



*Est. December, 2001*

*[www.autismtrainingva.org](http://www.autismtrainingva.org)*

# Vision and Mission

## The Vision of the Virginia Autism Council (VAC)

The Virginia Autism Council envisions individuals with autism fully participating in every aspect of society.

## The Mission of the Virginia Autism Council

- provides leadership and coordination for state agencies and service providers.
- increases knowledge and understanding of autism in the wider community in order to maximize outcomes for people with autism.

# Purpose of VAC

- **Gather, synthesize, and distribute knowledge;**
- **Develop best practice tools;**
- **Promote the interests of citizens affected by autism;**
- **Identify and address gaps in the system.**

# Council membership includes representatives from:

- Autism Society of America
- Commonwealth Autism Service
- DMAS, DRS, DBHDS
- Public and Private Schools
- SECEP
- VA Colleges and Universities
- Individuals with autism and their families
- Autism Center for Excellence at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)
- The Arc of Virginia
- Virginia Autism Resource Center (VARC)
- VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities
- VA Board for People with Disabilities
- VA Dept. of Education
- Early Intervention (Part C) providers
- Virginia Institute of Autism
- Local CSBs and Private Providers

# Autism Council Endeavors

- ❖ Development of Training
- ❖ Training Calendar and Website
- ❖ Online Education
- ❖ Live Training
- ❖ Tuition Reimbursement Program
- ❖ Projects with Adult Services
- ❖ Skill Competencies

# **SKILL COMPETENCIES FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS IN VIRGINIA SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM ACROSS THE LIFESPAN**

- **First Published in October, 2005**
- **Revised September 15, 2010**
- **Developed to guide best practice in supporting individuals with autism across the state**
- **Used in all fields of service delivery**
- **Based upon consistent findings in current research**

# Why Develop the Skill Competencies?

# Outcomes

- Early childhood
- School
- Transition
- Adult Life



# Who is Working with Individuals with ASD?

- Everyone!
- General Educators
- Special Educators
- **Early Intervention Specialist**
- Adult Service Providers
- Related Service Personnel
- Every kind of Educational Specialist
- Direct Service Providers

# Individual Need

- Have goal to go to College – 23% - Third lowest of all disabilities
- Have goal for post-secondary training – 18% - Second lowest of all disabilities
- Have goal for competitive employment – 22% - Lowest of all disabilities
- Had paid work in last year – 22% - Lowest of all disabilities
- Live independently – 4 to 5%

# Professional Need

- Autism has grown
- Professionals regularly report a lack of training in autism
- Demand for skills outstrips supply of knowledgeable professionals

For a professional to be effective, we  
must establish:

- What is the required knowledge?
- What are the required skills?
- What are the required abilities?

# What **Drives** Professional Preparation Programs in Autism?

- Increased Awareness
- Demand for Information
- State Teacher Licensure
- Certificates in Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Research Centers of Excellence
- Educational Standards or Competencies
- Need to Serve Population

# How were the Skill Competencies developed?

- Originally designed by subcommittee of the Virginia Autism Council
- Reviewed by state and national experts in the field of autism

# VAC Competencies Development Process



# Use of the Skill Competencies

- **Help identify the areas of need for education and support**
- **Guide development of programs**
- **Guide development of university-based classes**
- **Guide training and staff development**
  - Individual teacher
  - Group professional development



# Competency Areas

- **General Autism Competency Statements**
- **Environmental Structure and Visual Supports Competencies**
- **Comprehensive Instructional Programming Competencies**
- **Communication Competencies**
- **Social Skill Competencies**
- **Behavior Competencies**
- **Sensory Motor Development Competencies**
- **Independence and Aptitude Competencies**

# Who should demonstrate these skills?

- **Paraprofessionals/Direct Service Professionals**
- **Professionals**
- **Master Professionals**
- **Advanced Degree, Program Developer, or Specialist**

How do you Envision  
using the Skill  
Competencies?

# How can I Access the Skill Competencies?

- Available to download on the website at [www.autismtrainingva.org](http://www.autismtrainingva.org)
  - PDF format
  - 20 page printout
- Limited number of bound copies available
  - Contact the VA Autism Council ([info@autismtrainingva.org](mailto:info@autismtrainingva.org)) for print copies

# For More Information:

**Website:**

**[www.autismtrainingva.org](http://www.autismtrainingva.org)**

**Email:**

**[info@autismtrainingva.org](mailto:info@autismtrainingva.org)**