

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS



Some students with disabilities may require specially designed instruction in a unique setting to meet their individual needs. These specialized programs are available for your consideration as you explore options for your child.

You are encouraged to review the information for each of these programs and apply if they are appropriate. Here are some specialized programs that are offered in community schools or at select District 75 program sites:

- **ASD Nest:** an integrated class setting (reduced class size) in a community school for students with autism who are at or above grade level and require minimal support.
- **ASD Horizon:** a special class in a community school for students with autism at or near grade level who may require more support.
- **AIMS (Acquisition, Integrated Services, Meaningful Communication, and Social Skills):** a special class in a community school for students with autism. This early learner program spans kindergarten to second grade and uses principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Verbal Behavior (VB). *AIMS is a District 75 specialized program.*
- **Academic, Career, and Essential Skills (ACES) Programs:** a special class or integrated class setting in a community school for students who are classified as intellectually disabled or with multiple disabilities. In addition to academics, these students also learn work and independent living skills. Bilingual Special Education – a program for students whose IEP mandates instruction in a language other than English. Services are provided in an integrated or special class setting.

Please visit these links for more information:

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/school-settings/specialized-programs>

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/learning/special-education/school-settings/district-75/district-75-programs>

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM

Students who are on the autism spectrum should be offered a range of programs and services along the continuum, as is the case with all students with disabilities, depending on students' individual needs. The following represent some of the possible service delivery models for consideration for students who have an autism spectrum disorder, and are specialized programs in community schools or District 75.

THE CRITERIA TO BE CONSIDERED FOR AN AUTISM PROGRAM ARE:

Type of Autism Program	HORIZON	NEST	AIMS
Disability Classification	Autism	Autism	Autism
Cognition	Low-average verbal or Full Scale IQ, or borderline IQ with clear evidence of higher functioning, as determined by subtests of IQ testing; If entering K: Preschool level (developmentally 3 to 4 year old level)	Average IQ; On or close to grade-level	Functional levels include developmental delays in behavior, social, and communication skills
Language	Phrase speech of at least single words or phrases used functionally; may rarely initiate communication; follows one and two step directions	Close to age appropriate speech; Close to age appropriate comprehension of verbal language	Severe language and communication impairments Struggle and profound delays with functional and spontaneous communications
Behavior	Mild to moderate stereotyped behaviors; may occasionally tantrum, some non-verbal compliance; self-injurious behavior is infrequent; physical aggression is infrequent	Mild to moderate stereotyped behaviors; self-injurious behavior is almost absent; physical aggression is mild and infrequent; does not require one-on-one support frequently during daily activities	Delays with adaptive functioning skills including, like dressing or toileting. May exhibit mild to severe behaviors. Note that AIMS does not have 1:1 paraprofessionals for behaviors. If your child's behaviors may pose a safety risk, please take another look to determine if AIMS is the right fit

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES:

It is critical to understand that a classification of Intellectual Disability (ID) does not, in and of itself, indicate the need for a specialized program. Many students with ID are best served in a general education setting in a community school and it is extremely important to make thoughtful decisions appropriately utilizing the full continuum of services matched to individual pupil needs so that all students are given equal opportunity to meet their academic potential. As with other specialized programs, if you are considering an ID program always consider the least restrictive environment first.

THE CRITERIA FOR A STUDENT TO BE REFERRED TO THE ACADEMICS, CAREER, AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS (ACES) PROGRAM ARE:

1. Classification of Intellectual Disabilities or Multiple Disabilities – According to NYSED, Part 200.1 regulations, “intellectual disability means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a student’s educational performance.”

2. Students are alternately assessed. The criteria that the IEP team must use to determine a student’s participation in alternate assessment are:

A. The student participating in the alternate assessment has:

- a severe cognitive disability, and
- significant deficits in:
 - communication/language, and
 - adaptive behavior.

AND

B. The student requires a highly specialized educational program that facilitates the acquisition, application and transfer of skills across natural environments (home, school community and/or workplace).

AND

C. The student requires educational support systems, such as:

- assistive technology,
- personal care services,
- health/medical services, or
- behavioral intervention.

Participation in the state assessment may not be based on: category of disability, excessive or extended absences, language differences, or cultural or environmental factors. For definition of “severe disability” and additional information see alternate assessment.

3. The student’s need for a program that includes functional skills precludes a full time general education setting, but the student is able to receive education in the community school.

If all three of these criteria are met (ID classification, alternate assessment, and the least restrictive environment has been considered), then the student may be recommended for a specialized program for students classified as ID.

BILINGUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION:

Overview

If an English Language Learner (ELL) student* requires bilingual programs and/or services and is eligible for special education services, the IEP team (with parent input) may recommend them for a bilingual special education program.

ELL Programs and Services

New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) schools must provide a student who has limited English proficiency an ELL program. NYCDOE offers three programs:

1. English as a New Language (ENL), formerly called ESL
2. Dual Language (DL)
3. Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)

These programs are intended to help ELL students (ELLs) develop English language skills and provide them meaningful access to the general education curriculum. For more information on ELL services and programs, see INCLUDEnyc's tip sheet, Services for English Language Learners (ELL): <https://bit.ly/3cEv4jS>

Developing an IEP for an ELL

When developing an IEP for an ELL, the IEP team must:

1. Consider how the student's level of English language proficiency affects the special education services that the student needs.
2. Arrange a bilingual evaluation that assesses native and second language strengths and weaknesses.
3. Consider evaluation results relating to language proficiency, such as the LAB-R (for Spanish-speaking students) and NYSESLAT results in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, in the Present Levels of Performance.

At least one IEP team member needs to be a teacher with bilingual certification who can determine how the student's English language levels and learning needs relate to the child's disability.

Determining if Bilingual Special Education (BSE) is Appropriate

If the IEP team determines that:

1. The student needs special education services for any part of his or her educational program (regardless of disability classification), **AND**
2. The services and/or the special education class program need to be provided in a language other than English (Example: bilingual speech and language therapy)

THEN

3. The student may be referred for an appropriate bilingual special education (BSE) program.

BSE Program Models

- The special education programs available for BSE are Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) or Special Class (small, self-contained special education class).
- The bilingual program models for BSE are:
 - 1) Dual Language (DL) classrooms, which serve ELLs and English-proficient students. Students receive instruction half the time in English and half the time in ELLs' home language. The goal in DL classrooms is for students to be able to read, speak, and write in both English and in the home language.
 - 2) Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) classrooms, which serve only ELLs. Students learn in both ELLs' home language and English. As students transfer home language skills to English, instructional time in English increases over time.
- More information on these program models is available on the NYCDOE Specialized Programs website: <https://on.nyc.gov/30ntX3b>
- A list of BSE Programs by district and language is available on the NYCDOE website: <https://bit.ly/37bmiqM>.
- For more detailed information on how to access a BSE program, see INCLUDEnyc's tip sheet, How to Access a Bilingual Special Education Program: <https://bit.ly/2HAB3us>.

* ELL refers to a student identified as speaking another language at home who has limited English proficiency and who needs specific instruction and programming to help with learning English. Multilingual Learner (MLL) is another term used in New York City and across New York State that may refer to an ELL. MLL draws on the multilingual strengths of a student who speaks a language other than English and who is also building skills in another language. We use ELL in this tip sheet for simplicity and because ELL notes specific programming to help improve English language skills.