



Building Bridges



A place for fun,
friendship, and
development
through Applied
Behavior Analysis
Services



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TABLE OF CONTENTS



About the Program	Page 3
Highlights	Page 4-6
Circle Time Skills	Page 7
EL1 Craft Changes	Page 8-9
Tool Use	Page 10-11
Supporting Tolerance at Home	Page 12
Events	Page 13



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Our Mission:

Providing young children with autism the opportunity for individualized 1:1 support through ABA therapy in a group setting to prepare them for kindergarten. We will work to develop learners into the best versions of themselves, and ultimately develop the skills they need to approach kindergarten with confidence and pride.

Quick Facts:

- The Early Learner (EL) program is designed for children age 3-6 years old with approval for ABA services.
- Each learner has an RBT assigned to them throughout the day. Often a learner has at least two different therapists per day.
- The program is designed to replace preschool and teach key kinder-readiness skills.
- Learners attend Monday through Friday for an average 30 hours a week.



HIGHLIGHTS



CLASSROOMS

The Early Learner classrooms are intentionally set up to be developmentally appropriate per class level. The Early Learner 1 (EL1) classroom focuses on skills for a Special Education or an Inclusive Education kindergarten classroom. As for the Early Learner 2 (EL2) classroom, they focus on skills for General Education or Inclusive Education kindergarten classrooms. Each classroom is set up in order to prepare each learner for what it will be like in a natural school environment. All of the materials and resources are to help learners acquire the skills they need for success.

EL 1:

- Large rugs for group times
- Television for educational videos
- Bathroom in EL1
- Toy shelves
- Book corner
- Individual cubbies for learners
- Small Group Inclusion Table
- Designated art carts
- Alternative seating for sitting on the rug

EL 2:

- Large rugs for group times
- Smartboard in EL 2 for circle time interactive elements
- Designated Bathroom for EL2
- Toy shelves
- Book Corner
- Individual cubbies for learners
- Small Group Inclusion Table
- Designated art carts
- Name spots for sitting on the rug



LINING UP

- A large center gives us ample opportunities for hallway etiquette:
 - EL1 - walk in line with a line up rope
 - EL2 - walk in a line with some guidance from therapist if needed
 - Quiet voices "catching a bubble"
 - Walking feet
 - Line leader
 - More emphasis on walking behind a peer



CIRCLE TIMES

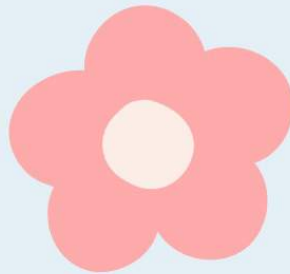
The rug replicates the spaces in which group times happen in a classroom. There are multiple seating choices to help each child work towards sitting independently without the assistance of a therapist or alternative seating.



CIRCLE TIME SKILLS

In the Early Learner Program, we focus on preparing our learners to soar into kindergarten with all the skills they need to be successful.

The program has a heavy emphasis on circle time and group activities. After observing kindergarten classrooms, we noticed how important it was for our learners to attend and engage in group settings.



During circle times, our therapists work with each child to tolerate sitting on the carpet, raising their hands, recognizing their names, and so much more! We also know how much early learners like to play with toys, and it is our goal to grow each learner's ability to engage in circle and group times free of toys and other distractions.

Our circle times are designed to teach your child all the skills needed for them to enter kindergarten feeling confident and ready for their journey as a student.

EL1 CRAFT CHANGES

EL 1 Crafts have a new look! Each day of the week learners will engage in fine motor activity themes that offer the chance to learn and grow! We have introduced a variety of craft activities in which the learners are introduced to new and circulating materials and experiences. Craft time always seems fresh and exciting because we are able to change it up. The skills learners acquire through participating in these activities can prepare them for more advanced activities in school and life.

