



Family/Community Representative Instruction Guide

COUNCIL
for
PROFESSIONAL
RECOGNITION



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Representative's Materials Checklist

THE FAMILY/COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE'S MATERIALS CONSIST OF:

- Instruction Guide*. This guide contains detailed guidance for the Family/Community Representative and a checklist of activities they must complete in order to fulfill their responsibilities.
- Assessment Observation Instrument*. The official form the Family/Community records observations of the candidate's consistent behavior working with youth and families.
- Summary of Youth Family Questionnaires*. This is used to record the number of Youth Family Questionnaires distributed and collected.
- Assessment Evaluation Form*
- Military School-Age Assessment System and Competency Standards Book*

Preface

Thank you for making a commitment to fulfill a challenging and important role as a Family/Community Representative to a candidate aspiring to earn the Military School-Age Associate (MSA) Credential.

The Council for Professional Recognition (Council) evaluates/assesses professionals who work with youth and their families. The purpose of the assessment is to identify individuals who have the necessary skills and knowledge to work competently with youth in the Department of Defense programs. Unlike other forms of certification, the MSA Credential requires no paper-and-pencil exams. Rather, candidates have a chance to demonstrate their ability to meet the needs of youth and families daily, on the job.

The Department of Defense believes that families have the right to know that the individuals working with their youth are competent. Therefore, families have a very important role in the evaluation of a person who wants to achieve a Military School-Age Credential. Your role is to represent the interests of families and the community in the assessment process. You will be a member of the Local Assessment Team (LAT) that will collect information about the candidate's work and provide information about your assessment of the candidate's competence as a youth professional.

Introduction

This book contains the forms you will need to carry out your responsibilities in the assessment process. It also describes your role as a member of the Local Assessment Team (LAT). It includes guidance on observing the candidate, completing the observation form, summarizing questionnaires, and sharing information.

A checklist of tasks is provided at the end of this guide. In addition, this guide includes the Observation Form **and** Summary of Youth Family Questionnaires. You will use the observation form to record your observations of the candidate's work.

The *Military School-Age Assessment System and Competency Standards Book* contains an overview of the Military's School-Age Credentialing Program, a description of the assessment system, the eligibility requirements and information collection responsibilities for members of the LAT, and the complete Competency Standards for youth professionals.

Read all the materials and discuss your responsibilities and any questions you may have with the candidate or the MSA Advisor. Additionally, if you have questions after reading these materials, STOP and contact Council's customer service toll-free hotline, **800-424-4310** or email msa@cdacouncil.org.

Part 1

Family/Community Representative Responsibilities for Information Collection

This section gives guidance for completing the Family/Community Representative information collection responsibilities:

- Observe the candidate working with youth and completing the observation form.
- Complete the summary of *Youth Family Questionnaires*.
- Review the professional portfolio.
- Evaluate the candidate.
- Share your assessment information.

Each of these responsibilities is explained in this guide. Use the checklist to keep track of the tasks you must perform. If you have questions about your responsibilities, the forms you will be completing, or any other steps along the way, check with the candidate, the MSA Advisor, or contact the Council.

Part 1

Observing the Candidate and Completing the Observation Form

Each team member is asked to observe the candidate at work and to record the observation in writing. These recorded competency-based observations are critical to the candidate assessment. The Competency Standards for Military School-Age Programs provide the framework skills and behaviors of a competent youth professional. Samples provided will guide you in recognizing candidate behavior indicators.

Read the Competency Standards for the Military School-Age Credential before you observe. The examples listed under each of the 13 Functional Areas are guidelines for what type of behavior to look for when you observe the candidate. Remember, these examples are only a few of the many ways that youth professionals can demonstrate competence in working with youth. Before your observation visit, write down your own ideas of how an individual could show they are doing a good job in each functional area. This will also help you know what to focus on when you observe.

The *Family/Community Observation Form* has a separate page for each of the 13 Functional Areas. You are asked to answer a question about the candidate's behavior in each area by describing what you see. You may find it easier to jot down your observations on blank paper and then transfer them to the observation form later.

MAKING THE OBSERVATIONS

Being a good observer requires preparation. The following are some suggestions to help you, the youth, and the candidate feel comfortable about the observation:

1. Arrange for a convenient time for your observation with the candidate. Plan to spend at least 1–1.5 hours, so you will be able to observe several activities. If you do not see enough to complete the observation form, you will need to schedule a second observation date and time. The candidate should have prepared the youth for your visit.
2. Take along a clipboard or some other firm surface, pens and pencils, and blank paper.
3. Dress comfortably.
4. Find a place to sit where you will not be in the way or have to change places often, but where you will be able to see and hear the candidate. Take the first 10–15 minutes to get used to the setting before starting to write down observations. This gives the candidate and the youth a chance to feel comfortable having you there.
5. Observe quietly without interrupting. Try to avoid talking to the candidate or youth. The candidate will understand that you need to observe and write.
6. If you are asked to play with the youth, you may want to respond by saying, "I'm sorry, but I need to write all of this down. Perhaps I can join you when I've finished my observation."
7. Focus your attention on what the candidate says and does. Try to write down the exact words the candidate uses in talking with youth and families. The following are examples of how you might record an activity or incident you observed:

