



Westwood Regional Connect Program

Putting the pieces together Pre-K - Grade 8

Mission Statement

The Westwood Regional School District places an emphasis on inclusion and is committed to effectively educating students with Autism Spectrum Disorder through the Connect Program. Our Pre-K through grade eight ABA Autism program utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to address the individual needs of each student. It is our mission to appropriately support our students to not only meet their academic goals, but to also help them reach their full potential socially, emotionally, and behaviorally in order to become contributing members of society.

Vision

A nurturing environment where individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder learn, develop, and grow socially, emotionally and academically to become participating members of their communities.

Curriculum

Our ABA Autism Program provides each child with a specific curriculum that is individually tailored to their needs and directly connects to their IEP goals. This includes Discrete Trial Instruction (DTI) and various educational programs that are differentiated in accordance with each student's academic ability, as well as their social and emotional aptitude.

The academic components of the program focus on an array of supports that are necessary for students to be productive within the community, while also meeting their educational needs. The curriculum also facilitates everyday life skills that provide social and emotional aid to create independence within society.

Program Opportunities and Supports

- Inclusion opportunities appropriate to each child's ability
- Discrete Trial Instruction
- Support and collaboration between speech, occupational and physical therapies in accordance with IEPs
- 1:1 ABA and Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) trained aides
- Behavioral supports related to each student's needs
- On site Behaviorist
- Counseling
- Utilization of ReThink Software System
- Working relationships between school and home
- Parental involvement
- Home Programming
- Adaptive Specials (PE, Media, Spanish, Art, Music)
- Sensory Groups
- Social Skills Groups
- Life Skills/ Community Involvement
- Extended school year (ESY)

Inclusion

We provide a variety of inclusive opportunities as we integrate our students into the general education setting when appropriate. The objective is for our students to generalize academic and life skills by utilizing a natural transition into the greater school community. We provide an assortment of inclusive opportunities that are appropriate for each child. These opportunities are individualized to each student's progress academically, socially and emotionally.

Each student is affiliated with a general education classroom in accordance to their grade level. When appropriate our students have the opportunity to accompany the class to lunch, recess, specials and/or other events (class parties, field trips, etc.)

throughout the school year. When suitable, students can be integrated during academic periods with the support of paraprofessionals and general/special education teachers.

In addition, for our students who require more intensive supports we offer reverse inclusion opportunities where students placed in the general education classrooms push into our Autism program for social groups and to provide positive peer role modeling.

Adaptive Specials

Some of our students require more extensive supports, and as a result we provide them with opportunities to participate in small group adaptive specials that are tailored to their needs and ability levels. Each week these students participate in Adaptive Physical Education twice a week and Media, Art, Music and Spanish once a week. Through these specials our teachers create sensory based modified lesson plans that focus on each student's goals, while also connecting to their respective subject areas.

Therapies, Counseling, & Behavioral Supports

Our students are provided with physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and counseling, outlined in the IEP. Teachers and therapists work closely together to provide a collaborative educational experience for each child. In addition to individual therapy sessions, our related service providers collaborate with our teachers to integrate best practices into the classroom environment on a daily basis. In addition, behavioral supports are provided for each child and are individualized to meet their needs. We are staffed with a district behaviorist who analyzes our students' data, provides weekly consults to our teachers, and is on call for behavior management support when needed.

Trained Support Staff

Each classroom is staffed with Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) aides that are also trained in CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention). Our aides work 1:1 with our students on a rotating basis in order for our students to become familiar working with different adults as they practice generalizing their skills. In addition to collaborating during the school day, our aides, behaviorist, and teachers come together one morning a week to review data, discuss student progress and prepare for the upcoming week. Furthermore, the teachers and 1:1 aides utilize the ReThink software system to collect, graph, and analyze student data. Moreover, the ReThink program provides the staff with additional training through the utilization of instructional videos on how to effectively implement programs.

Teacher/ Parent Relationships

Our belief is that communication is an essential component in providing a quality education. Our program believes building positive relationships with caregivers is integral to facilitating a positive and meaningful transition between the school and home. As a result, daily communication logs are utilized to keep parents up to date on their child's progress.

Extended School Year (ESY)

Our Extended School Year program (ESY) allows students to maintain the skills they have learned throughout the school year, and reduces the chance of regression. During the month of July academic programming is provided along with social skills opportunities that continue to cultivate learning, growth, and development. ESY also provides the opportunity for each child to be serviced through the appropriate therapies they need in order to maintain their skills.