearful. He knew he could call me on his cell phone for support. John attended the retreat. He called me two times. Mr. Simpson kept a watchful eye on him. John said he had a great time and met new single men in the church. Several of them including John, agreed to keep in touch via Facebook, phone calls and phone text. As a result, they discovered they had one thing in common. They all like to cook. John was at a church spaghetti supper one Thursday. One of his new buddies suggested they all go down to the local soup kitchen and volunteer. John agreed to go. He asked me to drive him and stay with him until he got the hang of things. I did just that. At first, I worked beside him. Over a 6 month period, he built his confidence by learning 3 new skills:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greet soup kitchen guests at the front entrance & direct them to the dining area 2. Set-up the beverage station 3. Work with a team of 3 cooks to prepare a meal for 200 people <p>John is a faithful volunteer. The men who started with him no longer volunteer. He doesn't need me to drive or stay with him anymore. One of the paid soup kitchen staff pick him up and drop him off. He lives 2 blocks from John's house. He is one of three volunteers who cook an Italian meal every Tuesday, They call Tuesday: "A Taste of Italy." John gets to showcase his cooking skills with three of his volunteer buddies. Word spread around town about these three guys who cook great Italian food every Tuesday. Guests line up early to enjoy a pasta dish, salad, garlic bread, iced tea and a homemade dessert. John is one of those three guys.</p>	

Two (2) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>2. Assist the participant with limited experience to attempt new things, get to know different parts of their community, and in getting to know and interact with their neighbors and other members of their immediate community.</p>	<p>I support a 35 year old woman named Sasha. Sasha spent most of her life in an institutional setting. She isolates herself and does not communicate without being prompted. I decided to spend one hour of my own time once a week to get to know Sasha. My supervisor let me know that I would not be paid for coming in one hour a week early. I told her no problem, it's my choice. I spent the next 3 months getting to know Sasha. I discovered two amazing things about Sasha. She loves to listen to Jazz and she loves dogs. With this new found information, I called up my friend Jess. She is a gospel jazz singer. She agreed to meet for lunch. At first Sasha was shy and refused to have any eye contact with my friend. One day I said to Jess, "sing." Jess did just that. She started singing a Billie Holiday song. Sasha gasped and started singing the lyrics with her. Blew me away – she has a beautiful voice. From that moment on, Sasha's life changed. I was able to schedule a person centered team meeting. I brought in a boom box and some Jazz music. All of us were humming and swaying to the music. The music relaxed Sasha. We were able to learn about Sasha's love of jazz. We documented Sasha's story using markers and flip chart paper for everyone to see. Sasha said she wanted to go to a club, eat some good soul food and listen to jazz. She wanted to move to the music!!! Thank goodness, I have a friend who is a gospel jazz singer. She took Sasha and me on a walking tour of Downtown Portland. We discovered that there are 3 clubs known for good jazz and inexpensive soul food. Sasha was excited. I was too. She agreed to go out one night. The week before our big outing, I took her shopping for some new clothes. She loves the color red. She purchased some foxy clothes. I encouraged her to purchase some bright red lipstick. We had a blast. Just two chicks loving ourselves and our bodies. We stopped at a coffee shop that night and had a sandwich and some good coffee. The big day came – I brought my dress up clothes to work. I changed. I helped Sasha get dressed. My friend Jess agreed to meet us. I was so excited for Sasha. We walked through the door. The music consumed us. Everyone knew Jess. She introduced Sasha and me to her friends at the club. Sasha beamed. She was in a place of familiarity. She had more eye contact and talked more than I had ever seen her do before. We ate, laughed and danced. Sasha said she did not want the night to end. Jess hooked us up with two musicians. They invited us to join them at a club two blocks away. The rest is history. One life changed. Sasha met another jazz enthusiast. Her name is Lily. They are forming a friendship. Sasha joins her once a week to eat and listen to jazz music. She knows the musicians and many of the regular patrons. Over time, she has blossomed into a more confident woman. I am delighted that folks who get to know her accept her as she is. They see past her diagnosis. They recognize a connoisseur of good jazz!!!</p>	

