

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
DESCRIPTIONS OF  
SPECIAL EDUCATION  
SERVICES**

Fall 2005

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## Descriptions of Special Education Services

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## **RESOURCE SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.

### ***POPULATION***

Students in kindergarten to grade 12 served through this model receive special education services primarily as a result of a disability that impacts academic achievement. Students typically demonstrate learning and/or behavioral needs that affect performance in one or more academic areas.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team determines student eligibility for services in the resource program.

### ***MODEL***

Students served in this model receive direct and/or consultative services. A variety of instructional models and strategies may be used to meet individual student needs.

The resource service providers consult with school staff to provide early intervention strategies, staff training and demonstration of effective instructional practices. The resource teacher participates in school Individualized Education Program team meetings and administers educational assessments.

## **HOME SCHOOL MODEL**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To serve students with learning disabilities, mild mental retardation and/or language disabilities in their home school.
- To increase opportunities for students with disabilities to form a meaningful network of interpersonal relationship within their neighborhood school.
- To increase opportunities for general and special educators and related services staff to collaborate and promote the success of all students.

### ***POPULATION***

Students served through this model require special education services for learning needs that significantly impact academic achievement, such as learning disabilities, mild mental retardation and/or language disabilities.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, in consultation with the supervisor of special education, determines eligibility for the Home School Model.

### ***MODEL***

Support for students, including instructional, curricular, and behavioral interventions, is viewed as a school-wide responsibility. Collaboration among parents, general educators, special educators, and other school personnel occurs on an ongoing basis.

Students attend their neighborhood school and are assigned in age-appropriate heterogeneous classrooms. Student grouping during the course of the day will encompass a variety of instructional models and may include instruction in a self-contained setting, based on the individual needs.

Students are instructed in the general education curriculum with differentiated instruction to accommodate various learning styles. Some students will receive instruction in the Fundamental Life Skills curriculum as appropriate to meet their needs. Instructional materials used for general education student assignments; homework and tests are modified for the students receiving inclusive services.

## **LEARNING AND ACADEMIC DISABILITIES CLUSTER MODEL SERVICES ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- Students with disabilities are provided with opportunities to participate in the general education environment.

### ***POPULATION***

Students served through this model require special education services primarily as a result of a learning or language disability that significantly impacts academic achievement. Students typically demonstrate average cognitive ability; yet have processing deficits that affect performance in one or more academic areas. Most students served in this model have previously received a considerable amount of special education resource support, and did not make sufficient progress toward Individualized Education Program goals.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

#### **Elementary Cluster Model**

The home school Individualized Education Program team, in consultation with the supervisor of special education, recommends placement in the Learning and Academic Disabilities Cluster Model.

#### **Secondary Model**

The home school Individualized Education Program team, in consultation with the supervisor of special education, recommends placement in the Learning and Academic Disabilities Model within the home school.

### ***MODEL***

#### **Elementary Cluster Model**

Elementary cluster models can provide up to 25 hours a week of special education instruction for students, typically utilizing a model of self-contained classrooms and opportunities for participation in general education classes with non-disabled peers.

#### **Secondary Model**

All middle and high schools are able to provide special education services for students with learning and academic disabilities, typically utilizing a model that may include components of self-contained classes, co-taught general education classes, and other opportunities for participation with non-disabled peers.

## **GIFTED AND TALENTED/LEARNING DISABLED SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS General Education Program of Study.
- To provide students with adaptations and accommodations that provide appropriate access to rigorous instruction including Honors classes, Advanced Placement classes, and to the components of acceleration and enrichment in the MCPS instructional guides.