Part 1

EXAMPLE 1 (FUNCTIONAL AREA 5: COGNITIVE)

The Candidate walked over to Seth, an 8-year-old, who was separating and making piles with cards. She asked him, “What kinds of cards are those, Seth?” He said, “Baseball cards. I’m putting them into piles.” She asked how he was deciding on which piles to put the cards in. He replied, “This one is for Hall of Famers, this one is for the Rookies, this other one is for the ones I might want to trade.” The staff member said, “Seth, you have a very good system for sorting cards — and you certainly know more about baseball than I do. Maybe later you can show me some of your favorite cards and tell me how you learned so much.”

EXAMPLE 2 (FUNCTIONAL AREA 8: SELF)

The candidate was outside helping the youth organize a volleyball game. Once the game started, the candidate noticed Diego (6 years old) on the climbing equipment. He said to Diego, “Diego, I don’t think I’ve ever seen you climb so high!” Diego smiled and replied, “Yeah, this is the highest I’ve ever been. I’m taller than everybody!” The candidate agreed, “Yes, you sure are. I bet you’ll be on your way to the very top in no time.” Diego laughed, nodding his head in agreement.

8. It is possible that you will not see the candidate demonstrating behavior in one or more of the functional areas. If you can, schedule a second observation for another day. If, after that, you still have not had an opportunity to observe examples in an area, you can check “Unable to answer.”
9. You may observe something you do not understand, have questions about, or do not like. You can note such questions in the space provided under each functional area. You will have the opportunity to discuss these with the MSA Representative.
10. After you have completed your observation form, put it aside for a day or two. Then look at it again and be sure it accurately describes what you saw.

MAKE SURE YOUR OBSERVATION IS CURRENT

The candidate will notify you when they will be ready for assessment. The dates of your observation(s) of the candidate must be within three months prior to the date the candidate submits their Assessment Request Form.

The purpose of a current observation is to ensure all team members share current information about the candidate’s work with youth and families. This gives team members a common frame of reference for their discussion, evaluation, and for their final recommendation of the candidate’s competence.

SUMMARIZING YOUTH FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRES

As the spokesperson for families’ interests, you will summarize the information from the surveys collected by the advisor. Here you will synthesize, and record identified areas of strengths, professional growth, and any highlights for the questionnaires.

Part 1

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

You will also have an opportunity to review the candidate's professional portfolio. The candidate shares information about their training, resources they use, statements of competence, their daily practice, and their overall philosophy. The Professional Portfolio aids your understanding of the candidates' professional competence.

Assessment Evaluation

After reviewing and analyzing all collected information (i.e., observation, questionnaires, candidate portfolio), complete the *Assessment Evaluation Form* and provide your final recommendation about the MSA Candidate's performance. Once completed, you will provide all your assessment documentation to the MSA Representative. It may be necessary for the MSA Representative to set a time to discuss/share any information that may need further discussion before the MSA Representative consolidates all LAT assessment documentation.

VERIFICATION VISIT

When you have made your observation(s), completed the observation form, and completed the summary of the Youth Family Questionnaires, notify the candidate that you have completed your responsibilities. The candidate will then ask you to complete and sign your portion of the *Assessment Request Form*, which they will send to the Council.

When the Council receives the *Assessment Request Form*, a Military School-Age Representative will be assigned to conduct an observation and an interview with the candidate. They will also coordinate with you to share your information and discuss the evaluation.

AFTER THE VERIFICATION VISIT

Based on all the information presented by all team members, the MSA Representative then summarizes the information and develops an overview of the candidate's performance. The MSA Representative makes a final team recommendation to the Council based on a consolidation of information to summarize candidate's performance as to whether the candidate receives the Military School-Age Credential or that the team recommends further training. The MSA Representative submits all of the required documentation to the Council within 48 hours. The Council reviews the information and makes the final credentialing decision within ten business days.

A FINAL NOTE

Thank you for contributing your time to this effort. We hope that your participation will be a rewarding experience. If you are concerned or unsure about any aspect of your responsibilities, please contact the candidate, the advisor, or the Council.

Family/Community Representative Checklist

Below are all the major tasks you will perform as a Family/Community Representative. Tasks may be completed in an order that best fits you. You do not have to finish one before starting another.

- Read this guide carefully.
- Discuss your responsibilities with the candidate.
- Schedule your observation(s) with the candidate.
- Review the Competency Standards and think of your own examples of competent behavior in each functional area.
- Observe the candidate.
- Complete the observation form.
- Complete the summary of the Youth Family Questionnaires received from the Advisor.
- Notify candidate when you have completed your responsibilities.
- Complete candidate's *Assessment Request Form*.
- Be prepared to share your information collection with the MSA Representative.