

SCA SELF-CONTAINED AUTISM PROGRAM

Autism programs are specifically designed to service students with autism, who require a highly structured, more intensively staffed program due to the severity of limitations in social skills, language, behavior, and independence. Program structure and model, methods and strategies are specific to students with autism. There are different levels of program offerings due to severity of disability, functioning levels, and concomitant disabilities:

- Level I: Mild Autism/Aspergers
- Level II: Moderate Autism/Mild Autism with potential retardation
- Level III: Moderate-Severe Autism with potential retardation
- Level IV: Severe Autism with significant retardation/behavioral deficits

Students placed in the Autism Program will have a diagnosis of autism (at least to a moderate degree) and demonstrate a significant need for a highly structured program that requires a smaller class size due to severely impacted communication, social/behavioral, academic, and/or self-care skills. Typically, independent skills will also be severely impacted.

The program is based upon the structured teaching model, a highly organized and visual approach. It incorporates daily-integrated language development activities, integrated sensory stimulation activities, academic skill development, and social skills development. The amount of on-on-one time for the students with any given professional will be decided upon by that professional, based upon the needs of the individual student. Varied methodologies are used to accomplish attainment of IEP goals and objectives and are selected by the professional staff, based on student need and progress.

Staffing for the Autism Program will be a minimum of one fulltime special education teacher, two paraeducators, and a part time speech-language pathologist. Occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, and other related services will be provided based upon individual students' IEPs. The maximum enrollment for this program varies according to the program level and student needs. Additional paraeducators will be added based upon identified student needs.

Speech-language services will be delivered using methods determined by the Speech-Language Pathologist. Services may be integrated, individual, small group, and/or whole class, depending on the skill and objective to be taught. Visual communication strategies using Boardmaker, PECS, etc. will also be an integral component of most programs for children with autism.

Curriculum will be based on AZ Functional Standards, AZ Academic Standards, and other needs identified through the evaluation and IEP process. Data collection to record student progress and achievement toward IEP goals and objectives will be a shared responsibility of all program staff.

The teacher is responsible for determining methods of communicating with parents concerning progress. Required quarterly progress reviews will be completed. The need for home visits and parent training will be determined through the IEP process.

Inclusion opportunities are made available for each student to the maximum extent appropriate. Length of day will be commensurate with non-disabled peers unless the IEP team determines otherwise.

Number and location of programs is based upon student need, residence, accessibility and space availability.