### ***POPULATION***

Students receiving Gifted and Talented/Learning Disabled services demonstrate outstanding abilities in either the verbal or visual-spatial area and typically have production problems, particularly in the area of written output. Organization, memory, and reading may also be significantly impacted. Many of these students are identified as gifted as a result of the global screening that occurs for all MCPS students at the end of second grade. Others are identified as gifted when their abilities are revealed as part of the process of identifying their learning disability. The majority of these students score two standard deviations above the mean on the verbal or performance scales of the WISC-III, or comparable intelligence scales.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Staff from Gifted and Talented/Learning Disabled services provides consultation to schools about appropriate programming options for individual students. Gifted and Talented/Learning Disabled students, who despite efforts at intervention and support, are not able to access rigorous instruction in their home schools may be referred, by the school's Individualized Education Program team, to the Central Individualized Team Process for consideration of an alternative placement.

### ***MODEL***

Most students identified as Gifted and Talented/Learning Disabled are given access to rigorous instruction in their home schools, while receiving appropriate adaptations, accommodations and special instruction. Special instruction in the home school may be provided through pull out programs such as a resource room and/or through in class or team teaching models.

Students may be placed in a Gifted and Talented/Learning Disabled classroom setting after attempts to provide appropriate supports in their home schools have not been successful. This setting provides rigorous instruction in the students'

areas of strength, while providing adaptations and accommodations in the areas of skill that are affected by their disability. Students receive specialized instruction in self-contained and/or team taught general education classes. Elementary school students are served in regional centers housed in elementary schools. Middle school and senior high school students who continue to need more intensive supports than available in their home schools will be served through a Secondary Learning Center.

## **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BASED LEARNING CENTER**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To provide comprehensive special education instruction for students requiring intensive specialized interventions, case management, and accommodations while maximizing opportunities for interaction with non-disabled peers.
- To develop home/school partnerships to ensure student success.

### ***POPULATION***

Students served through this model require special education services primarily as a result of pervasive needs in areas such as academics, cognition, communication, organization, sensory/motor skills and/or social interaction.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The home school Individualized Educational Program team, in consultation with the special education supervisor, recommends placement in the Elementary School-Based Learning Center.

### ***MODEL***

An Elementary School-Based Learning Center provides comprehensive special education instruction, related services, and diagnostic services to students with multiple needs and varied disabilities. The program offers a continuum of kindergarten to grade 5 services in several self-contained classes within an elementary school.

This model incorporates related services that are integrated into special education instruction through a team approach. Multiple interventions such as multisensory lessons and use of assistive technology are incorporated into the program. Adjustments such as pacing of instructions and curricular modifications may be used to address individual student needs.

## **SECONDARY SCHOOL BASED LEARNING CENTER**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To provide comprehensive special education instruction for students requiring intensive specialized interventions, case management, and accommodations while maximizing opportunities for interaction with non-disabled peers.
- To ensure access to post-secondary transition services, education, and/or training.

### ***POPULATION***

Students served through this model require special education services primarily as a result of pervasive needs in areas such as academics, cognition, communication, organization, sensory/motor skills and/or social interaction.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The home school Individualized Educational Program team, in consultation with the special education supervisor, recommends placement in the Secondary School-Based Learning Center.

### ***MODEL***

A Secondary School-Based Learning Center offers intensive specialized instruction, and integrated related services to students with significant learning disabilities, language disabilities and/or multiple disabilities in a comprehensive secondary school. This highly structured setting supports a continuum of services for students to achieve success in the MCPS Programs of Studies. Adjustments such as pacing, alternative materials, assistive technology, and differentiation of instruction may be used to address individual student needs.

## **CARL SANDBURG LEARNING CENTER**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities who require intensive specialized interventions, case management, and accommodations have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To deliver instruction, in partnership with parents and community, that emphasizes reasonable expectations, while creating a nurturing and supportive environment.
- To facilitate student participation in field trips, cultural and educational assemblies, camping trips, and the outdoor education program to complete a challenging program.

### ***POPULATION***

Carl Sandburg is a special school that serves elementary students, with multiple disabilities, including language disabilities, mental retardation, pervasive developmental disorders and other learning and emotional disabilities. Some students have diagnosed syndromes that present complex medical and educational needs.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Students are placed at Carl Sandburg Learning Center through the Central Individualized Education Program team meeting process.

