

# Post-Secondary Pathways for Neurodivergent Students



Vista Life Innovations

Welcome

Presentation  
Overview

Who We  
Serve

Post-  
Secondary  
Expectations

Assessing a  
Baseline

Alignment

Learn  
More





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# Welcome!



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MA, ATR-BC, CHC, CSI, RYT, AADP  
**Admissions Manager**

## Vista Overview

# Vista Overview

## Discover Program:

- NCASES** accredited post-secondary program
- Students engage in over 55 hours of curriculum-driven programming each week
- Fading supports while increasing independence to move from a dormitory to a condo setting to prepare for graduation!

## Engage Program:

- Individualized supports for all stages of adult life—à la carte services in over 120 homes
- 98% of students and members are competitively employed
- Benefits and Advocacy Services to navigate the world of entitlements, funding, trusts and more!



## Admissions Process:

Provides a baseline for 1- or 5-day functional skills assessments

# Educational Transitions Consulting

Independent Educational Consultant Specializing in Students with Learning Differences

## Services:

**Individualized Transition Planning Counseling & Services:**

- Planning & Placement
- Financial Aid

## Amy Brown, M.Ed., Author of:

**Navigating Post-Secondary Pathways:**

A Guide to Postsecondary Education for students with Learning Differences

**Postsecondary Program Guide:**

A comprehensive overview of over 90 programs



# Presentation Overview

## Who We Serve

- Neurodivergent Profiles
- External Factors
- Alignment

## Post-Secondary Options & Expectations

- Programs
- Overview of Skills

## Assessing a Baseline

- Gathering Data
- Skill Assessment Strategy

## Components of Skill Building

- Tools & Strategies
- Activity
- Finale

## Learn More



"In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun."

# Unique & Complex



"I'll stay till the wind changes."

Profiles

External  
Factors

Alignment

# Neurodivergent Profiles

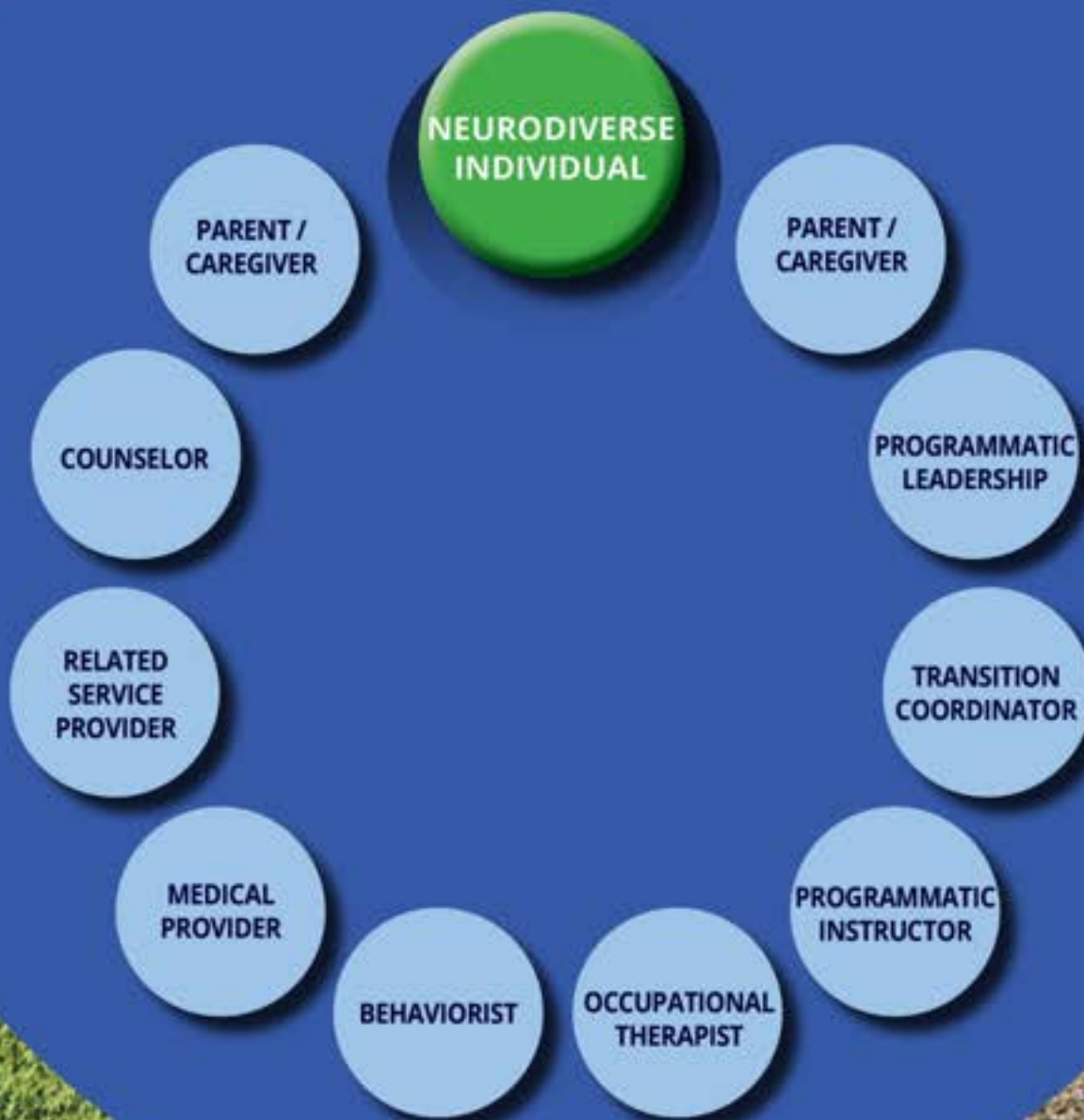
- Anxiety Disorders
- Depression
- OCD
- Wide IQ Range
- Down Syndrome
- PDD
- Cerebral Palsy
- ASD
- Dysgraphia
- Dyslexia
- Dyscalcula
- Language Disorders
- Processing Delays
- Executive Function Disorders
- ADD/ADHD
- Seizure Disorders
- Fragile X
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Environmental Sensitivities
- Food Aversions
- TBI

