

IX. PERSONNEL STANDARDS**A. POLICIES**

1. The Lead Agency (DMHMRSAS) ensures that Virginia's Personnel Standards *include* policies and procedures relating to the establishment and maintenance of standards to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out Part C are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained.
 - a. *"Appropriate professional requirements in Virginia" means entry-level requirements that:*
 - (1) *Are based on the highest requirement in Virginia applicable to the profession or discipline in which a person provides early intervention services; and*
 - (2) *Establish suitable qualifications for personnel providing early intervention services under Part C to eligible children and their families who are served by State, local and private agencies.* (34 CFR 303.361(a)(1))
 - (3) *"Highest requirements in the State applicable to a specific profession or discipline" means the highest entry-level academic degree needed for any State approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to that profession or discipline.*(34 CFR 303.361 (a)(2))
 - b. *"Profession" or "discipline" as discussed below, means a specific occupational category that:*
 - (1) *Provides early intervention services to eligible children under Part C and their families;*
 - (2) *Has been established or designated by the Commonwealth of Virginia; and*
 - (3) *Has a required scope of responsibilities and degree of supervision.* (34 CFR 303.361(a)(3))
 - c. *"State-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration or other comparable requirements" means the requirement that the Virginia legislature has enacted or authorized a state agency to promulgate through rules to establish the entry-level standards for employment in a specific profession or discipline in Virginia.* (34 CFR 303.361(a)(4))
 - d. *In identifying the "highest requirements in the State" for purposes of this section, the requirements of all Virginia statutes and the rules of all State agencies applicable to serving children eligible under Part C and their families must be considered.* (34 CFR 303.361(e))
 - e. *A State may allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulations, or written policy, to assist in the provision of early intervention services to eligible children under Part C.* (34 CFR 303.361(f))
2. *In implementing this section, a State may adopt a policy that includes making ongoing good-faith efforts to recruit and hire appropriately and adequately trained personnel to provide early intervention services to eligible children, including, in a geographic area of the State where there is a shortage of personnel that meet these qualifications, the most qualified individuals available who are making satisfactory progress toward completing applicable course work necessary to meet the standards described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, consistent with State law, within three years.*(34 CFR 303.361(g))

3. The Lead Agency ensures that the highest requirements noted in this section under “Part C Personnel Standards” are the highest entry-level academic degree standards needed for State approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration or other comparable requirements that apply to the area in which such personnel are providing early intervention services. The list includes the professions or disciplines identified in the federal regulations as qualified personnel plus other qualified personnel not specified in the federal regulations but working in early intervention in Virginia.
4. The Lead Agency ensures that the following standards have been *established and will be maintained to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of Part C are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained*. These standards are consistent with existing Virginia approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which a person is providing early intervention services. *Timelines for retraining or hiring personnel that meet Virginia's requirements* are also noted below. (34 CFR 303.361(b)-(c))
5. All personnel serving children with disabilities and meeting a highest standard through licensure, certification, registration, or other comparable requirement will participate in the self-assessment of Indicators of Recommended Practice in accordance with steps outlined below under B (Procedures) # 3. Personnel must participate in two (2) training activities each year based on individual need.
6. The Lead Agency ensures that personnel not licensed, certified, registered, or meeting other comparable requirements who were employed to provide early intervention services prior to September 1993 are classified as Early Intervention Generalists and must pursue discipline-specific training necessary for credentialing within one of the disciplines identified on the listing of highest standards requirements. The Early Intervention Generalist discipline is a measure that will only be in place until the year 2002.

B. PROCEDURES

1. Personnel who serve children with disabilities in Virginia must meet one of the highest standards, according to the Part C Personnel Standards Table.
2. A person who is employed as an “early intervention assistant”, as identified on the Part C Personnel Standards Table, may be employed as an “early intervention assistant” under provisionary status, for a period of up to eighteen (18) months, while completing the application process to seek approval of his or her qualifications by the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services. The “early intervention assistant” is a qualified provider of paraprofessional status who is appropriately trained and supervised, and who has met the recognized competencies, having the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to be an early intervention provider. The “early intervention assistant” is described further in Appendix R.
3. A person may, according to 34 CFR 303.361(g), be employed to serve children with disabilities, but because of a shortage of personnel that meet the qualifications of the Part C Personnel Standards Table, including geographic areas of the State where there is a shortage of personnel, be hired without, at time of hiring, meeting one of the standards. If the individual is the most qualified applicant available and is making satisfactory progress toward completing applicable course work necessary to meet one of the highest standards within three (3) years, then that individual may be employed as an early intervention service provider.

