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ACCESS Academy

Goal Statement

The goal of ACCESS Academy is to provide a quality education to elementary and secondary-aged students with special needs or learning disabilities. The individualized academic curriculum is designed to enable each student to realize full social, educational, and employment potential.

Program

ACCESS Academy is a private non-profit school for children who require an intensive learning environment to master basic academic skills. Programs are individualized in order to meet the needs of each child and maximize their learning potential. We focus our attention on building a firm foundation of basic academic skills and social skills. We strive to prepare our students to successfully meet the challenges they will face in their next learning environment.

Classrooms Offered

K – 1	Nicole Cooper
1 – 3	Becky Terbrack
3 – 5	Kelly Arnold
4 - 7	Candace Chappell
High School	Suzanne Fullerton & Lindy Vint

Curriculum

Our specialized program offers curriculum designed to teach children with language learning disorders. The core components of our program utilize the Association Method and Growing With Math, along with many teacher-adapted materials. Supplemental types of activities are taught to assist students with science, social studies, history, social skills, problem solving, memory, and vocabulary. Related subjects and activities such as guest speakers, field trips, movement, music and art will be taught by a combination of in-house staff and community resources.

The teaching and therapy staff offers training to assist parents in understanding our curriculum and teaching methods so they can help their children at home.

All students will pay for pre-packaged school supplies so that they will have the exact items needed and also to take the burden off of the parents for finding them. We believe we are able to get a better price for families by offering this service.

Therapy Services

ACCESS Academy is a unique academic setting that utilizes an entire team to assist students in reaching their full potential. Our therapy staff is organized in classroom teams so that the teachers and students have a core group of professionals providing services. The teachers and therapy staff work together to develop an atmosphere that promotes the highest level of learning for each student. Therapists are available to assist the classroom teacher in programming as an aspect of our team approach. The teacher leads weekly team meetings where the team has a designated time to discuss classroom and student based issues, develop plans, and share information.

The ACCESS therapy team includes Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Physical Therapists. Therapy is delivered using several models a) pull out individual therapy, b) pull-out group therapy, c) individual therapy that is integrated into classroom activities. The delivery or combination of therapy models is individualized for each student. Setting up our environment and delivery of services to enhance learning potential is an ongoing process for each student.

Therapy is an important aspect of our program. It is one of the unique components of our school and has greatly contributed to the overall success of our program. All therapy staff are trained in the Association Method so specific skills can be addressed in therapy or used as reinforcement activities during therapy. Each student has a bin of materials kept in the classroom. This bin contains their Association Method phoneme cards, word cards, and picture cards as well as math fact cards and other curriculum that is specific to that student's level of work. When the therapists or other staff members work with students, these materials are available to use so that we are working on their specific skills.

The education of our students is the most important component of our school. However, the quality education we offer could not be achieved without our dedicated therapy staff. Therapists work with the teaching staff to design the most effective techniques and tools to use with each student. The team then identifies therapy and education goals that are the most vital objectives for each student.

The ACCESS Schools model was developed by the founders so that each child attending has every opportunity to realize their full academic and therapeutic potential. In order to provide school and therapy services with the quality and intensity required to ensure maximal progress, we must control all of the programmatic variables. Therefore, we require that students receive all of their therapy services from ACCESS Schools.

The Evaluation Center

The ACCESS Evaluation Center provides psycho-educational and therapy evaluations, comprehensive educational resources, educational diagnoses, and recommendations, for children, adolescents and young adults.

Cheri Stevenson, Speech-Language Pathologist is the Director for this program. Joining her team are Sabine Falls, Ph.D Clinical Psychologist; Susan Jeter, LPE, Psychological Examiner; Annabel Johnson, Speech-Language Pathologist, Renee Bennett, Physical Therapist, and Krysta Rupp, Occupational Therapist. The center has the best team in Arkansas for educational and therapy evaluations, diagnostics and also hosts a lab for students to “access” educational tools that enhance their learning and assist them with study skills. Janice Edmonson, Speech-Language Pathologist administers the lab; which is complete with equipment, software, and a sample study station. Supplemental services include home/school consultations, training, tutoring and setting up learning environments and creative strategies to assist with organization and study skills. The evaluation center will serve ACCESS Schools students, as well as, students in other schools in the surrounding area. Families interested in these services will need to contact the front office.

We also offer Developmental Evaluations for children ages birth to five years. Our expert team consists of a special educator, speech-language therapist, physical therapist and occupational therapist. Referrals can come from parents, physicians, teachers, and other early intervention programs.

Homework

We assign daily homework activities (Monday through Thursday) that are individualized for each child. All work is designed to reinforce learning and mastery of skills. Parents will receive a homework notebook that contains daily homework sheets that lists their child’s assignments. The homework assignments must be completed. Many of the assignments require parent interaction for their completion. Parents are to initial each homework assignment completed. Because of the frequently assigned “oral” assignment, this assists the teacher in knowing when all assignments are completed. Students are not required to use pencil and paper to complete assignments unless specified. For example, students may complete written assignments by using the chalkboard or dry erase board.

Parents are provided with parent training after school is underway. This training will educate parents about the Association Method and other teaching methods used.

Parent Involvement

ACCESS Academy requires each parent to be an active participant in their child's education and school.

