

DIRECT SUPPORT ASSISTANT

JOB DESCRIPTION

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CLASS

Direct Support Assistants perform a wide variety of routine tasks and activities in support of the full range of habilitative services provided to developmentally disabled individuals. The tasks and activities performed depend upon the specific abilities of the individuals being served and the nature of the setting where the work is performed. These tasks involve encouraging, guiding and training individuals in developing daily living skills and habits, taking care of their personal needs, assuring community integration, ensuring the health and safety of individuals, and maintaining the service environment.

Direct Support Assistants exist only in the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities and are assigned to residential and/or program settings as members of a Program Planning Team.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Direct Support Assistant: entry level; under general supervision of clinical or higher level staff provide direct care to developmentally disabled individuals in a residential and/or program setting; assist and motivate individuals in their care to attend to their personal daily living needs and to further develop those vocational, nutritional, social, and personal skills necessary to maintain or achieve the highest possible level of independent functioning in the least restrictive environment.

ILLUSTRATIVE DUTIES

Direct Support Assistants provide observations, evaluations, and reports to other team members to ensure and/or record an individual's progress toward treatment/habilitation goals. In accordance with habilitative plans, they guide and teach individuals to develop skills required for a more independent lifestyle. Incumbents may take a lead role in one or more of the following duties within a work site. Duties may be performed in several or all of the following areas:

Personal Care

- Teaches and reinforces accepted infection control and personal grooming techniques; assists in bathing, dental care, hair and nail care, personal hygiene, toileting, incontinence care, menstrual care, and grooming routines as necessary.
- Teaches and assists individuals in dressing, clothing selection, storage, laundering and repair of clothing and accessories; helps them to shop for clothing.
- Teaches and assists in proper use and care of shavers and razors, eyeglasses, hearing aids, prostheses as prescribed by appropriate medical practitioner.
- Administers and teaches individuals first aid treatments; administers cardiopulmonary resuscitation techniques and performs other health-related techniques as required.
- Takes, records, reports temperatures, blood pressures, pulse rate, weight, and other significant symptoms/health-related occurrences; aids developmentally disabled individuals in understanding, recording, and reporting such factors.
- Maintains confidentiality of information.
- Reports unusual incidents and physical or behavioral symptoms promptly and accurately to the supervisor.
- Applies valid and accepted limits for inappropriate behavior and helps control and restrain individuals with challenging behaviors in their care.
- Administers prescribed medications and treatments; teaches, observes, reports problems and progress in self-administration of medications programs; assists individuals in achieving more independence in administration of medications; teaches use of skin care lotions, topical ointments, eye and ear drops and assists in their use as needed.
- Accompanies individuals to medical, dental, and other health-related appointments; delivers prescriptions to pharmacy, takes medication to home site and logs same; and instructs and observes individuals in use of those substances.

Food Preparation, Mealtimes

- Assists individuals in eating who cannot feed themselves independently.
- Teaches individuals to eat in a family-style setting; models and teaches mealtime socialization skills.
- Teaches and assists individuals to plan, shop, store, prepare and serve meals using currently accepted nutritional standards; and to clean kitchen and dining areas, and dispose of leftover food safely.

Maintaining the Environment

Under the direction of the appropriate level supervisor, the Direct Support Assistants performs various tasks and duties to assure that the living environment is properly maintained and kept in clean, neat and orderly condition.

- Performs/teaches developmentally disabled individuals routine housekeeping duties such as dusting, washing floors and walls, cleaning bathrooms, and vacuuming rugs.
- Assists developmentally disabled individuals in bed making.
- Follows safety procedures in living unit by mopping up spills, reporting unsafe conditions, teaches and reinforces fire safety procedures. Checks to see that fire exits are clear, night-lights and exit signs on, windows locked, etc.
- Stores supplies and assures that storage areas are kept in a neat and orderly condition.
- Responsible for storage and replacement on linens.
- May assist in various household inventories.
- Performs/teaches minor and routine maintenance tasks such as changing light bulbs, fuses, replacement of faucet washers; and obtains repair services for appliances.

- Performs/teaches routine removal of trash, cleaning of trash containers, ashtrays, etc.
- Teaches/performs outdoor maintenance tasks and repairs of residence, yard, garden, walks; reports need for or obtains repair services for automobiles, van, mowers, etc.
- Checks fire equipment and reports any malfunction.
- Conducts fire drills following the fire evacuation plan.

Individual Development, Personal Interests

- Teaches and reinforces use of a variety of communication skills.
- Guides individuals through motor exercises designed to increase physical coordinative functions.
- Teaches and reinforces principles of human growth and development, including human sexuality, as determined by each person's developmental level and program plan.
- Teaches acceptable work habits, e.g., punctuality, dress and grooming, to enable individuals to develop readiness for work outside the home, or in support of individuals' habilitative goals.
- Accompanies developmentally disabled individuals to community activities including worksites, cultural, religious and social events, day programs, visits to health practitioners; aids them in developing awareness and use of community resources and in interacting with others.
- Provides support for maximum community integration.
- Transports/arranges for transport of individuals to community events; and aids them in development of their mobility skills.
- Maintains an adequate supply of and accounting of personal clothing and possessions.

- Teaches money management principles to developmentally disabled individuals; and completes/aids in completion of banking activities.
- Provides an accurate accounting of all financial transactions made on behalf of individuals in their care.
- Helps developmentally disabled individuals to develop/maintain positive interpersonal relationships with their peers, with others in their families, and with others in the community. Aids in explaining feelings, resolving conflicts, teaching/reinforcing acceptable means of dissipating frustration, and anger.
- If pets are in the home, teaches/assists with their feeding, grooming, and care.
- Teaches/supervises/participates in a variety of leisure and recreational activities, crafts projects, seasonal and permanent home decoration; assists in planning, supervising and conducting holiday celebrations selected by residents and staff.
- May accompany developmentally disabled individuals to dances, camping trips, swimming, horseback riding, basketball, or other sports; assists in selection and teaching of appropriate community inclusion leisure activities.
- Aids in the selection, purchase, care and use by developmentally disabled individuals of age appropriate personal belongings.

Participating as Program Planning Team Member

Observes and reports on behavior and specific responses to programming, medication, interpersonal relationships, etc.

- Actively participates at staff meetings by communicating observations concerning progress and reaction to various therapy programs.
- At meetings, may suggest alternative programs or procedures based on experience with the individual's habilitation plan.
- Records all significant behavioral responses in prescribed format.
- Participates in the development of individual program and habilitation plans.

COMMUNICATION

As members of the Program Planning Team, Direct Support Assistants communicate with other direct care staff or with supervisory or clinical staff for the purpose of sharing information and obtaining direction for specific assignments. They also communicate with the developmentally disabled individuals in their care, their families and others who come in contact with them.