



Warren County Educational Service Center

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

Program Characteristics

- Provides a low student-to-teacher ratio, such as 2 students to one teacher.
- Systematically planned, developmentally appropriate educational activities aimed toward identified objectives created for each student.
 - Incorporation of evaluation systems that assess program-wide effectiveness in the areas of:
 - student progress towards mastery of IEP objectives
 - student's performance on State and District wide tests
 - including state alternate assessment
 - student's generalization of skills
 - student's progress toward long term outcomes
- At least once a month, a well known regional professional with experience in evidence based practices and methodology consults with each classroom in the program through classroom observations and interactions, and running a monthly team meeting

Personnel

- Interdisciplinary approach which consists of: intervention specialist, SLP, OT, PT, Program Supervisor, Educational Consultant, general education teacher, district representative, family
- Staff are knowledgeable and skilled in the areas specific to ASD:
 - Diagnostic Criteria and associated characteristics of ASD
 - Familiarity with assessment methods
 - Developing IEPs to meet the individual needs of each student
 - Adaptations and modifications in curriculum and environment
 - Strategies to improve social interaction skills
 - Strategies to improve communication
 - Classroom and individual behavior management techniques
 - Crisis Prevention Intervention
- Supervision of the program is conducted by personnel with knowledge and experience in ASD
- Intervention specialists are certified and highly qualified
- One full day of integrated Speech-Language services and Occupational Therapy Services
- Paraprofessionals receive specific and direct instruction and supervision regarding their IEP responsibilities for each student

- Staff is available in a ratio sufficient to provide the necessary support to accomplish IEP goals in general education classes, resource rooms.
- Staff participates in ongoing professional development activities to increase their knowledge and experience in the education of students with ASD

Family Involvement

- The program supports parents and family members as active participants in all aspects of their child's ongoing evaluation and education to the extent of their interests, resources, and abilities

Development of the Individualized Education Program

- The IEP identifies developmental, health, social-emotional, and behavioral needs
- While the IEP addresses a broad range of developmental and educational needs, it specifically includes the areas of:
 - Communication
 - Social interaction
 - Behavior and emotional development
 - Play and leisure time
- Goals and objectives
 - Related directly to the student's present level of performance and identified needs
 - Reflect parental input and family concerns
 - Are observable and measureable
 - Are selected to achieve long term outcomes
- The IEP identifies program modifications including environmental and instructional adaptations and accommodations which are in need to support the student
- Augmentative and alternative communication systems are provided with limited verbal abilities
- Opportunities for interaction with non-disabled peers are provided as appropriate

Curriculum

- Program utilizes curriculum that addresses the deficits of students with ASD, relates to the Ohio Learning Standards, and utilizes evidence based practices for persons with ASD
- The curriculum emphasizes the development of:
 - Communication/language
 - Social skills
 - Symbolic play
 - Academics
 - Self-management
 - Fine and gross motor skills
 - Generalization of skills
 - Vocational skills
- Curriculum focuses on maximizing independent functioning in home, school, vocational, and community settings.

Effective Instructional Methods

- Instructional methods have documented effectiveness and reflect empirically validated practices
- Methodology promotes maximum engagement in appropriate activities and targeted skill areas
- Instructional methods:
 - Emphasize the use of naturally occurring reinforcers
 - Promote high rates of successful performance
 - Encourage communication and social interaction
 - Encourage the spontaneous use of learned skills in different settings
- Methods are adapted to meet the range of age abilities, and learning styles of the students with ASD

Structured Environment

- Environment is simplified so that students can recognize the relevant information
- Classrooms have defined areas that provide clear visual boundaries for specified activities
- Environmental supports are available to increase the student's ability to:
 - Predict events and activities
 - Anticipate change
 - Understand expectations
- Communication toward and with students is geared toward their language abilities and is clear and relevant

Instructional Activities

- Instructional activities:
 - Enhance response opportunities
 - Are appealing and interesting
 - Promote active engagement of the student
 - Developmentally appropriate
 - Provide multiple opportunities for practicing skills identified in the IEP
 - Are when possible, embedded within ongoing and natural routines of home, school, and vocational settings.
- Activities use a variety of instructional formats
 - One on one
 - Small group instruction
 - Student initiated interactions
 - Teacher-directed interactions
 - Play
 - Peer mediated instruction
- IEP goals and instructional methods are compatible and complementary, the program uses components of different intervention approaches
- Instructional activities are adapted to the range of ages, abilities, and learning styles of students with ASD

Challenging Behavior

- The program has a classroom-wide behavioral system that
 - Defines expectations for appropriate behavior in all instructional settings
 - Uses proactive approaches (positive behavior supports) to prevent challenging behavior
 - Provides training for staff in recommended behavioral strategies
 - Incorporates data collection and analysis on a continuous basis during baseline, treatment, and follow-up period
- A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is used to direct intervention planning for persistent challenging behaviors. The FBA consists of:
 - Utilization of multiple methods
 - Identification of both immediate and non-school factors to predict occurrence or non-occurrence of challenging behaviors
 - Identification of one or more functions of behavior
- Behavior interventions include:
 - Teams assessment of the contributing factors which may include but are not limited to medical factors, circumstances out of school, curriculum, staff training, motivational systems, and student/teacher ratios
 - Environmental accommodations and adaptations to prevent or minimize occurrences of the problem behavior
 - Instruction in alternative, appropriate skills which address the identified function(s) of behavior
 - Positive supports and strategies
 - Focuses on long term outcomes
- Program has a policy and protocols for crisis intervention and provides staff with sufficient training in implementing protocols. Such documents typically vary from student to student. When a student's behavior constitutes imminent danger to self and others, the staff implements crisis prevention procedures as determined by the program protocol.