1. The families are encouraged to give staff constructive feedback at any time. You are encouraged to discuss any problems with your teacher or the coordinators.
2. Parent surveys will be completed at the end of the school year. We need everyone to participate in this process because we use your input to assist our staff in making our programs more effective.
3. Parents are required to attend the Association Method training so that they understand the teaching method and can assist their child in completion of homework assignments.
4. Other parent training opportunities will be provided throughout the school year on topics related to children with special needs. Input from parents will assist the staff in organizing parent-training sessions.
5. A small resource library is available for parents. You can contact the administration office if you are interested in checking out any of these items. Parents are welcome to contribute resources that they are no longer using.
6. On site visits are best handled by appointment, but we do have an open door policy. Without an appointment, staff may not be able to visit with parents, but parents are welcome to observe as long as it does not interfere with programming and the confidentiality policy is not broken.
7. Educating the community about ACCESS Schools is accomplished through sharing with friends, family and neighbors about our programs. Visitors are welcome and the information about our services will be shared with them. (See visitors section)

ACCESS Parent Association

The ACCESS Parent Association (APA) is our organized parent group. When participating in this group, parents have the opportunity to assist the school while getting to know other families. Activities will be planned including parent outings, small fundraising events, and projects that will help with school activities. The mandatory membership fee is \$15.00 annually per family. Please sign-up orientation night or contact Stephanie Beall.

Please make being an active part of this group a priority! If all our parents became an active participant, the entire school would benefit greatly. ACCESS Schools needs parents who are willing to help at whatever level they can. Anyone can make a difference... the only requirement is time.

2008 – 2009 ACCESS Parent Association Officers

Stephanie Beall, President	(501) 803-0525 home
Girlsmom2@sbc global.net	(501) 650-6209 cell
Ashley Stuckey, Vice-President	(501) 868-6375 home
stuckeyville@comcast.net	(501)772-4167 cell
Clarke Delp, Sec.-Treasurer	(501) 664-2794 home
cc_sos@comcast.net	(501)413-8542 cell

Booster Club

The ACCESS Gators Booster Club is a group of parents whose primary goal is to ensure that our Special Olympics program is completely funded. The Booster Club raises money through various small fundraisers throughout the year to support ACCESS athletics.

Fundraising

ACCESS Academy welcomes a parent's help with raising money and receiving in-kind donations from businesses and corporations. Tammy Simmons, Chief Executive Officer, must approve all fundraising activities and solicitation of gifts.

1. **Before** approaching a business or company about a donation, you must contact Beth Johnson, Development Director.
2. Once the solicitation is approved, the parent will fill out a carbonized in-kind donation form for any in-kind donations accepted. The parents will then present the original copy to the individual/company and the copy to the administration office. Please ask for any needed assistance in completing the forms.
3. Parents may feel free to write personal thank you notes to entities or individuals they have solicited. ACCESS staff will send a thank you note for the gift containing all the necessary information for their taxes.
4. The organization must reserve the discretion to refuse any gifts on the basis of space and utilization/need.
5. The parent organization "ACCESS Parent Association" may outline some fundraising projects for the parent group.

Visitors

Visits to our school by prospective ACCESS Academy parents, residents of the community, and interested educators are welcomed. In order to protect the educational programs from undue disturbance, the school requires that people wishing to visit must make appointments. There are designated days for these activities. All visitors must register at the school office at the front entrance.

We want to extend an open door policy at our school for parents. However, it is important for parents to consider the disturbance of students during their visit.

Many of our students are very distractible and some students do not exhibit typical behaviors when guests are present.

Parents may observe class or therapy. However, we cannot accommodate several parents on a given day. Making an appointment will help to prevent this situation from occurring.

School Day

Regular School Term (August - May)

Students may arrive as early as 7:30. From 7:30 until 8:00, we offer morning care. Our actual school day is from 8:00 until 2:55 during the regular school year.

Summer Months

Our summer schedule starts in June. During the summer months, our actual school day is on a shortened schedule. The school day is from 8:30 until 12:00. From 7:30 until 8:30, we offer morning care. We know that students with learning differences need to attend school year round in order to reach their full potential and also in order to not lose academic skills. We have created a learning environment specifically for your child therefore your child's attendance is crucial!

Extended Care

Any ACCESS Academy student may arrive as early as 7:30 for school. Students may stay as late as 5:30 if they are enrolled in extended care. Extended Care is available from 2:55 until 5:30 during the regular school year for **working parents only**. This service is not part of our educational day. Extended care cost of \$75.00 is billed per month for the regular school year. Students must be enrolled in the extended care program to participate. Enrollment in this program is based on staff availability to ensure proper staff to student ratios.

See the ACCESS Adventure section for information on the summer program, which is offered from 12:00 till 5:30 during the summer schedule.

We do have a drop-in policy for Extended Care in order to assist families in case of an emergency or a situation where parents need childcare on a given day. You must call the front desk for approval of drop-in services. Your approval of a drop-in is based on staff availability to ensure proper staff to student ratios. Cost of drop-in is \$15.00 per day.

Some students may do their homework during extended care. However, we do not have the same staff to student ratio as during the school day. Therefore, each student may not receive the "one-on-one time" necessary to complete their

assignments. (Parents are still responsible for checking homework and initialing completed assignments.)

