

Youth Services Endorsement

Competency Areas

1. Knowledge of the Field: Knows youth and adolescent development theory; rights and laws relating to youth and to people with disabilities; professional ethics including boundaries, confidentiality, and privacy rights; key processes for youth with disabilities including individual plans, universal access, and reasonable accommodations.

2. Communication with Youth: Is able to establish, develop, and maintain caring, respectful, trusting relationships with a diverse range of young people. Is sensitive to cultural differences, including current youth culture. Understands issues and trends affecting youth in the community, as well as those affecting youth with disabilities. Can communicate with all youth including those with disabilities (such as physical, sensory, psychiatric, and cognitive).

3. Assessment and Individualized Planning: Is able to utilize assessment tools, appropriate for youth/young adults, to determine academic skill levels, career interests, presence of disabilities, and support needs. Understands when and how to refer youth for specialized assessment, and how to incorporate results to accommodate youth needs. Is able to involve youth in using assessment results to develop their own plans and goals for career and educational and life skills development, as well as for measuring progress. Understands the need to ensure benefit planning in the assessment process for youth with disabilities.

4. Relationship to Family and Community: Is able to engage and build relationships with family members, guardians, advocates, and other significant persons, as well as connect them to institutions, community service opportunities, leadership activities, and supportive adults, including mentors and role models with and without disabilities.

5. Workforce Preparation: Is able to facilitate youth job readiness skill-building and assess employability strengths/barriers of youth, including necessary accommodations and supports; teach job search skills, including the use of technology, the internet, and assistive technology; match youth with appropriate jobs and careers, including job analysis, customizing, and skills standards; and coach youth, assisting in job retention and providing follow-up.

6. Career Exploration: Knows technology, online search skills, tools, and processes for career exploration for youth. Is able to engage employers in helping youth explore careers. Knows workplace and labor market trends as they relate to new and future workers, as well as options for youth with disabilities such as supported or customized employment and self-employment.

7. Relationship to Employers and Between Employers and Youth: Is able to develop relationships, engage, and communicate effectively with employers, including identifying recruiting and providing support to employers hiring youth. Is able to train employers and their staff in how to work with and support all youth, including providing universal access and reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities. Is able to mediate/resolve conflicts between employers and youth, advocate for all youth, and negotiate job design, customization, and carving.

8. Connection to Resources: Is able to identify, network, and create relationships with a variety of community agencies and resources for youth, including community intermediary organizations with disability-specific supports and resources. Is able to market own program as a resource and build collaborative partnerships with other youth-focused organizations. Knows different funding streams for youth.

9. Program Design and Delivery: Is able to design and implement programs using broadly-recognized best practices for youth initiatives (such as strong management; long-term, intensive, youth-centered approaches; age, stage, and cultural appropriateness; and strong academic and work experiences). Is able to apply disability related concepts such as universal access, reasonable accommodations, and other services. Is able to evaluate and adjust programs based on youth outcome measurement and data.

10. Administrative Skills: Is able to complete referrals and service summaries using common reporting formats and requirements, including disability-specific forms such as individual plans, transition plans, and individualized work plans. Demonstrates time management, teamwork, interpersonal, written communication, and verbal expression skills appropriate to a youth-centered organization.