And so on...



"Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious"

# Existing Support Structures



**"For every task you undertake,  
becomes a piece of cake"**

# Alignment?



## Post-Secondary Expectations

College

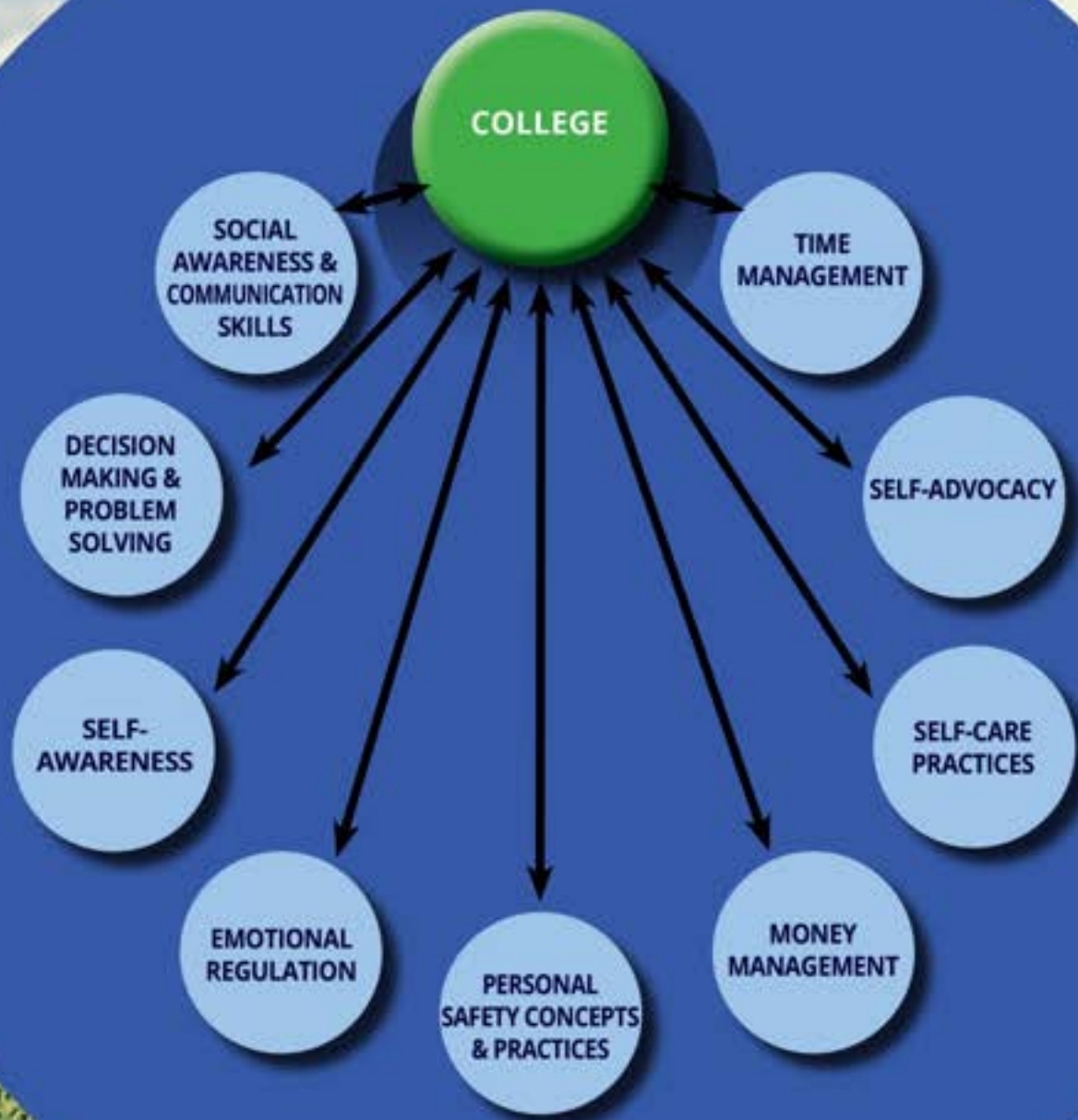
Career &  
Technical  
Education  
Programs



Supported  
Education  
Programs

Transition  
Programs

"Why do you always complicate  
things when they are really  
quite simple!"