Students must be signed out of after-school care with the staff member in charge. Students who stay for extended care **must** be picked up by 5:30 p.m. Parents will be billed \$5.00 per minute after that time. There will be no exceptions to this policy. If a parent is late three afternoons, extended care privileges **will be** withdrawn.

Students of working parent(s) must be enrolled to attend the after school extended day program.

Some students receive therapy outside the school day. Parents will pick-up children from therapy who are not enrolled in the extended care program in the office waiting area at their designated time. Our office is open from 8:00 until 5:30 each day.

Arrival and Dismissal

School begins at 8:00 a.m. We have a strict policy that the children must be at school, in their assigned place, and ready to start the day at 8:00. This means that students must arrive prior to this time so that they are ready to start school at the appropriate time. The school day is completed at 2:55. We expect all children to be picked-up in a timely manner at the completion of our school day.

Car Rider

Students who are leaving at 2:55 will wait for their ride in “car rider line”. Please remember that car rider line is not the place for conversations. If you need to talk to someone, **please park**. Many of our parents are on a strict time frame and conversations “slow-up” our entire process.

Any student who is left in the car rider line at 3:10 will be sent to extended care. The parents will be charged a drop-in fee of \$15.00 for extended care.

Lunches

Lunchtime is divided into two groups. The groups are divided by age. “First Lunch” is 12:00 – 12:30 and will be students who are ages 5 years to 10 years at when school starts. The First Lunch recess is 12:30 – 1:00. The “Second Lunch” is from 12:30 – 1:00 and is for students 11 years and up. The corresponding recess for this group is 12:00 – 12:30. (Students will remain in the same lunch schedule throughout the year despite birthdays.)

Lunches may be brought from home; however, they cannot be refrigerated or heated. You have the option to buy or milk or juice from the cafeteria. Please make sure your child's lunch is nutritional and well balanced.

You also have the option to buy a school lunch. There is a monthly menu and the lunch count is taken in each classroom every morning by 8:30 am. If your child is tardy you will need to stop by the front desk and let the receptionist know that your child will need a lunch. All lunch money is to be turned into the teacher.

School Store

The High School classroom will run a school store as a function of their classroom curriculum. This store will be open during designated school hours and will be available so that students may purchase school supplies, snack food, reinforcement items, and other items. The students may purchase items at the store during those times. The purchase of school supplies and snack food would require money from home.

Dress Code

Students may **not wear flip-flops, crocs** or any other types of shoes (bulky or strappy) that make it difficult for them to walk around our facility or participate in school activities. Students must have a pair of athletic shoes each day to participate in our physical fitness program and other school activities. Tennis shoes are the best choice!

Students may not wear shirts that have inappropriate characters or messages on them. It is not appropriate for undergarments to show or to wear extremely tight clothing. Student's shorts need to be an appropriate length – complete coverage in standing, walking, and sitting.

Electronics

ACCESS does not allow electronic devices, Ipad, cd's, game boys, play stations, digital, video, or standard cameras, or cell phones.

Attendance

School attendance is obviously vital to your child's progress. The ACCESS Staff have gone to great measures to ensure that we are available to perform therapy and classroom activities that are necessary for maximal progress. Therefore, it is very important that the school office is notified about a student's absence because of the level of individualized teaching/learning that is done on a daily basis. There is also

a great impact on therapy schedules as well. Following a few guidelines make it easier for our staff:

1. Poor attendance directly effects student progress and may effect continued placement at ACCESS Academy.
2. Please provide the office with any information about absences, arriving late or leaving early! We do not want the teaching staff or therapist burdened with remembering to notify the office or other staff, regarding absences etc.
3. Parents are required to call the office by **8:00** on that school day if their child will not be attending. Parents may leave a message on the answering machine prior to 8:00 a.m. or after 5:30 p.m.
4. If the parent(s) know ahead of time that their child will be absent (i.e., vacation, doctor's appointment, etc.) we ask that you notify the office as soon as you know the dates.
5. In the event of a therapist being absent, children may not receive their designated therapy that day or a different therapist may see them.
6. We will make every attempt to schedule make-ups for therapy. Ricky Cooper, Therapy Coordinator will schedule make-ups (they must be done in the same week missed) when possible.

An ACCESS Academy student cannot miss more than 13 unexcused days during the August to May school year. There will be a letter sent to the parent(s) upon the 6th missed day informing you of school days missed. On the 12th missed day the parents will receive another letter informing them that the next missed school day your child will be on probation. Also at that time the prosecuting attorney will be notified of your child's truancy. Due to the seriousness of this problem your child may be in jeopardy of being dismissed from ACCESS.

During the summer months each ACCESS student is required to attend a minimum of 80% of the school days and therapy. When a student falls below the expected minimum of attendance the office will contact parents. Ricky Cooper, Therapy Coordinator, will contact parents of students attending therapy sessions less than 80% of the time in one month. Snow days or staff cancellations will not be included in the 80% attendance policy. The situation will be discussed and options chosen to correct the attendance problem.

Tardy School Arrival

All students must be at their desk (or designated morning area) and ready for class **no later than 8:00**. Parents must organize their arrival time to allow this to happen each day. Our students are very distracted by late arrivals and these occurrences disrupt the entire class.

When a student is tardy he/she **must be checked into school at the front desk by the parent**. We will no longer tolerate constant interruptions in the classroom by late students. When a student is tardy three times this will count as one unexcused absence. Failure to adhere to these rules will jeopardize your child's enrollment.