### ***MODEL***

The Carl Sandburg Learning Center is designed for students who need a highly structured setting. The MCPS General Education Program of Study and the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills Program of Study are both used to provide instruction for students. Modification of curriculum materials and instructional strategies, based on students' need, is the basis of all instruction. Emphasis is placed on the development of language, academic, and social skills. Emphasis is placed on providing an in-class transdisciplinary model of service delivery so that all staff are trained to implement the recommendations of related service providers. Special emphasis is placed on meeting the sensory and motor needs of students in their classroom settings. To address behavioral goals, services may include a behavior management system, psychological consultation, and crisis intervention.

## **LEARNING FOR INDEPENDENCE SERVICE**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills Program of Study in the context of a general educational environment and community settings.
- To provide students with opportunities for interaction with non-disabled peers and mainstreaming with support in general education classrooms.
- To prepare students for adult life by teaching them skills that will enhance their opportunities for independent participation in work, recreational, and home settings, while making meaningful contributions to their community.

### ***POPULATION***

Students in this model have a primary disability of mild to moderate mental retardation, or have multiple disabilities including mild to moderate mental retardation.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The home school Individualized Educational Program team, in consultation with the special education supervisor, recommends placement in the Learning for Independence model.

### ***MODEL***

This model utilizes the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills Program of Study that emphasizes basic skills, personal management, career, vocational, and leisure skills. This curriculum may be enhanced with a modified general education curriculum with in-school learning focusing on functional academics, tied to real-life situations. Community instruction focuses on vocational skills, including travel training and access to stores and services as determined by individual student needs.

## **SCHOOL/COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills Program of Study in the context of a general educational environment and community settings.
- To provide individualized instruction in functional life skills such as personal management, functional academics, community training, communication, socialization and vocational training in order to ensure that students are ready to enter the world of adult living upon graduation.
- To provide students with opportunities for interaction with non-disabled peers and participation in general education with support.

### ***POPULATION***

This model serves students whose primary disability is moderate, severe or profound mental retardation, or multiple disabilities including moderate, severe or profound mental retardation, or Autism.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The home school Individualized Educational Program team, in consultation with the special education supervisor, recommends placement in the School Community-Based model.

### ***MODEL***

This model utilizes the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills Program of Study that emphasizes basic skills, personal management, career, vocational, and leisure skills. This curriculum may be enhanced with a modified general education curriculum with in-school learning focusing on functional academics, tied to real-life situations. Community instruction focuses on vocational skills, including travel training and access to stores and services as determined by individual student needs.

## **ROCK TERRACE SCHOOL**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To prepare students for independent living, integrated employment, and participation within the community.
- To develop independent citizens who contribute to society to the fullest extent possible.

### ***POPULATION***

Rock Terrace School serves students ages 12 through 21 whose learning and behavioral needs require the structure and support available in a special education facility. Primary disabilities include mental retardation or significant learning disabilities and may include autism, language disabilities, emotional disabilities, medical conditions and/or physical disabilities.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Students are placed at Rock Terrace School through the Central Individualized Education Program (CIEP) team.

### ***MODEL***

Rock Terrace School is divided into middle school, high school, and upper school (school-to-work programs).

The instructional focus in the middle school is on functional skills while integrating content from reading/language arts and mathematics. Focus is on functional academic skills that prepare the students for the transition to the high school program. The high school program emphasizes the application of functional academic skills that lead to full participation in the school-to-work plan and vocational/community experiences. Authentic jobs help in reinforcing classroom learning.

In-school instructional work opportunities include classes in food service training, production woodshop, and vocational experiences in the school cafeteria, library and offices. Out of school experiences and opportunities range from supported employment to totally independent vocational placements. This rigorous and challenging program provides instruction that prepares the students to contribute to society.