- Mondays

- The prepared Dot Marker worksheets focus on:
 - Numbers
 - Nursery Rhymes
 - Letters
 - Animals
 - Shapes
- Dot Marker Activity Benefits
 - Practice motor imitation
 - Improve upon dexterity and hand control



- Tuesday

- Popsicle Stick Activity: Provides a deck of cards that present patterns or images for the learners to recreate or complete using popsicle sticks.
- Popsicle Stick Activity Benefits:
 - Hand eye coordination
 - Finger dexterity
 - Grip strength
 - Bilateral coordination



- Wednesday

- Cutting skills: Cutting with scissors can be fun, especially with variety. We rotate using play-doh, scoop, loop, and kid scissors.

- Cutting colorful strips
- Scoop scissors and pom poms
- Cutting streamers
- Cutting play-doh
- Cutting painters tape

- Benefits:

- Independent movements of each finger
- Strengthens hand muscles
- Bilateral coordination skills (two-handed coordination)
- Visual-motor skills (hand-eye coordination)
- Visual perception tasks (directionality)
- ****Lifelong skill****



- Thursday

- Pincer Grasp Activities: Learners have a lot of opportunities to engage in sensory experiences as well as gain exposure to a variety of tools and materials.

- Ripping paper
- Tracing
- Hole punchers
- Cotton ball painting
- Tongs and pom poms

- Benefits:

- Strengthen hand muscles
- Hand-eye coordination
- Finger mobility
- Practice for handwriting



- Friday

- Learners work to complete an advanced craft. These are the same crafts that the Early Learner 2 Classroom completes. This allows the learner to engage in a "take home craft" as well as see how all the skills they have been practicing come together.

TOOL USE

Have you ever thought about how often we use our hands to hold and manipulate objects throughout your day? We open doors, type messages, cut sandwiches, and so much more. As an early learner at A Bridge to Achievement, we often incorporate the use of gross and fine motor skills in our kindergarten preparation. Oftentimes encouraging our learners to color and cut during craft time can create some frustration. ABA focuses on skill building, shaping behaviors, and helping each individual be as independent as possible. We often recommend that if you find that your child has significant challenges completing motor movements to seek out Occupational Therapy (OT).



Learning to use and operate new tools can be difficult and you may notice that your child engages in challenging behaviors making it hard to teach a new skill. Here are some tips to use at home!

START SLOW

This could look like encouraging them to turn the pages as you read, you initiating zipping up their jacket and letting them zip the rest of the way, or even having them help you prepare their favorite snack!



MAKE IT FUN

While you are incorporating those slow starting techniques, don't forget to make the mundane exciting. Be cheerful and offer a lot of excitement to encourage them to keep trying and success will come with practice.



EXPOSURE

Being exposed to different activities that help your child's developing motor skills will likely increase your child's confidence when faced with the task of coloring, cutting, or building throughout kindergarten and beyond.



SUPPORTING TOLERANCE AT HOME

To increase your child's tolerance to transition to a difficult activity such as cleaning up toys, you can make it fun by playing a game or singing a song based on their personal preferences. You can also download a fun timer application to give warnings for upcoming transitions, help your child adapt to changes in a typical routine, and to lower frustration levels when introduced to different activities in the home.



As an alternative to online applications, you can create visual schedules or video models for different activities such as teeth brushing, washing hands, potty training, and your child's morning routine. When possible, try to have non-preferred activities happen before preferred activities. For example, you could say "first we will clean up our toys, then we will go outside and play!" If needed, a visual can be made with a picture of the non-preferred activity followed by the preferred activity to help your learner understand!

EVENTS



DARBY SAFARI

COME MEET THE ANIMALS!

HUTCHINSON LN
CHARLOTTE, NC
28216



CHARLOTTE - CONCORD

SEALIFE
AQUARIUM

SENSORY FRIENDLY SUNDAYS

(SECOND SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH 10AM-11AM)

811 CONCORD
MILLS BOULEVARD
CONCORD, NC
28027



A WALK FOR JOY,
AUTISM 5K
SIGN UP AT THE LINK
BELOW:

RUNSIGNUP.COM/RACE
/NC/CHARLOTTE/AW
ALKFORJOY