## College with Accommodations

- Four-Year College
- Cooperative College
- Community College
- Online College

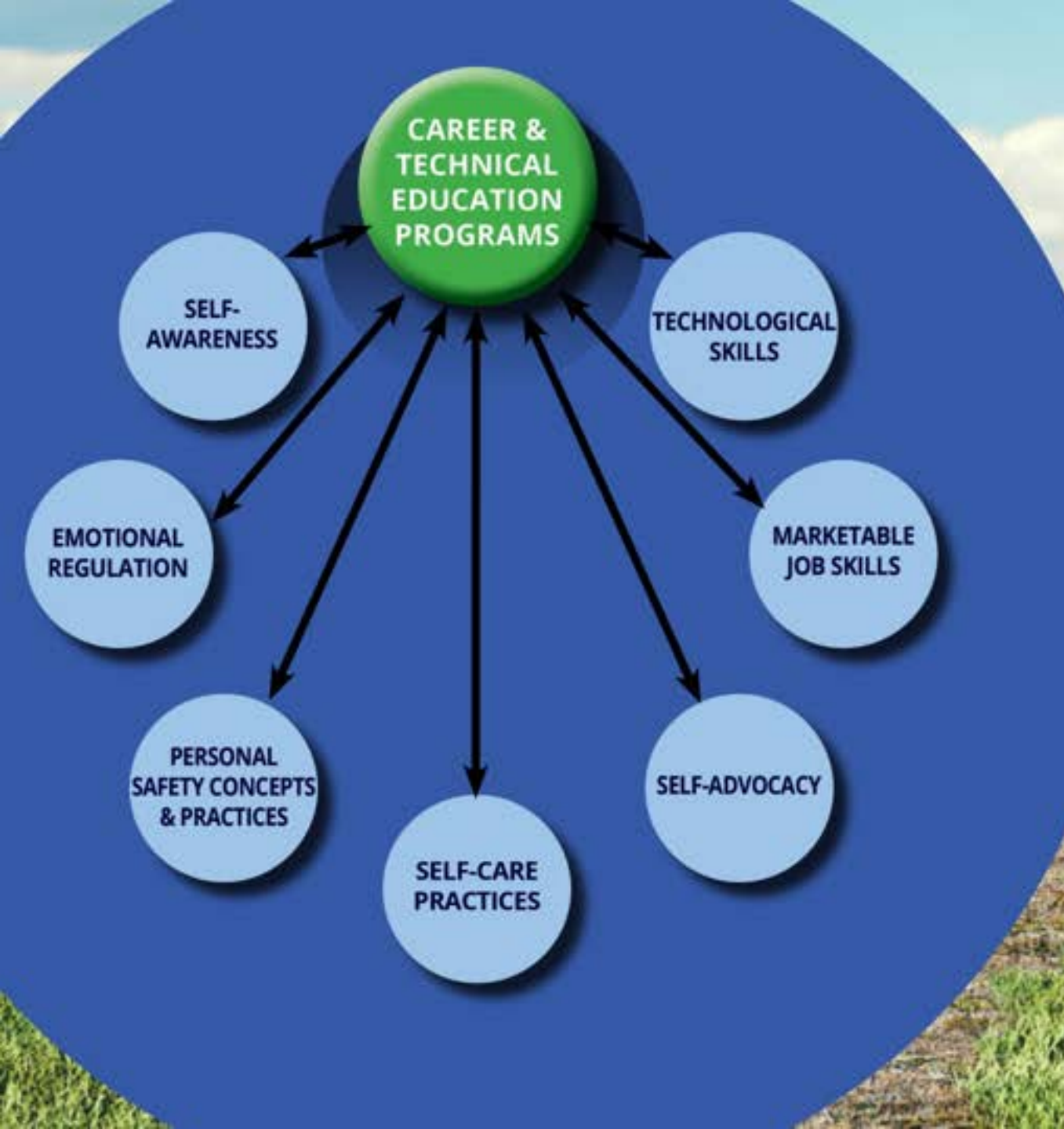
(Educational Transitions Consulting, 2022)



## Supported Education Programs

- College Autism Support Program
- College External Support Program
- Specialized College

(Educational Transitions Consulting, 2022)



## Career and Technical Education Programs

- Vocational and Internship Programs
- Technical and Trades Programs

(Educational Transitions Consulting, 2022)

## SPECIALIZED TRANSITION PROGRAMS

EMOTIONAL  
REGULATION

SELF-ADVOCACY

PERSONAL  
SAFETY  
CONCEPTS

EXPRESSIVE  
LANGUAGE

SELF-CARE  
PRACTICES



## Transition Programs

- Transition to Independent Living Programs
- Bridge Programs
- College Prep Programs

(Educational Transitions Consulting, 2022)

## Gather & Assess



"That's a funny sort of bag!"

Gathering  
Data

Skill  
Assessment  
Strategy

Activity  
Time!

# Information Gathering

- IEPs
- Brigance Inventory
- YouScience
- Career Interest Inventories
- Psychoeducational Evaluations
- ARC Self-Determination Scale
- Student & Parent Surveys
- Transition Evaluations
- Neuro-Psychological
- Functional Behavioral Assessment
- OT/PT/Speech & Language



"Come feed the little birds, show them you care"

# Components of Skill Building

## Four Core Functional Skill Areas:

Social & Cognitive      Vocational  
Independent Living      Community Integration

## Assessing a baseline for each skill:

### *Thinking Skills:*

The ability to think about, think through and plan ahead for handling tasks or the desired plan

### *Doing Skills:*

The ability to carry out the task across different settings or environments

**How to  
Assess**

# Functional Skills Assessment

## Elements for identifying a baseline:

1. Identify the Skill Area
2. Away from Natural Supports
3. Create the real life environment(s)
4. Identify the time of day
5. Understanding the rubric



**Rubric**



## Prompt-Based Rubric

Pre-emerging Skill	> 5 Prompts
Emerging Skill	4-5 Prompts
Developing Skill	2-3 Prompts
Developed Skill	0-1 Prompts

Prompts are verbal or visual

Meet Jane

## Functional Skills Assessment Sample Form

Below is a sample of a portion of a Personal Safety Assessment form which gathers specific information on the student's skill level.