## **STEPHEN KNOLLS SCHOOL**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills Programs of Study.
- To provide comprehensive educational services in a center-based program to students with severe to profound mental retardation and multiple disabilities.
- To provide students with skills in the areas of communication, mobility, self help, functional academics, and transition to adult life.

### ***POPULATION***

Stephen Knolls School serves students with severe to profound mental retardation and multiple disabilities, which often include: expressive and receptive language delays, limited motor functioning, visual and/or hearing impairments, medical or physical problems or traumatic (acquired) brain injuries. Students attending this school range in age from 5 to 21 years.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Students are placed at Stephen Knolls School through the Central Individualized Education Program team meeting process.

### ***MODEL***

The MCPS Functional Life Skills curriculum, in conjunction with the student's Individualized Education Program, provides the foundation for the educational programming of each child. The staff works with students in an intensive manner to help them develop self-help skills, including eating, dressing, and toileting. Instructional and related services are delivered through a transdisciplinary approach

Senior students receive job training, as appropriate, and transition services to assist as they move from school to the adult world. Instruction in the use of assistive technology and augmentative communication is provided to help students communicate their wants and needs.

## **LONGVIEW SCHOOL**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills Programs of Study.
- To provide comprehensive educational services in a center-based program to students with severe to profound mental retardation and multiple disabilities.
- To provide students with skills in the areas of communication, mobility, self help, functional academics, and transition to adult life.
- To provide students with opportunities to participate with non-disabled peers in a variety of natural settings and experiences.

### ***POPULATION***

Longview School serves students with severe to profound mental retardation and multiple disabilities, which often include: expressive and receptive language delays, limited motor functioning, visual and/or hearing impairments, medical or physical problems or traumatic (acquired) brain injuries. Students attending this school range in age from 5 to 21 years.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Students are placed at Longview School through the Central Individualized Education Program team meeting process.

### ***MODEL***

The MCPS Functional Life Skills curriculum, in conjunction with the student's Individualized Education Program, provides the foundation for the educational programming of each child. The staff works with students in an intensive manner to help them develop self-help skills, including eating, dressing, and toileting. Instructional and related services are delivered through a transdisciplinary approach. Senior students receive job training, as appropriate, and transition services to assist as they move from school to the adult world. Instruction in the use of assistive technology and augmentative communication is provided to help students communicate their wants and needs.

Students participate in a variety of experiences at Matsunaga Elementary School that include attending cultural arts assemblies, and other whole school events. There are also opportunities for elementary school aged students to participate in classroom lessons as well as art, music or physical education lessons.

## **CROSSROADS**

### ***GOALS***

- To provide students with skills for independent living, integrated employment and community participation.
- To assist students in acquiring appropriate social, behavioral, and communication skills necessary for return to a less restrictive environment.
- To prepare students for transition to a less restrictive environment within 1-3 years.

### ***POPULATION***

Crossroads serves students ages 13-18 that have mild or moderate mental retardation or multiple disabilities that must include mental retardation and/or autism. Students also have a prolonged history of aggressive, self-injurious, destructive, or disruptive behaviors and have not responded to functional and systematic behavioral interventions in less restrictive settings.

### ***PLACEMENT***

Students are placed in Crossroads through the Central Individualized Education Program team meeting process, and must be based on extensive documentation of behavioral concerns over a significant period of time, as well as efforts to identify and provide positive behavioral supports.

### ***MODEL***

Students receive instruction in functional academics, vocational, and social skills within the context of the Fundamental Life Skills Program of Study. The primary objective is to address behavioral issues that have been barriers to learning, and to facilitate a transition back to a less restrictive educational setting. A major emphasis is the acquisition of job-readiness skills that apply across a variety of settings and include working effectively with others, problem-solving and effective self-advocacy. Social skills and behavioral management will be addressed using individualized positive intervention strategies derived from a functional behavioral analysis.