4. For individuals who are hired and who are working to meet a highest standard as described in 34 CFR 303.361(g), the Lead Agency ensures that the following steps are in place to document existing shortages and steps the individual is taking to complete the necessary work within three (3) years:
 - a. Areas of personnel shortage by discipline and by geographic region are identified by personnel information obtained by Part C and Part B; and
 - b. The local interagency coordinating council (LICC) will report to the Lead Agency the hiring of the individual at the local level who does not meet a highest standard but who will complete necessary course work to meet one of the standards within three (3) years. On a form supplied by the Lead Agency, the LICC, in conjunction with the individual's employer, identifies the steps the individual will follow to complete necessary course work within three (3) years. The employer will also describe the steps used in the hiring process to determine that the individual hired was the most qualified person available.
5. The Part C Personnel Standards Table identifies the "early intervention generalist", which is the personnel category for persons not licensed, certified, registered, or meeting other comparable requirements, and who were employed to provide early intervention services prior to September 1993. Persons classified as Early Intervention Generalists must pursue discipline-specific training necessary to meet one of the highest standards and complete such training by July 1, 2002.
6. *In identifying the "highest requirements in Virginia", requirements of all state statutes and rules of all state agencies applicable to serving children/families were considered.* Virginia embarked on several personnel studies to determine the status of personnel involved in early intervention programs. A study of personnel standards was conducted by the Commonwealth Institute for Child and Family Studies, Virginia Treatment Center for Children. The document "Personnel Standards for Early Intervention Teams under P.L. 99-457: A Survey of the Commonwealth of Virginia" (August 1989) was prepared for the VICC Personnel Standards Task Force. (34 CFR 303.361)(e)
7. *The information on the personnel standards for each early intervention professional or discipline listed above is maintained on file in the Lead Agency and is available to the public.* (34 CFR 303.361(d)(2))
8. The following steps are being taken to bring personnel in Virginia into compliance with the Indicators of Recommended Practice:
 - a. The Lead Agency, with the VICC Personnel Training and Development Committee, utilizes a mechanism for documenting participation in the self-assessment of the Indicators of Recommended Practice by personnel providing early intervention services under Part C. Local Interagency Coordinating Councils fully implement policies and procedures to determine mechanisms for obtaining participation in the self-assessment of the Indicators of Recommended Practice by personnel providing early intervention services under Part C. This documentation is completed annually.

Several vehicles exist for obtaining the interdisciplinary child/family competencies. These include:

- (1) Completion of course work and supervised experience in an appropriate preservice program which provides the child/family core competencies.
- (2) Completion of coordinated inservice training courses and supervised experiences.
- (3) Completion of a combination of inservice and field experiences provided by institutions

- of higher education or inservice/technical assistance providers.
- b. The Lead Agency annually develops, with advice and assistance from the VICC Personnel Training and Development Committee, a plan to assist all personnel in meeting a highest standard. The plan includes strategies for inservice trainings on a regional and local basis, coordination with institutions of higher education to expand or adapt preservice interdisciplinary training in early intervention competencies, and for offering tuition assistance to personnel pursuing a recognized highest standard.
 - c. The Lead Agency continues to work closely with the Joint Legislative Subcommittee Studying Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities concerning personnel shortages issues in Virginia. Prioritizing and implementing feasible strategies to address personnel shortages is emphasized.
9. The following procedures will be used annually to notify public agencies and/or other participating agencies/providers and personnel of steps being taken to bring personnel into compliance with the highest standard requirements:
- a. Interagency memoranda to appropriate State agency executives;
 - b. Notification through the State Council on Higher Education of Virginia (SCHEV) to Institutions of Higher Education;
 - c. Memoranda through local interagency coordinating councils to appropriate service agencies; and
 - d. Presentations by the Lead Agency to state-level professional organizations.

PART C PERSONNEL STANDARDS

NOTE: The disciplines specified in the federal regulations are underlined.