Student Name:	Jane Banks
Name of Assessor(s):	M. Poppins
Date(s) of Assessment:	1/14/1910
Location(s) of Assessment:	Banks' household and London community
Time Frame(s):	Afternoon, 2-4p
Environment (please describe if loud, busy, quiet, outside, inside etc.):	Light background noises in the house. Few people passing and greeting in community (Cherry Tree Ln)

Pre-emerging	Unable to demonstrate skill with continuous staff support and prompts.	>5 Prompts
Emerging	Able to demonstrate the skill with extensive prompting and support.	4-5 Prompts
Developing	Able to demonstrate the skill with moderate assistance or intervention.	2-3 Prompts
Developed	Able to demonstrate the skill with minimal assistance or intervention.	0-1 Prompts

Observe (Doing Skills)	Yes?	No?	Not Observed	Skill Level				Must list observations to substantiate your answer
				0-1	2-3	4-5	>5	
Evacuates building to a safe location. *Have them demonstrate this by stating the fire alarm is going off, show me where you would go.	X				X			Jane didn't know where to exit the house when the fire alarm went off (boast burning on the stove top). I prompted her to think about the doors exiting the house and to show me the way out. Jane began to cry because of the loud noise and when prompted to focus on safely exiting the house, she successfully led us outside.
Follows basic safety protocols and expectations to minimize personal risk. (i.e. doesn't dart into traffic, doesn't go for a walk in the dark without proper safety attire, does not harm themselves or others)	X					X		Jane inconsistently demonstrated the ability to maintain her personal safety when out and about in the community. She benefited from verbal reminders to look both ways at intersections and to look at traffic signalling. Jane was often distracted by conversation and walked into intersections 2 times, requiring direct instruction to "stop." Jane doesn't own a safety vest.
Calls 911, if applicable, in emergency situations.		X			X			Jane had never learned how to dial 911. I demonstrated how to call and verbally outlined the steps. Jane was able to successfully complete this skill.

# Functional Skills Assessment *Sample Form*

Below is a sample of a portion of a Personal Safety Assessment form which gathers specific information on the student's skill level.

Student Name:	Jane Banks
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<b>Pre-emerging</b>	<b>Unable to demonstrate skill with continuous staff support and prompts.</b>	<b>&gt;5 Prompts</b>
<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Able to demonstrate the skill with extensive prompting and support.</b>	<b>4-5 Prompts</b>

<b>Developing</b>	<b>Able to demonstrate the skill with moderate assistance or intervention.</b>	<b>2-3 Prompts</b>
<b>Developed</b>	<b>Able to demonstrate the skill with minimal assistance or intervention.</b>	<b>0-1 Prompts</b>

Observe (Doing Skills)	Yes?	No?	Not Observed	0-1	2-3	4-5	>5	Must list observations to substantiate your answer
Evacuates building to a safe location. *Have them demonstrate this by stating the fire alarm is going off, show me where you would go.	X				X			Jane didn't know where to exit the house when the fire alarm went off (toast burning on the stovetop). I prompted her to think about the doors exiting the house and to show me the way out. Jane began to cry because of the loud noise and when prompted to focus on safely exiting the house, she successfully led us outside.
Follows basic safety protocols and expectations to minimize personal risk. (i.e. doesn't dart into traffic, doesn't go for a walk in the dark without proper safety attire, does not harm themselves or others).	X					X		Jane inconsistently demonstrated the ability to maintain her personal safety when out and about in the community. She benefitted from verbal reminders to look both ways at intersections and to look at traffic signalling. Jane was often distracted by conversation and walked into intersections 2 times, requiring direct instruction to "stop." Jane doesn't own a safety vest.
Calls 911, if applicable, in emergency situations.		X			X			Jane had never learned how to dial 911. I demonstrated how to call and verbally outlined the steps. Jane was able to successfully complete this skill.

