

THE

MIDDLE SCHOOL

PROGRAM

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Middle School Program provides the students with a comprehensive academic program, as well as instruction in Life Skills, Personal-Social Development, and Career Education. IEP goals and objectives are based on the student's current level of functioning and developed utilizing the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. An individual approach is used to teach and reinforce learning. At the middle school level, emphasis is placed on the practical application of learned skills in realistic life situations. The Middle School Program is designed to help students reach their full potential and successfully transition into the high school's Career Education Program.

GOALS

1. To develop academic skills in the nine areas of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS).
2. To assist students in acquiring life skills and personal-social skills so they can function as independently as possible in the home and in the community.
3. To emphasize the practical application of academics in the school setting, simulated work settings, and in the community.
4. To provide an introduction to Career Education which includes the exploration of student interests, the development of appropriate work behaviors and simulated work experiences in the school setting.
5. To provide a supportive environment and experiences that will promote improvement in self-esteem, behaviors and social interactions with peers and adults.

ENTRY CRITERIA

1. Eligible for Special Education Services as cited in N.J.A.C. 6A:14.
2. Chronological ages 10-14 years.
3. Identified as needing skill development in the practical application of academics.
4. Identified as needing a functional pre-vocational component in their program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Academic Skills:

The academic component of the program is based on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. Instruction is presented at the functional levels of the students. Individualized strategies and materials are utilized according to the varying needs, abilities and learning styles of the students. Computer technology is also incorporated into instruction. Communication skills are an integral part of all classroom activities. These skills are achieved through various modes of instruction, which may consist of speech, sign language, picture communication symbols, the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) or through the use of augmentative communication devices.

Life Skills:

This program component is designed to develop student independence in areas such as Nutrition, Food Shopping, Meal Planning, Food Preparation, Table Etiquette, Home Safety, Dressing, Clothing Care, and Civic Responsibilities.

Career Education:

This program component gives students the opportunity to participate in work experiences in the classroom and throughout the school. Students are involved in activities such as clerical skills, recycling, shredding, delivery services, environmental services, and development of the Middle School newspaper.

Physical Education:

These classes provide students the opportunity to participate in various games and activities while improving their health and fitness. Through these experiences, students develop a positive self -image, an understanding of teamwork and an appreciation of good sportsmanship.

Art:

Art activities serve to build student confidence and self-esteem. Students develop their creativity through individual projects and group projects, while also being exposed to art production, art history, and art appreciation. All activities encourage students to develop their listening skills, fine motor abilities, perceptual skills, and interpersonal relationships.

Music:

The music program provides a wide variety of activities and experiences including theory, movement, song, listening, instrument playing, and creativity. Some activities are structured so that visual and auditory receptive skills are emphasized. Other activities are left open to express the student's internal creativity through improvisation. Students are exposed to music technology as another tool for learning, performance, and creativity. The music activities help to refine students receptive and expressive communication skills by recalling and using skills and information that they have been taught. Social skills are also emphasized by turn taking, participating in group and partner activities, and active and passive participation in performances. The goal of the program is to provide the students with a positive interactive music experience as well as an outlet for their creativity.

Occupational Therapy:

This therapy provides training of functional skills needed to successfully perform activities of daily living. This includes the areas of self-care, such as personal hygiene, grooming and eating as well as work skills and leisure activities. Independent living skills are taught through the use of assistive technology such as environmental switches for use with computers or small appliances. A variety of strategies and techniques are also employed to ensure successful transition into the community and adult life.

Physical Therapy:

This therapy is directed toward a student's ability to function in school and/or work environment. A physical therapy evaluation can help determine any adaptations that may help place students in an appropriate work setting according to their physical and/or medical limitations. Ongoing physical

therapy can help prepare the student for successful life experiences by educating students about their physical limitations and maintaining their level of function.

Speech and Language Therapy:

At this level, Speech and Language Therapy focuses largely on speaker and listener skills. Pragmatic language is incorporated through small group communication classes. Clarity of speech, turn taking, relevant information, memory and body language are a few components addressed. All of these skills enhance communication for daily living and/or learning.