<u>DISCIPLINE OR PROFESSION</u>	<u>HIGHEST STANDARD</u>
a. <u>Audiologist</u>	Master's plus licensure in Audiology by the Board of Audiology and Speech Pathology.
b. Certified Therapeutic Recreation Therapist	Bachelor's plus certification from the National Council on Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC).
c. Counselor	
● Licensed Professional Counselor	Master's and licensure by Board of Professional Counselors.
● School Counselor	Master's plus licensure as a school counselor from the Virginia Department of Education.
d. <u>Early Childhood Special Educator</u> (termed Special Educator in federal regulations)	Bachelor's plus licensure in special education early childhood (birth-5) from the Virginia Department of Education.
e. Educator	Bachelor's plus licensure early/primary education pre-K-3 from the Virginia Department of Education.
	Bachelor's plus licensure in Work and Family Studies from the Virginia Department of Education.
	Technical Professional License in Work and Family Studies from the Virginia Department of Education.
f. Early Intervention Assistant	Approval of qualifications from the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services.
g. Early Intervention Generalist	Person employed in Virginia's Part C system prior to September 1993 who does not meet another highest standard listed in this section. This is a temporary measure to enable continued employment of these experienced individuals until July 1, 2002. On July 1, 2002, the Early Intervention Generalist must meet one of the highest standards in Virginia.
h. Educational Interpreter	Certificate from Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf of Virginia, Quality Assurance Screening Level III.
i. Educator of the Hearing Impaired	Bachelor's plus licensure in hearing impairment from the Virginia Department of Education.
j. Educator of the Visually Impaired	Bachelor's plus licensure in visual impairment from the Virginia Department of Education.

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| k. | Family and Consumer Science Professional | Bachelor's plus certification through the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. |
| l. | <u>Family Therapist</u> (Marriage and Family Therapist) | Marriage and family therapy license by the Board of Professional Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Substance Abuse Professionals. |
| m. | <u>Nurse</u> | |
| | ● Registered Nurse | R.N. plus licensure by the Board of Nursing. |
| | ● Nurse Practitioner | R.N. plus licensure by the Board of Nursing plus completion of an approved or accredited program to prepare nurse practitioners, and is licensed as a nurse practitioner by the Boards of Nursing and Medicine. |
| n. | <u>Nutritionist</u> | Bachelor's plus Registered Dietitian by the Commission on Dietetic Registration, American Dietetic Association. |
| o. | <u>Occupational Therapist</u> | Bachelor's plus certification by the Board of Medicine as Registered Occupational Therapist. |
| p. | Occupational Therapy Assistant | Degree from a two-year accredited program plus pass an examination by the National Occupational Therapy Certification Board. |
| q. | <u>Orientation and Mobility Specialist</u> | Bachelor's plus certificate from the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of Blind and Visually Impaired. |
| r. | <u>Physical Therapist</u> | Bachelor's plus licensure by the Board of Medicine. |
| s. | Physical Therapy Assistant | Two year college-level degree plus licensure by the Board of Medicine. |
| t. | <u>Physician</u> | Doctor of Medicine plus licensure by the Board of Medicine. |
| u. | <u>Psychologist</u> | |
| | ● Clinical Psychologist | Doctorate with licensure by the Board of Psychology. |
| | ● School Psychologist | Masters in school psychology plus licensure by the Board of Psychology or licensure by the Virginia Department of Education. |
| | ● Applied Psychologist | Doctorate in psychology plus licensure by the Board of Psychology. |
| v. | <u>Social Worker</u> | |
| | ● Licensed Social Worker | Bachelor's plus licensure by the Board of Social Work; |

- entitles one to practice case management and supportive services.
- Registered Social Worker Bachelor's plus registration by the Board of Social Work; entitles one to practice case management; this one-time registration is no longer available to new personnel.
 - Licensed Clinical Social Worker Master's plus licensure by the Board of Social Work; entitles one to practice independently.
 - School Social Worker Master's plus licensure as school social worker by the Department of Education; enables one to practice as a social worker within local school divisions.
 - Visiting Teacher Master's plus licensure as a visiting teacher by the Department of Education.
- w. Speech-Language Pathologist Master's plus licensure in Speech-Language Pathology by the Board of Audiology and Speech Pathology or licensure with an endorsement in Speech-Language Disorders by the Virginia Board of Education.

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