The following guidelines will be implemented to help alleviate tardy arrivals:

1. The tardy policy will become effective one week after the opening of each school year to allow students and parents time to make needed changes to ensure timely arrivals.
2. After 3 tardy arrivals (one unexcused absence) the parent will receive a letter from our office.
3. If the pattern of tardy school arrival continues, our office will call for a parent meeting.
4. Tardy arrivals will accumulate on a semester basis and will be documented on the report cards.
5. A habitual inability to adhere to the tardy policy may place a student's school placement in jeopardy.

Early Departure

Any student leaving early **must** checkout with the office. The parent must come in and check the student out. We cannot and will not send a student out to the parking lot at any time!

Tuition and Enrollment

Parents will be charged a flat monthly fee regardless of a child's attendance. The payment is due via bank draft by date selected at the time of enrollment (either the 1st or 15th of each month).

By enrolling in ACCESS Academy, parents are committing to a full year's tuition. If parents choose to discharge their child from ACCESS Academy, they will be responsible for paying the remaining tuition for that school year. ACCESS Academy will aggressively seek payment for the balance of the unpaid tuition.

Tuition Assistance

ACCESS Academy is committed to offering financial assistance. Our goal is to help eliminate finances as a barrier to accessing our services. Interested parents must fill out an application for tuition assistance by the January before the new school year. Applications can be obtained in the school office. Each tuition assistance application will be reviewed by a committee and will be granted based on availability of scholarship funds and family need. Interested parents should request an application from the administration office in January.

All tuition assistance recipients must adhere to all school policies including (a) on time school arrival (b) volunteer hours (c) 80% attendance (d) completion of homework and (e) maintaining their portion of the financial agreement. Failure to follow these school policies will result in termination of the tuition assistance opportunity.

Snow Day Policy

In case of inclement weather, parents of ACCESS Academy students must listen to local broadcastings for school closings, late arrival or early dismissal. The broadcasting will be listed as **ACCESS Schools**. When ACCESS Schools is closed for snow, all offices will be closed and therapy services will be canceled.

Reports/Conferences

A skill-based report card describing student progress will be completed three times a year for students in Kindergarten through Ms. Candace's room. Students in High School will have their progress reported through their individual transition plans (ITP). Parents will be given the opportunity to review and discuss their child's academic performance on each occasion. Please consult your school calendar for the schedule of conferences for your child's classroom. Your classroom teacher will conduct conferences. Each conference will be scheduled for 30 minutes. Any issues that cannot be resolved or discussed within this time frame must be held for an additional meeting. This meeting will include some time for problem solving in cases where students are not meeting expected progress levels.

The classroom teacher, parents, and the education director or chief operations officer are available for parent conferences. Therapists do not regularly attend these meetings. A written update of progress will be provided from each therapist. However, parents may certainly request a meeting regarding therapy at any time.

Yearly School Placement

School placement at ACCESS Academy will be recommended on a yearly basis and will be determined with the following variables:

1. School attendance – regular attendance, timely school arrival and departure
2. Therapy attendance
3. Homework
4. Student Progress
5. Most appropriate school environment
6. Behavior

Parent Communication

Communication is a vital component of our program. Parent conferences provide information three times a year regarding programming. However, this is not

frequent enough parent/teacher/therapist communication! We do have several communication options for our staff to send and receive information on a regular basis:

1. Homework notebooks – There is a comment section on each individual homework sheet. Teachers and parents can communicate daily information in this section.
2. Therapy notes– Each child has a section in the homework notebooks that contains information about the child’s therapy schedule, goals and paper for notes. Each therapist is asked to write a note one time a week to let you know about therapy issues and progress. We request that parents check the notebook regularly to this section to stay abreast of therapy information. Parents may also use this notebook to address concerns, ask questions, etc.
3. Parents have the freedom to call a team meeting or request a meeting with their teacher or a specific therapist. Please be respectful of the staff’s time by scheduling a meeting in advance instead of just “dropping by” to talk.
4. ACCESS Academy newsletters will include helpful information about our school activities. We will also share information related to the specific areas we will study through our thematic units.
5. Please use communication notebook, calling, or setting up a meeting since email is not an option for parents to teachers.
6. All notes from teachers/staff will be sent home every Thursday of the week. This will allow you to know to look in your child’s backpack every Thursday for correspondence from ACCESS.
7. When a deadline is set there will be no exceptions due to the coordinating of staff, students, food, etc.

Illness

No child is to attend school if:

1. Running a temperature 100 degrees
2. Broken out with a rash that is undiagnosed
3. A contagious disease (chicken pox, impetigo, etc.)
4. More than two incidences of diarrhea while in attendance
5. Vomiting

A child must be free from fever for a 24-hour period of time or on an antibiotic for 24 hours in order to return to the program. A child should be free of diarrhea and/or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to the program.

If your child gets sick at school the office will:

- a) Isolate the child until he/she can be picked up

- b) Call the family and/or emergency number to arrange for the child to be picked up *immediately!* We do not have a sick area or staff to support a sick child.

If your child has been absent for an extended period of time or has a contagious condition, the school requires a note from the physician clearing the child to return to school.