## **LONGVIEW EXTENSIONS**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills Program of Study.
- To provide students who exhibit extremely challenging behaviors intensive educational programming designed to enable them to acquire more appropriate social and communicative skills, as well as other self-management strategies.
- To provide students alternative communicative and social skills which will facilitate their return to a less restrictive educational setting.
- To offer students the opportunity for participation in integrated employment and community activities.

### ***POPULATION***

Longview Extensions serves students aged 11-16 who have moderate, severe, profound mental retardation, or multiple disabilities that must include mental retardation and/or autism. They must also have a prolonged history of aggressive, self-injurious, destructive, or disruptive behaviors, and have not responded to functional and systematic behavioral interventions in a less restrictive setting.

### ***PLACEMENT***

Students are placed at Longview Extensions through the Central Individualized Education Program team, and must be based on extensive documentation of behavioral concerns and efforts to identify and provide positive behavioral supports over a significant period of time.

### ***MODEL***

The students' behavioral needs are addressed using a comprehensive functional behavioral analysis approach to determine appropriate behavioral interventions and replacement behaviors to be taught.

Behavioral intervention and programming are infused across the student day. Students receive specialized instruction utilizing applied behavioral analysis strategies. The focus of intervention is on positive, educational behavioral programming, using a range of positive pro-active interventions.

Students receive instruction in the community up to ten hours a week in a variety of community and vocational settings. Emphasis is placed on providing an in-class trans-disciplinary model of service delivery so that all staff are trained to implement the recommendations of related service providers.

## **SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES CLUSTER MODEL PROGRAMS**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To provide intensive services within a general education setting to students experiencing significant emotional and/or behavioral difficulties.

### ***POPULATION***

Students served through this model require services as a result of significant social, emotional, learning and/or behavioral difficulties that adversely impact their success in school. The vast majority of students enrolled in these programs are identified with an emotional disability. Some students are identified with secondary disabilities such as health impairments, language disabilities and learning disabilities. Students enrolled in these programs demonstrate average to above average cognitive abilities, yet may not demonstrate commensurate academic achievement due to a history of emotional and behavioral difficulties interfering with their ability to participate successfully in educational programs.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

School Individualized Education Program teams that are considering recommending a student for placement into an Emotional Disabilities Cluster Model work with their special education supervisor to initiate a review by the Special Education Supervisor for Emotional Disabilities prior to placement by the school team.

### ***MODEL***

The Emotional Disabilities Cluster Model offers the following instructional/intervention components:

- Comprehensive behavior management that includes proactive teaching and rehearsal of social skills, as well as the use of structured and consistent reinforcement systems. Individualized and comprehensive behavior management strategies and systems are used to promote students' acquisition of skills that allow them to be successful in school.
- An alternative structure that provides levels of containment to respond effectively to students' inappropriate and disruptive behavior.

- Successful mainstreaming opportunities that utilize mainstream competency programs and provide direct support to mainstreamed students.
- Crisis intervention with effective strategies and techniques implemented to maintain a safe and secure learning environment. Staff members are trained to respond to a variety of crisis situations in order to keep both students and staff safe.

## **SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES BRIDGE**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To meet the needs of socially vulnerable middle and high school students who may be challenged by problem-solving, establishing peer relationships, interpreting social cues, coping with anxiety and/or changes in routines.

### ***POPULATION***

Students demonstrate significant social, emotional, learning and/or behavioral issues that make it difficult for them to be successful in a large school environment. The majority of students are identified as having an emotional disability. Some have secondary disabilities such as health impairment, Asperger's Syndrome, language disability, or learning disability.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

School Individualized Education Program teams that are considering recommending a student for placement into Bridge work with their special education supervisor to initiate a review by the Special Education Supervisor for Emotional Disabilities prior to placement by the school team.