## Functional Skills Assessment *Sample Form*

Ask (Thinking Skill)	Understands question? Yes?	No?	Not Observed	0-1	2-3	4-5	≥5	Must list observations to substantiate your answer
What is an emergency?	X			X				Jane answered immediately, "Yes. When Michael takes my toys." I provided an example of a fire as an emergency and Jane replied, "Ah, fires, accidents, & my cousin passed away from tuberculosis. It was sad."
What emergency supports exist in the community?	X				X			Jane paused after this question and asked for an example of supports, to which I replied, people or places that provide help or information. She thought for a moment and asked me to reask the question, then replied, "policemen, bank tellers and librarians."
Describe the function of: Police, Firemen, ambulance/EMT.	X			X				With much enthusiasm and a smile on her face, Jane said "Policemen help people cross the street by my school. Firemen put out fires, of course. Ambulances come to places to help people who are sick and take them to the hospital."

Other Observations: *Please describe additional observations made that are not reflected above. For example, you may have noted that the individual was not dressed properly for the weather, were they hungry, distracted, etc. \*Please document observations made regarding their executive functioning skills. The primary areas of executive functioning include: adaptable thinking, planning, self monitoring, self control, working memory, time management, and organization.*

Overall, Jane required more prompts when "doing skills" verses for answering "thinking skills" questions. Many skills and concepts were newly introduced, but Jane exhibited each skill with prompts and demonstration of the skill ahead of attempting it herself. When out in the community, Jane required more direct instruction to maintain her personal safety. She often became distracted by other sounds and being in conversation with the assessor rather than paying attention to her surroundings.

Tally up the number of greens, oranges, yellows, and reds below

Accompanying Tools if needed:	Results	Developed	2	Developing	3	Emerging	4	Pre-emerging
Real life emergency situation?								
First Aid Kit *Physical mock kit assessor would need to bring								
Photos and visuals utilized								

**NOTES:**

# Time to Assess!

Which baseline skills would you  
like to test?  
Self-Advocacy



Let's  
Practice

# Functional Skills Assessment Overview

## Rationale:

Assessments are intended to provide a snapshot of an individual's ability to perform a functional skill to determine their progress and/or readiness to transition to a new phase of the program. At Vista, baseline assessments are part of the admissions process in the four core areas of:

<b>Cognitive &amp; Social/Emotional Development</b>	<b>Community Involvement</b>
<b>Life Skills</b>	<b>Employment</b>

Vista assesses over 35 skills within these four core areas. Knowing that all functional skills areas overlap and that an individual's performance may be different across a variety of settings, information is obtained through direct interaction and observation in a variety of both structured and naturally occurring settings, so it is essential to gather initial data inclusive of the individual and assessor's names along with date, time and location that the assessment is taking place.

**NOTES:**

# Alignment

Identified a baseline in functional skill areas

Baseline Informs Fit

Align family and student expectations and goals

Identify short & long-term support needs

Exploration of options or next steps

Step in  
Time



# *Step in Time*



*Step in time to align, Step in time to align  
So many reasons, I'll tell you why  
It's time to assess those skill baselines*

*Why we assess, to progress  
Through discomfort is success*

*Functional skills aren't taught in school  
doing, thinking components are so cool*

*Separate students from their team  
using various settings, is the theme*

*Keep your cool, use the assessments  
Present the pockets in all skill sets*

*Doing, thinking skill baselines  
Inform the team and one-of-a-kind*

*The counseling comes in once complete  
Finding the best fit program is so neat!*

*The admissions world is so complex  
Eligibility criteria tough to digest*

*Thank you all for such a great time!  
Advocates must step in time...*

# Learn More

Let's continue the conversation...  
visit our website or give me a call!



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Scan this QR code to download  
today's presentation materials, as  
well as inquire about Vista.



**"When the wind changes"**

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