Medication

If an ACCESS Academy student is in need of oral medication during school hours, ACCESS Academy staff will administer the medication with written permission from parents and with a doctor's orders.

All medication must be in the original bottle. If a prescription, the bottle must have child's name, date, dosage and doctor's name on the label. If the medication is to be given daily, a bottle will be kept at school in a locked medication box. When empty, the bottle will be sent home for parents to refill.

All parents must complete and sign a medication form. A medication log containing these forms will be kept in a central location to document administration of medication.

ACCESS Academy staff are unable to accept prescriptions to administer medication "as needed" with the exception of an EPI-pin, an injection for allergic reaction to wasps/bees.

All information regarding medication is confidential. Medication is kept in a locked box with the medication logbook. Parents may not have access to this area. Staff will assist you by placing your child's medication in the appropriate place and documenting that activity in the log.

Your child will have an individual medication report in the logbook. The assigned staff will document all medications given. You may ask to see your child's report or receive a copy of this log at any time.

If there is a medication change for your child and it is a blind study to gather unbiased information, you must let one person know about the change in case of emergency!

In case of a serious medical emergency, the school will contact 911 first and then the parent. We will have a copy of the medical release form and the daily medication log ready when the emergency medical personnel arrive.

Incident/Injury Report

Accident/Injury reports will be completed regardless of severity.

Staff is responsible for filling out and having the parents sign an incident report for the following situations:

1. Student is hurt any time they are on ACCESS Academy premises– before, during and after programming time period.
2. Sibling or family member is hurt while on our premises.
3. Staff person or another student is hurt while interacting with your child.
4. Other incidents involving your child that warrants reporting.

The form will be completed on the day of the incident or injury. ACCESS Academy teacher/coordinator will initial the report. A copy of the report is filed and the parent receives a copy.

Behavior Management

ACCESS Academy is committed to assuring a school climate that is appropriate for students to learn while their safety and welfare is ensured. Because of the educational emphasis of our school and the success of our program, we must strive toward acceptable and appropriate behavior. Therefore, social skills and behavior training is intended to help students understand their obligations to others in the school setting and the role of rules at school and other settings.

Social skills and discipline should be taught and directed to develop skills necessary for students to:

1. Solve problems effectively
2. Develop positive relationships with others
3. Follow classroom and school rules
4. Develop a responsibility for his/her actions
5. Respect the property of others and the school
6. Develop self-discipline, sensory regulation, and coping mechanisms
7. Find appropriate ways to express emotions
8. Learn in a group setting
9. Share and take turns
10. Use manners and polite behavior
11. Learn study skills
12. Learn to work independently

Each classroom has a behavior management program as a component of their individual classrooms. Each classroom teacher will explain the behavior management program during parent orientation.

If the classroom behavior management system is not effective, teachers will call a parent meeting to discuss possible solutions to the problem. (Please refer to criteria in the “Admission” section for the policy regarding behavior.) ACCESS Academy does not allow physical and/or verbal abuse of staff, students, or families.

Field Trips

In order for ACCESS Academy to have field trips this year, we must have parent participation. The new law regulating car seat usage now requires any child 6 years or younger or 60 pounds or less to be in a car seat. Field trips may have to be canceled if we do not have enough help to transport children.

Parents who agree to help with a field trip should plan to concentrate on their child and his/her classmates during that time to ensure their safety. Siblings are a distraction for the parent, teacher, and the particular class involved. Consequently, **siblings are not permitted to be included in field trips.**

Each child must have a signed permission form from his parent/guardian before leaving the building. If a parent declines the field trip for their child, they must remain at home.

The ACCESS Bus will be used for field trips. Depending on available seating for students, parents may or may not be able to ride on the bus if they are attending the field trip.

Special Activities

School Sponsored Activities

ACCESS Academy is sponsoring special activities throughout the school year for students. This would include activities such as dances, movie nights, ball games, etc. All activities will have a deadline and chaperoned by ACCESS Staff. In an effort to better meet the needs of each age group this year, we are breaking the activities down into two groups.

- Youth Activities: Academy students Kindergarten-12 years old
- Teen Activities: Academy students ages 13 and up

There will be a fee (it will vary depending on the activity) for participating in each activity. This fee is due by sign-up deadline of the activity. This fee will pay for the activities and staff to cover the supervision. Dates for activities will be posted

in the monthly school calendar. If your child misses school they cannot attend the youth/teen activity that day.

School Of Character

The character education program will place special emphasis on good character traits. Each month we will highlight a trait and its meaning, and reward students that display that character trait. We end each month with a character assembly complete with skits, awards, and student performances.

Gator Girls

All female students will have the opportunity to try-out for our spirit team, the Gator Girls. Try-out will be held after school and the date and time will be on the monthly school calendar. Each girl in this program will be required to order a uniform and attend practice on a regular basis. All practices will be held after school from 3:00 to 4:00. The Gator Girls will perform at school assemblies and other functions throughout the year.

Student Council

Elected class representatives and officers will make-up the school student council. The student council will meet to assist with school activities including:

- ❑ Mock Election
- ❑ School Assembly
- ❑ Car Wash
- ❑ Bake Sale
- ❑ Prom
- ❑ Morning Patrol
- ❑ Halloween Booth
- ❑ School Dances

ACCESS Adventure

Our summer program, ACCESS Adventure, is offered to all Academy students. The fee for this program is \$800.00 for the summer. This program is offered from 12:00 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. Students participate in many fun activities that promote teamwork, social skills, leisure skills, community awareness, and physical fitness. Activities include swimming, bowling, movies, field trips, art, music, and much more. However, the most important component is FUN. The main objective is to participate in quality activities and to have a great time. The family must **enroll** their child to be a part of ACCESS Adventure; the students are not automatically enrolled.

