



DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION
Olympia, Washington

TITLE: SPECIALIZED HABILITATION POLICY 4.20

Authority: [42 C.F.R. 441.301 \(c\)\(2\)](#) The Person-Centered Service Plan
[42 C.F.R. 441.301 \(c\)\(4\)](#) Home and Community-Based Settings
[42 C.F.R. 441.301 \(c\)\(5\)](#) Settings that are not Home and Community-Based
[45 C.F.R. Part 164](#) Security and Privacy
[Chapter 388-825 WAC](#) DDA Service Rules
[Chapter 388-829C WAC](#) Companion Homes
[Chapter 388-845 WAC](#) DDA Home and Community-Based Services Waivers

Reference: [DDA Policy 4.06](#) Children's Intensive In-Home Behavioral Supports Program
[DDA Policy 4.12](#) Companion Homes
[DDA Policy 4.27](#) Teleservice
[DDA Policy 5.13](#) Protection from Abuse: Mandatory Reporting
[DDA Policy 5.25](#) Integrated Settings: Promoting Community Integration through Long-Term Services and Supports
[DDA Policy 16.01](#) Responding to PASRR Referrals
[DDA Policy 16.06](#) Referring PASRR Clients for Community Transition

PURPOSE

This policy establishes service delivery requirements and service limits for specialized habilitation services.

SCOPE

This policy applies to DDA field services staff and DDA-contracted providers of specialized habilitation services.

DEFINITIONS

SH provider means an independent contractor or agency, with a signed specialized habilitation contract with DDA.

Stabilization services—specialized habilitation means short-term (90 days or less), intermittent, or episodic supports available on all waivers that assist a client on a habilitative goal, when the client is experiencing a crisis and is at immediate risk of hospitalization or institutionalization as defined in Chapter 388-845 WAC.

POLICY

- A. Specialized habilitation is a waiver service that supports a client to learn or maintain an identified life skill. Supports can be community-based or individualized and are provided by a qualified, contracted provider. Specialized habilitation is available on the Basic Plus, Individual and Family Services, Core, and Children’s Intensive In-Home Behavioral Support waivers, the Preadmission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR) program, and the Roads to Community Living (RCL) grant.
- B. Specialized habilitation provided to a client must aim to address a support need in the categories outlined in [WAC 388-845-1870](#). Categories include:
 - 1. **Self-Empowerment**, which means taking control of one’s own life, setting goals, and making positive choices to promote self-determination. Supports under this category include:
 - a. Increasing a client’s control of their life by facilitating positive internal dialogue;
 - b. Building self-esteem and confidence;
 - c. Reflecting on personal values, skills, and goals and adjusting behavior in order to achieve those goals; and
 - d. Becoming more self-aware of one’s own strengths and weaknesses to be better equipped to deal with problems as they arise.
 - 2. **Safety Awareness and Self-Advocacy**, which means recognizing, analyzing, and controlling hazards to make informed choices. Supports under this category may include:
 - a. Learning and developing skills for safety awareness, such as how to recognize and report abuse, neglect, or exploitation;
 - b. Safely navigating social media and the internet;
 - c. Learning and developing skills for street safety and transportation options;

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- d. Receiving sexual education to promote healthy relationships; and
 - e. Promoting appropriate and safe advocacy for oneself and others through methods of assertiveness and negotiation, learning to say “no,” or stating needs or preferences.
3. **Interpersonal Effectiveness and Effective Social Communication**, which means the development of social and emotional learning skills that help a person attend to their relationships, balance priorities versus demands, and build a sense of mastery and self-respect. Supports under this category may include:
- a. Developing or enhancing verbal or nonverbal social communication;
 - b. Developing listening skills;
 - c. Balancing immediate goals with the concepts of “wants” and “shoulds”;
 - d. Learning and demonstrating how to uphold and maintain values;
 - e. Avoiding or mitigating inappropriate peer pressure; and
 - f. Developing other social skills necessary to maximize integration into the community or home environment.
4. **Coping Strategies Regarding Everyday Life Challenges**, which means the development of problem solving and other stress reduction strategies to deal with unexpected or unavoidable situations, such as:
- a. Missing the bus;
 - b. Acclimating to a new caregiver or medical professional;
 - c. Moving to a new residence;
 - d. Acclimating to a new family member or roommate;
 - e. Adjusting to a loss, such as employment, lost relationship, activity, caregiver, etc. (does not include grief counseling); and
 - f. Transition planning.

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5. **Managing Daily Tasks and Acquiring Adaptive Skills**, which means the development of skills necessary to reside successfully in the home and community. Examples may include:
 - a. Learning how to use a vending machine or other nontraditional shopping method, such as online shopping;
 - b. Ordering food in a restaurant;
 - c. Paying for items at a store;
 - d. Managing bills; and
 - e. Selecting clothing for various work and social occasions.
 - C. Stabilization services—specialized habilitation may be authorized, without prior approval, for up to 90 consecutive days. The case resource manager (CRM) must enter the service in the client’s person-centered service plan and send a planned action notice within five days of the start of service.
 - D. Specialized habilitation is not a replacement for behavioral health support, applied behavioral analysis (ABA), services available through the Medicaid state plan, or other benefits, and cannot be approved to duplicate or replace those supports ([WAC 388-845-0110](#)). Examples supports that cannot be duplicated or replaced include:
 1. Community First Choice skills acquisition training;
 2. Education-based supports, such as tutoring or homeschooling resources;
 3. Autism treatment, such as applied behavioral analysis or positive behavior support;
 4. Behavioral health services, such as counseling, medication management, dialectical behavior therapy, or psychiatric evaluations; or
 5. Employment support.

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- E. The SH provider must work directly with the client to develop clearly defined goals and provide individualized supports. If needed, the client and provider may develop these goals with assistance from the CRM or the client's family or legal representative.
1. No more than 30 days after the service is authorized, the SH provider must complete and submit [DSHS 10-657](#), *Initial Specialized Habilitation Plan*, to the client's DDA CRM for review.
 2. No more than 120 days after the initial service authorization, and every 90 days thereafter, the SH provider must submit [DSHS 10-658](#), *Specialized Habilitation 90-Day Progress Report*, to the client's DDA CRM.
- Note: If a referral to emergency personnel is necessary due to imminent danger of the client or caregiver, the SH provider must initiate the referral and notify DDA no more than two hours after making the referral.
3. The CRM must review the completed 90-day progress report and may extend the service if documentation clearly indicates that the need persists.
 4. If the CRM is unsure if the report meets minimum reporting criteria, or if the report is not received at all, the CRM must contact their regional resource developer and waiver specialists for support.
- F. If the client requests to receive specialized habilitation through teleservice, requirements outlined in [DDA Policy 4.27](#), *Teleservice*, must be met and consideration that the client's goals for specialized habilitation can be addressed through this delivery method.
- G. Specialized habilitation may be provided individually or in a small group of up to four clients who have the same or similar goals and interests. Services must be provided in an integrated setting.

EXCEPTIONS

Any exception to this policy must have the prior written approval of the Deputy Assistant Secretary.

TITLE:

SPECIALIZED HABILITATION

4.20

SUPERSESSION

4.20, *Specialized Habilitation*

Issued August 1, 2023

Approved:



Deputy Assistant Secretary
Developmental Disabilities Administration

Date: January 1, 2025