Two (2) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>3. Ability to support the participant to identify and choose community events/activities that are enriching, relaxing and pleasurable and offers opportunities to develop natural supports/relationship building on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Gabe is a member of the organization Kentucky Self-Advocates For Freedom (KYSAFF). He is a staunch advocate for individuals with disabilities. He spends most of his time with individuals with disabilities. One day I asked him if he would ever consider hanging out with people without disabilities. He became anxious and hesitant. He was made fun of and bullied in high school. I told him not everyone is like that. There are good people in the world. He said okay. I asked him what activities made him real happy. He said running long distances, collecting comic books and watching old movies. I encouraged him to talk about that at his next plan of care meeting. I attended his meeting. He indeed brought it up. During the discussion, Gabe said he wanted to find out about long distance running clubs in town. After the meeting we went to the Library. He and I spent an evening learning about our town. We discovered that there were 3 running clubs in town. We looked them up on the internet. Gabe picked the Marathon Gents club to explore further. The next day, Gabe called the number that was listed on the website. From his conversation with the president of the club (Ian Blackford), Gabe agreed to show up the third Saturday of the month to meet club members. Gabe showed up. He met the club members. There are 7 active members. They were a little hesitant at first. Most of them had minimal contact with individuals with a disability. Gabe picked-up on their hesitation. Gabe spoke up. He talked about KSAFF and his experience with people without disabilities. He invited them to the organization's Annual conference. Four of them attended. Club members encouraged him to come out every Saturday. I took Gabe every Saturday for 3 months. His anxiety and hesitation decreased. He runs with the members who are at his endurance level. The club members talked about the importance of Gabe joining them. They have a better understanding and comfort level with individuals with disabilities. Gabe is developing friendships with two of the members. They eat lunch after they run. One of them invited Gabe to sign-up for a charity run event out of town. Thanks to getting to know club members at his pace, Gabe agreed to participate. We worked out the details. Gabe attended the event without me. He had a great time. Gabe is now exploring other activities in the community. He is taking risks. His life is more enriching. He continues to run. The sky is the limit for Gabe.</p>	

Person Centered Supports: *The Specialist provides supports to the participant in ways that focus on the participant's dreams, hopes, strengths, challenges, and needs. The Specialist shall demonstrate:*

<p>Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated.</p>	<p>Example</p>	<p>Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?</p>
<p>1. Ability to modify implementation of support interventions to ensure they are person centered.</p>	<p>I learned to modify Maria's daily schedule based on her need to have a choice of healthy snacks throughout the day at times she needed/wanted them instead of when snacks were scheduled. First I spoke with her to get a better idea of what was important to her and I learned that she really just wanted more control over when she could have snacks. Next I contacted her mother/guardian to make sure I understood any dietary concerns and to see if her mother was OK with me talking to the rest of her team about making a change. Last, I contacted the case manager to inform her of what I had learned from Maria and her mother. The case manager agreed this was a good idea as long as she did not exceed her daily calorie allowance. Maria and I developed a list of 10 different snacks she liked that also met her calorie needs. The case manager sent emails out to the day program staff and residential staff sharing our ideas and the list of snacks. Maria and her team agreed she could choose 2 snacks each day from the list. Now she chooses what kind of healthy snack she wants and when during the day she has it. She is very excited that this is now her decision.</p>	

Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>2. Willingness and ability to actively participate in activities and events to learn more about the participant's interests, strengths, and preferences.</p>	<p>I assisted Maria in exploring various activities and events in the region. We started by going to the local YMCA to use the walking track because she has done this before and she is comfortable there. I learned that when she is in familiar surroundings with women her own age she is a social butterfly. Since she liked walking, I asked if she would like to do this at a local park when the weather was nice and she liked the idea. We started going to a small park close to where she lives. After a few weeks of walking there I noticed how her face lit up when she saw a dog in the park. On a couple of occasions I asked a pet owner if we could pet their dog. When we did this Maria would ask the dog's name and she would talk about the dog for days. Now when we see that same dog, Daisy, she remembers her name. She and Daisy's owner, Grace, now strike up a conversation every time they see each other. During one of their conversations Grace told us about a local dog park. Maria asked if she had to have a dog before she could go and Grace explained that anyone could go there. Maria wants to try walking at the dog park, which we now have on our schedule. Since she has enjoyed the dogs so much she and I decided to talk to her case manager about exploring other opportunities for her to be around dogs.</p>	

Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>3. Ability to describe effective person centered strategies in community inclusion.</p>	<p>I use positive introductions when introducing a participant and try to guide the conversation to the positive aspects of the person's personality. When I first started working with Maria I was told she is someone who is well known for behavior outbursts and being difficult to work with. Because of this some staff are reluctant to take her to the places she wants to go. After working with her for a few months I learned that some minor adjustments in how I approach a situation can make a big difference in how she reacts. For example, now that she decides when she gets her snack there is no longer a power struggle over food every day. I also learned that if she is allowed to sleep in until about 8am a couple days through the week, she is more likely to be positive about the rest of the week. So now when I introduce her to people I say things like "Maria is really good at making her own choices throughout her day." Now that others are hearing some of the positive things about her she is spending more time going where she likes and the negative behaviors are not happening as often. This has been a slow process over about the past 3 months, but it is progress.</p>	

Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>4. Ability to assist and support the participant to develop strategies, make informed choices, follow through on responsibilities, and take risks in developing friendships and community relationships.</p>	<p>I assisted Zach in finding a group of guys who share his interests in old cars and in becoming a part of the group. Zach has fond memories of him and his dad going to car shows and talking about what they knew about the cars. Zach usually goes to a car show in the summer but wanted to explore more ways to expand on his interest and share his knowledge. It's amazing how much he knows about many models. For about the first month we went to a bookstore that has computers and researched local groups on line. We found a group that met monthly and Zach said he would like to go see them in action. I called to inquire about their meeting schedule and found out it was open to anyone who was interested. Zach was excited but also nervous about going. He tends to get a little nervous when he doesn't know what to expect. Prior to the meeting he and I talked about how the meeting might go. We rehearsed what he would say if he were asked to introduce himself. He was worried he might be asked a question he did not know the answer to. I assured him it was completely OK to say "I don't know." At the first meeting he was very quiet but observant. The group met in Gene's garage where he and several other guys worked on old cars and stored a couple of Gene's cars. Zach was in heaven being that close to these cars. Over the next 2 months we went to every meeting. As he became more comfortable with the group he starting asking questions and talking about various models and engines. Sometimes the guys actually worked on cars and to my surprise, Zach is pretty mechanically inclined. He helped work on the cars, he helped clean and put tools away, and he helped clean up the snacks after meetings. Zach had lots of questions for Gene about keeping the cars neat and clean. Gene asked if he would like to help clean and care for the cars, Zach jumped at the offer. He is excited to get started. We have a time scheduled outside of the monthly meetings to go to Gene's so Zach can begin learning more about the responsibilities of caring for the cars. We are working on getting up the courage to take a risk and strike up a conversation with some of the guys he doesn't know as well.</p>	

Three (3) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>5. Ability to use the basic principles of effective communication and teaching, including clearly and concisely communicating expectations, checking for understanding, and adjusting styles to meet the unique needs of the participant when teaching or reinforcing new skills or behaviors to facilitate participation in developing and maintaining friendships and intimate relationships.</p>	<p>While working with Zach I've learned that he doesn't always understand what others are asking him to do. It took some time for me to discover this by listening to Zach and observing him in different situations. I have found that he does not want to be perceived as different so he will say "got it" even though he may not understand the entire request. As a result, I have adjusted how I communicate with him. Rather than using 2 -3 step instructions or questions I make one request and then check to see that he understands. If there are 3 steps required, I address one at a time and once he seems to have all 3 steps down individually, I then ask him to put them all together. This seems to be working well and even Zach has said he wished more people took the time to explain things to him. I explained that if more people knew that breaking things down in smaller steps was helpful to him, I'm sure they would be happy to do it as well. I asked Zach if he was OK with me sharing this with people. He and I agreed that he would let me know who he wanted me to share with and I agreed not to mention it to others unless I got his OK first. A couple weeks after this discussion Zach told me it was OK to tell Gene, the car guy, how to break things down for him but only while Zach was present. I assured him I would do this while the 3 of us were together. At our next meeting with Gene, Zach said "go ahead and tell him please," so I explained how I broke things down before moving on. Gene was completely on board with this and Zach seemed more comfortable and confident after this discussion.</p>	

Documentation: *The Specialist is knowledgeable of regulatory and agency documentation requirements and is able to manage these requirements in a thorough and efficient manner. The Specialist shall demonstrate:*

Two (2) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>1. Ability to document and communicate information regarding the participant's involvement in community events/activities in a professional and culturally sensitive manner.</p>	<p>I have learned how important it is to Zach that he not be seen as different. This is why we discussed who I could share information with regarding how he and I break things down in to smaller steps so he better understands what he is to do. Zach is the one who decides when and to whom I tell this info. I asked him if I could document this in my notes so that others who might read his record know what works best for him. Before I submitted my monthly summary I read it to him and he agreed with the wording. He also agreed to let me share the note with his case manager so she has a better understanding of this preference.</p>	

Two (2) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>2. Ability to review the participant's progress in developing and accessing community resources and natural supports.</p>	<p>I maintain daily notes with all the people I support. I include conversations with the person, any observations I have made, and I always discuss the steps we are working on so it is clear how we got from point A to point B. At the end of the month, I review these daily notes and then I look at the previous month or 2. I look to see where progress has been made, and include that progress in the monthly summary. For Maria in particular, I always start the monthly summary with the positive things that have happened and I make sure to document how she has made progress in reducing behaviors. By reducing the negative things, Maria is able to get out more often and explore her community. I also include any issues and concerns but I think it is only fair to document the positive in addition to any issues.</p>	

Two (2) of the skills must be demonstrated.	Example	Tell us your story. Who did you support? What did you do? How did you do it? How is the individual's life different because of your support?
<p>3. Ability to recognize and document critical information to share with others and maintain complete, objective, and accurate information regarding the current needs of the participant.</p>	<p>Since I began working with Maria I have always strived to document and pass on any behavior issues she may have so that her team can keep up to date on her progress. Information regarding her behavior has always been a critical component to her supports. What I have also learned is that the positive aspects of her behavior are also critical information that needs to be captured and shared. I documented and communicated to her team the information about her wanting more control over her snacks and wanting to sleep-in a couple days a week. Since then, other members of Maria's team have tried some of these new approaches and we are seeing less negative issues. Her person centered plan of care has since been updated to include these things that are important to Maria.</p>	