Music and Art

Our fine arts program features music, art and drama. These activities will be integrated into the curriculum and/or through specific activities. We use a combination of staff and volunteers for these programs.

Music is the universal language, giving students an opportunity to develop self-assurance and great communication skills. Each student from Kindergarten through high school has music classes each week. The classes focus on exposure to all genres of music, music history, and basic theory. They experience lessons to develop skills and just for exposure. Methods of musical expression include vocal, instruments, rhythm, and movement.

The music department has a number of opportunities for students with special musical abilities.

1. Percussion/Handbell Ensemble - This group plays handbells and works with untuned percussion instruments, as well. An audition only group, it is open to students from Ms. Becky's class and up.
2. Boy's Choir - This group works to achieve a polished male vocal ensemble sound, while working on stage presence, as well. An audition only group, the Boy's Choir is open to students from Ms Nicole's class through High School.
3. Girls' Ensemble This select group is designed for older girls who exhibit musical gifts; these girls continue to develop blend and expressive musical performance while incorporating some choreography. The age group is usually from Ms. Kelly's class up, but exceptions may be made in the event of a very gifted younger student.

Dress for all groups, including music class members is black pants or skirts and a black long sleeved shirt and white shirt, long or short-sleeved.

Special Olympics

Students 8 years and older and with developmental disabilities diagnoses have the option of participating in Special Olympics. We have a track team, swim team, and kickball team. There are no fees associated with the sporting events. However, there may be a uniform fee. There is a fee for the end of the year Sports Banquet. We will work with the students in order to determine which events would be most appropriate. Additional information on meets and activities will be announced throughout the year.

Library

Our library will be available for students, staff and parents to checkout books and other materials. Students will go to the library on a regular basis with their classroom. Instructional activities will be offered so the students know how to use a library, select a book, and the checkout and check-in procedures.

Gardening

In an era of instant gratification and fast-moving technological innovation, there's a lot to be said for getting back to our roots, digging in the dirt, sowing a bit of seed, and watching life spring out of the ground. Our school gardens are an outdoor classroom where students explore, learn and enjoy nature. The school gardens are complete with beautiful flowers and shrubs, with beds that teach certain gardening principles. Our perennial beds demonstrate the longevity of plants that can withstand the elements and thrive each year. Our cut flower beds provide students with a place to learn about the artistic elements in arranging flowers using color, texture and form. We also have butterfly gardens, weather garden, pond and waterfall area, bird sanctuary and woodland gardens. Finally, students learn about recycling in our compost station and worm farm.

In addition to our garden spaces, we have an amphitheater and an outdoor classroom area. These space are available, not only for our gardeners, but for all classrooms. Each garden has many elements that can be used in math, science and literature.

Students participate in weekly gardening lessons where they learn about plant science, gardening principles, the horticulture industry and the natural world.

Telephone Calls

Teachers are not available to take phone calls during class time. The office will gladly connect you to voice mail so you can leave a message. Your child's teacher can return your call during a break time if you must speak with her during the school day. If you have an emergency, the office staff will assist you in whatever way they can. Please remember that your child's teacher must utilize available time before and after class for classroom preparation.

Therapists may not receive phone calls during therapy. It will be necessary to leave a message if you want to talk to your child's therapist. Please feel free to leave a note in the therapy notebook or a message on your child's therapist's voice mail.

Client Files

Confidential student files are kept in the administrative office in a locked file cabinet.

HIPAA Statement

ACCESS Schools is dedicated to maintaining the privacy of your child's individual health information as protected by law, including the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). In conducting our business, we will create records regarding your child and the treatment and services we provide to your child. We are required by law to maintain the confidentiality of health information that identifies your child. We also are required by law to provide you with this notice of our legal duties and privacy practices that we maintain at ACCESS Schools concerning your child's protected health information (PHI). By federal and state law, we must follow the terms of the notice of privacy practices that we have in effect at the time.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of all information found in the client's record shall be protected.

1. All information in the records is classified as confidential.
2. No information from the student's record/file is to be released except as that permitted by regulation or unless proper authorization to do so is received from the parent/guardian.
3. It is preferred that all requests be made in writing. Information from the records can be released via telephone if proper procedure is followed.
4. There will be no charge for copies of records sent to other agencies.
5. Other individuals will be charged a fee no greater than the amount that is required to make the reproduction.
6. Clinical interns may use records only if there is written authorization signed by the parent/guardian.
7. It is acknowledged that the parent or guardian has a right to review the contents of the records, but ACCESS Academy reserves the right to schedule a time for such a request.
8. All records will be stored in a secure area and protected from the use of unauthorized individuals.
9. An employee of ACCESS Schools cannot release information that did not originate within our organization.

Release of Information

Proper authorization to release information from a client's records shall be identified as a written document containing all the following information:

1. Student's name
2. Date

3. A description of the information to be released and why the recipient requires it.
4. A release of information form must be signed by the parent each time information is requested.

