

Habilitation Program

A structured way to teach skills. A program includes goals and data collection.

What will I learn?

At least once a year, you meet with your person-centered planning team. At this meeting, you discuss what is **important to you** and what is **important for you**.

- **The things you want to learn are important to you.** Tell your Service Coordinator what you would like to learn or improve in the next year.
- **The things you need to learn to be more independent are important for you.** Every year a Level of Care assessment is completed so you can keep receiving waiver services. This assessment looks at many areas, including daily living skills, money management, and job skills. The assessment identifies what you can do and what you need to learn or improve.

Your team decides on your goals and your provider writes your programs. When you have many needs, your team discusses which skills will lead you to be the most independent, or are the basis for other skills.

Your provider may run a baseline to measure how well you can do a task before they teach anything. The baseline tells your provider if teaching is needed and where to begin your program.

What is a SMART goal?

Your goal is what you want to accomplish. Your provider should write a SMART goal to increase your chance of success.

SMART stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely.

- **Specific** – Your goal clearly defines what you will learn and what you need to do to meet your goal. One skill is taught at a time.
- **Measurable** – Your provider must be able to see you do a task for the goal to be measurable. Your provider keeps data to see if you are making progress.
- **Achievable** – Your goal should challenge you. It should also be something you are capable of learning.
- **Relevant** – Your goal must be something you want or need to learn.
- **Timely** – Your goal includes a timeframe for you to learn the task. You should be able to be meet your goal within one year.

Example SMART goal:

“When I am given one verbal prompt, I will wash my upper body for 90% of trials for three consecutive months.”

Contact DHHS



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Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waivers

What is Habilitation?

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

“Helping People Live Better Lives”

2026

What is habilitation?

Habilitation is a word for teaching you things related to your needs.

Many waiver services are habilitative. This means your provider will write and run programs to teach you things to help you meet your goals. Anytime your provider is doing a habilitative service with you, they are required to run at least one program and collect data.

Habilitation

Helping a person learn or improve a skill, when their disability caused the initial skill learning to be delayed or blocked.

Why is habilitation important?

Waiver services are based on your needs. This is called person-centered. **Services are designed to support you to become as independent as possible.**

You increase your independence by learning to do things on your own and building the skills you have. You and your team decide together what is important for you to learn.

Habilitative Service

A waiver service which teaches skills by using habilitation programs. The service may also provide other support, such as personal care and supervision.

How will a program help me learn?

Your provider writes your goals into programs, which they use to teach skills.

Your team should discuss how you learn best. This helps your provider teach you in ways that work well for you.

Some ways your provider might teach:

- Break a task into smaller steps and teach one step at a time.
- Show you how to do a task, then watch you do the same task.
- Physically assisting you.
- Use fewer reminders as you learn to do tasks by yourself.
- Reward you for completing a task.

Your program includes how to help you when you do not do a task right. The program also has a way for your provider to document if you refuse.

DHHS has resources available to help your provider write programs using SMART goals.

How is success measured?

When your provider is doing a habilitative service with you, they use your program to teach you. They write down how you do. This is called data.

Every month your provider reviews the data to see if your program is effective in teaching you. Data shows your progress toward your goals. It also shows when you are not making progress.

Your provider's review includes a summary of how you are doing. When you are not increasing skills, or declining, your provider's summary includes possible reasons and what can be done to help you learn.

Your Service Coordinator reviews program data at least quarterly to make sure programs are meeting your needs. Your program can be revised when needed to help you succeed.

Your team meets at least once a year and reviews your progress toward your goals.

Resources for Your Provider

- **Habilitation Program Writing** - DHHS hosts live online training.
- **Habilitation Plan Overview** - A guide to write programs.
- **DD Policy Manual** - This manual for providers has a section on habilitation and which waiver services require programs.
- **Therap User Guides and Training Academy** - Nebraska uses Therap for writing programs, collecting data, and creating reports. Therap is an online platform: <https://www.therapservices.net/>.

Your provider can find resources on the DD Provider webpage:
<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Providers.aspx>