### ***MODEL***

Emotional Disabilities Cluster Model Programs offer the following instructional/intervention components:

- Comprehensive behavior management that includes proactive teaching and rehearsal of social skills, as well as the use of structured and consistent reinforcement systems. Individualized and comprehensive behavior management strategies and systems are used to promote students' acquisition of skills that allow them to be successful in school.
- An alternative structure that provides levels of containment to respond effectively to students' inappropriate and disruptive behavior.
- Successful mainstreaming opportunities that utilize mainstream competency programs and provide direct support to mainstreamed students.

- Crisis intervention with effective strategies and techniques implemented to maintain a safe and secure learning environment. Staff members are trained to respond to a variety of crisis situations in order to keep both students and staff safe.

## **MARK TWAIN SCHOOL**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure access to the MCPS Programs of Studies for students requiring intensive specialized interventions.
- To provide a safe, nurturing, student-centered environment with a comprehensive multi-dimensional educational program.
- To offer students an opportunity to achieve their full potential, to successfully manage their life experiences and to be productive members of society.

### ***POPULATION***

Mark Twain is a school serving the needs of students in grades 6-12 who demonstrate social, emotional and behavioral needs that have impacted their ability to access instruction. Many students also have learning disabilities, language disabilities and/or other health impairments.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Students are placed at Mark Twain through the Central Individual Education Program team meeting process.

### ***MODEL***

Mark Twain School promotes growth in the emotional, behavioral, and academic areas through three important components:

- a rigorous curriculum which enhances a student's ability to compete academically with peers in general education settings
- a clearly defined system of behavioral expectations and incentives which ensure improved school performance
- specific social skills instruction which enables students to learn problem-solving, decision-making, and coping skills

The Mark Twain staff maintains close contact with parents in order to provide wrap-around supports that the students need in order to be available for instruction. Additionally, contact is established and maintained with various agencies including:

- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Department of Social Services
- Community Kids
- Montgomery County Police Department

- Rockville City Police Department
- Area Group Homes and Shelters

**JOHN L. GILDNER**  
**REGIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (RICA) -**  
**ROCKVILLE**

***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS General Education Program of Study.
- To provide a comprehensive educational and community-based public treatment service to students in grades 1-12 with emotional disabilities who require intensive intervention. RICA uses an interdisciplinary approach that integrates the educational, clinical, and residential services.
- To provide a highly structured instructional service in a safe therapeutic milieu.

***POPULATION***

RICA Rockville is a special education day school and residential treatment facility serving students primarily from Montgomery, Howard, Carroll, Washington, Frederick, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Prince George's counties. Students entering RICA have complex clinical, educational, and family-related needs that require multidisciplinary resources from the community, public service agencies, and their respective school districts.

***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Montgomery County Public School students are referred through the central Individualized Education Program team. Students from the Maryland feeder counties are referred for the RICA residential service through their local Individualized Education Program placement and Local Coordinating Council offices.

***MODEL***

RICA provides appropriate educational and treatment services to all students and their families through a highly structured intensive special education service with therapy integrated in a day and residential treatment facility. An interdisciplinary treatment team, consisting of school, clinical, residential staff and related services providers, is assigned to each student and his/her family. The treatment team develops, implements, and monitors the student's total educational plan and progress. Consulting psychiatrists, a full-time pediatrician and a health nurse also are on staff.

RICA offers a fully accredited special education service which emphasizes rigorous academic and vocational/occupational opportunities, day and residential treatment, and individual, group, family and multifamily therapy. A comprehensive behavior management system promotes acquisition of appropriate academic and social-emotional skills and prepares students to become productive members of a society.

An interdisciplinary team monitors the students' educational and therapeutic progress, as well as eligibility for mainstreaming and exiting RICA. Upon leaving RICA, students may attend their home school, a vocational program or job, college or other services for continuing education. Students are expected to meet the State graduation requirements and may graduate from their home school.