Student, Parent, & Guardian Rights

When parents are divorced, the school requires that a custody statement be on file in the office specifying whether or not the school may release the child or release information to the non-custodial parent. No child will be released to a person other than the parent or legal guardian or designee of the legal guardian.

All parents must complete a child access sheet for authorization of designees who are permitted to pick-up their child. We will refer to this document if anyone other than the parent comes to pick-up your child. Your designee must be prepared to show picture identification (driver's license).

Maltreatment Reporting

Any employee of ACCESS Academy is considered a mandated reporter of any "suspected" child mistreatment. Staff having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, shall immediately report this to the Child Maltreatment Hotline: 1-800-482-5964. This number is also posted in the school entrance hallway. A written report to the local DHS office will follow and will be kept in a confidential file accessed by the Executive Director. These reports will not be placed in a student's personal file.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) requests you be notified that your child may be subject to interviews at any time by child care licensing or The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Special Investigations, and Law Enforcement for investigative purposes and/or for determining compliance with licensing regulations.

Emergency Drills

ACCESS Academy staff will follow the emergency drills one time each month for tornado and fire. These emergency plans of action will stay posted in the school building. The documentation of these drills will be kept in a file in the administration office. Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and emergency backup lighting will be checked on a regular basis.

Admissions

ACCESS Academy currently admits students meeting established criteria kindergarten through high school without regard for race, religion, ethnic origin, gender or disability. Each applicant is individually interviewed and tested by the admissions team. The tests and interview results are used to determine the best

placement for every student. If it is determined that ACCESS Academy cannot meet the educational requirements of a student, the admissions team meets with the parents to explain why the school cannot place their child.

Criteria

Admission to ACCESS Academy will be based on the following:

- Language age of the student – A student must have a language age of at least 3 years when entering the Kindergarten and Ms. Becky’s classrooms, to participate in the teaching approach, the Association Method.
- Behavior – Our school is not staffed to accommodate students who exhibit disruptive and/or aggressive behaviors. Any student whose primary barrier to learning is a behavior disorder will be referred to an appropriate setting to address those needs.
- IQ and School Achievement – Each student’s records documenting Intelligence Quotient and School Performance will be evaluated to determine if the student’s profile meets the educational teaching style of this program. Students who exhibit an IQ below 65 may not be considered due to the intense academic nature of this program.
- Oral Expression – Due to the specialized curriculum that ACCESS Academy uses each student must be a verbal communicator.
- Written Expression – Each student must have the ability to write with his or her hands.

Interested parties will be selected based on openings in the classroom and age of the child. Furthermore, a diagnostic session at the school will be used when a child’s placement would help maintain 1.) A balanced classroom, 2.) Adequate/required staffing, and 3.) An environment based on the “least restrictive” principles. When services cannot be provided due to availability, referrals are made and students are placed on our waiting list.

Referral/Consultation

We use consultation, and/or referral arrangements for information regarding the following areas. Consultations will be obtained as appropriate for use in assessment, individual planning and direct services:

Audiology	Speech-Language Therapy	Special testing	
Education	Adaptive equipment	Counseling	
Occupational Therapy	Augmentative Communication	Psychiatric	evaluation
Orthotics, prosthetics	Transition		
Physical Therapy	Behavior Modification		

Discharge

A child can be discharged from school for any of the following reasons:

1. Doctors orders due to a health/medical condition

2. Unresolved behavior including behavior that disrupts the classroom or behavior that is aggressive.
3. Parent request
4. Progress
5. Team request
6. Failure to adhere to school policies
 - a) Completing assigned homework
 - b) Attendance
 - c) Tardiness
 - d) Parent participation

When a student is accepted into ACCESS Academy, parents sign an enrollment document stating that they are committing to the program for **12 months**. The family accepts the responsibility of the entire year's tuition upon enrollment.

No waiver of tuition or refund of school tuition or the enrollment fee is granted unless approved by the ACCESS Board of Directors.

Advise your child's teacher immediately and call the front office when leaving ACCESS. When discharge is planned, a ninety-day written notice is necessary to facilitate a smooth transition to the receiving agency or school. The team takes the necessary steps to ensure this occurs by the following procedures.

Discharge to public school

- Approximately six (6) months before the discharge date, the team begins the process by meeting to discuss recommendations for school placement. At this meeting, each member of the team gives his or her input. The family informs the other team members what has been done to date.
- If requested, the Education Director assists the family in making the necessary contacts to begin the process.
- Team members from ACCESS Academy will attend the transition conferences with families upon request.
- Families are encouraged to sign necessary releases in order that ACCESS Academy may share information with the new school.
- With parent permission, the receiving school's staff is invited to the discharge/transition conference.

GRADUATION from ACCESS

We graduate students as early as 18 years of age. If a student stays past 18, it has to be a recommendation by the team. Students may remain at ACCESS until the year of their 21st birthday with team recommendation. Students that attend ACCESS High School receive a certificate of completion for their education.

Top Things

ACCESS Parents need to know!

1. Handbook with all policies and procedures is on our website – updated before 8-18
2. Communication notebook – phone and or meeting (no staff email)
3. Dress Code – tennis shoes (no crocs or flip flops)
4. Lunch process
 - a. Must be prepaid
 - b. 10 am is the latest for lunch order or to cancel a lunch
 - c. There will be an extra entrée offered if your child needs an additional portion
5. On time – set a good example, students need to understand the importance of this!
 - a. Being tardy is disruptive to the entire class and staff
 - b. 3 tardies = 1 unexcused absence
6. Attendance Policy
 - a. Have to give front desk a Doctor’s note for excused absences
 - b. Preschool - 80% attendance required
 - c. Academy - 13 unexcused absences – turned into state truant office
7. Illness Policy – mandatory to follow so others are not exposed
8. Park only in lot (***never*** in the No Parking zone) and no speeding
9. Deadlines for events, youth events, teen events, will be upheld – no exceptions
10. Playground gates are not for entry or exit in the Preschool area
11. Use Website for calendar, school lunches, handbook, important parent info
12. Call office if student is ill, on vacation, or missing school
13. Preschool entrance closes at 8:05
14. Medication form has to be filled out and signed with meds in original bottle
15. How we communicate to ACCESS Families
 - a. Email
 - b. Phone tree
 - c. Front sign
 - d. Backpack Thursday
16. Join APA – mandatory \$15.00 per family

ACCESS Schools Staff

Administration Staff

Tammy Simmons, Chief Executive Officer, Founder
Cindy Young, Chief Operations Officer, Founder
Cheri Stevenson, Therapy Director

*For **emergencies** that arise beyond our hours of operation, you may feel free to contact Cindy at 772-7771 or Cheri 351-1810.*

Office

Shalene Hammons, Administrative Executive Assistant
Pam Priest, Operations Executive Assistant
Tina Funderburg, Accounts Manager
Cindy Hunt, Office Manager
Julie Zimmerman, Billing
Tamara Hill, Billing
Donna Purifoy, Receptionist
Beth Rice – Admissions

Fundraising

Beth Johnson, Development Director
Kevin Ryan, Development Officer

Academy Teaching Staff

Nicole Cooper	Shawnda Majors, teaching assistant
Becky Terbrack	Joyce Lauffer, teaching assistant
Kelly Arnold	Lafell Norris, teaching assistant
Candace Chappell	Joy Hurst, teaching assistant
Suzanne Fullerton & Lindy Vint	Barbara Robinson, teaching assistant, aftercare Leslie Rawlings, teaching assistant, aftercare Nathan Windham, teaching assistant, aftercare

Preschool and Foundations Teaching Staff

Roxanne Maloy	Anja Scarberry & Nancy Murry, teaching assistants
Brittany Franklin	April Carson, teaching assistant
Suzanne Carter	Carrie Smith, teaching assistant
Tim Thomas	Stephanie Trimble, teaching assistant
Monika Garner-Smith	Barbara Hanafiah, teaching assistant
Jenny Adams	Whitney Bell, teaching assistant Cindy Windham, teaching assistant, aftercare Jean Hess, teaching assistant, aftercare

Therapy Staff

Speech-Language Therapy

Annabel Johnson
Janice Edmonson
Lindy Vint
Megan Makovec
Stephanie Wood
Melissa Hannah
Cynthia Woodson

Physical Therapy

Julie Love
Amy Hughes
Renee Bennett

Occupational Therapy

Ricky Cooper
Heather Johnson
Suzanne Fullerton
Krysta Rupp
Holly Miguet

Coordinators

Monika Garner-Smith – Founder, Preschool Curriculum
Candace Chappell – Academy Curriculum
Nicole Cooper – Resources
Ricky Cooper – Therapy
Janice Edmonson - Technology
Tim Thomas – Early Intervention
Suzanne Fullerton – Vocational
Beth Rice - Admissions

ACCESS Schools Board of Directors

Lynn O'Connor, President	Walter (Skip) M. Ebel III
Kurt Knickrehm, Vice President	Turner Harris, M.D.
Jackson Farrow, Treasurer	Doug Jackson
Erin McConnell, Secretary	Steve Jonsson
Stephanie Beall – APA President	Michael Ptak
W. Scott Davis	Becky Scott
Chad Delp	

Founders: *Tammy Simmons and Cindy Young*

School Calendar 2008-2009

We will be sending a monthly calendar home so that you can stay informed on a monthly basis regarding ACCESS Schools activities. Below you will find our school closing dates and other important dates.

2008

August 18	First Day of ACCESS School
September 1	Labor Day – School Closed
October 7	Preschool School Pictures
October 8	Academy School Pictures
October 9	2 o'clock Dismissal ACCESS Staff Yearly Retreat
November 21 st	Academy Music Program - Madrigal Singers
November 26 th	Preschool Feast
	Preschool Noon Dismissal
	Academy closed
November 27 and 28	Thanksgiving Break – School Closed
December 19-January 2	Academy Christmas Break
December 24- January 2	Preschool Christmas Break

2009

January 5	School resumes
March 23-27	Spring Break
April 10	Noon dismissal – Easter Weekend
May 25	Memorial Day - School Closed
June 5	Academy last day of full days
	Academy High School Graduation
June 8	Academy starts ½ day
	ACCESS Adventure starts for Academy Students
July 3	4 th of July – School Closed
July 31	Academy last day of school
	ACCESS Adventure last day
August 3 – 14	Academy closed
August 6	Preschool Graduation
August 13-14	Preschool closed
August 17	2009-2010 School year begins