## **COLLABORATIVE AUTISM PRESCHOOL**

### ***GOALS:***

- To provide students with autism spectrum disorders highly intensive and individualized services.
- To utilize state of the art instructional practices to increase the academic, language, social and adaptive skill levels of youngsters with autism.
- To foster the development of adaptive skills that result in maximum student independence.

### ***POPULATION***

The Collaborative Autism Preschool serves students with autism, ages 3-5 who need a highly structured, repetitive educational approach across all instructional and behavioral areas.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Students are placed in Collaborative Autism Preschool through the Central Individualized Education Program team meeting process.

### ***MODEL***

The Collaborative Autism Preschool is a joint effort between Montgomery County Public Schools and Montgomery Primary Achievement Center and provides access to social integration opportunities with their age appropriate peers. Students receive approximately four hours per day of 1:1 discrete trial instruction and two hours of typical preschool experiences, utilizing a variety of systematic behavioral strategies. Through a combination of small and large group instruction, skills taught in the discrete trial context are practiced and expanded in natural settings. Emphasis is placed on providing an in-class transdisciplinary model of service delivery so that all staff are trained to implement the recommendations of related service providers.

During the last semester of kindergarten, students are systematically introduced to small group teaching experiences for an increasing segment of the day to assist students in gaining the social/behavioral skills they will need.

## **SCHOOL AGE AUTISM SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Fundamental Life Skills Program of Study.
- To provide a comprehensive and highly structured individualized service that is based on a behavioral model of skill instruction in public general education facilities.
- To provide structured opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers.

### ***POPULATION***

Autism Services provides support to students with Autism Spectrum Disorders whose complex learning, language and behavioral needs require systematic, repetitive instruction in a small group setting. Students typically have significant delays in the areas of cognition, communication, and social/emotional and adaptive behavior.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

School Individualized Education Program teams that are considering recommending a student for placement into school age Autism services work with their special education supervisor to initiate a review by the staff of Autism Services prior to placement by the school team.

### ***MODEL***

Autism Services provides children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ages 5-21, a highly structured setting. These students require a combination of pre-academic and functional life skill instruction, with emphasis on the development of language, social skills, and behavioral strategies. Students participate with non-disabled peers as appropriate.

Emphasis is placed on providing an in-class transdisciplinary model of service delivery so that all staff are trained to implement the recommendations of related service providers.

The primary methodology in the elementary and middle grades is discrete trial instruction, while the focus from middle to high school shifts to vocational training and community-based skills. The elements of discrete trial instruction are dependent on repetitive directions and high rates of immediate feedback, in a prescribed systematic, sequential format.

## **SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH HIGH FUNCTIONING AUTISM OR ASPERGERS SYNDROME**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS General Education Program of Study.
- To utilize state of the art instructional practices to increase the social and adaptive skill levels of students with HFA or Asperger's Syndrome.
- To provide direct instruction to students in the areas of coping strategies and prosocial behaviors.
- To identify and implement those strategies, accommodations and modifications that will enable students to participate successfully in a less restrictive setting.

### ***POPULATION***

Students receiving these services have a diagnosis of High Functioning Autism or Asperger's Syndrome. These students function in the average to above average range of intellectual ability and receive instruction on the general curriculum, with enrichment as appropriate. Students have documented social and behavioral needs that have significantly interfered with their ability to participate in other educational environments, despite a variety of special supports.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

School Individualized Education Program teams that are considering recommending a student for placement into Aspergers services work with their special education supervisor to initiate a review by the staff of Autism Services prior to placement by the school team.

### ***MODEL***

Services for Students with High Functioning Autism or Asperger's Syndrome provides a structured, individualized educational service to students for whom itinerant and school-based resources have been insufficient to remediate significant social, adaptive and behavioral difficulties. The staff provides instruction on the general education curriculum with accommodations and differentiation specific to the needs of students. Autism staff, in collaboration with the transdisciplinary team and a school-based counselor, integrates social skills teaching and generalization opportunities throughout the instructional day. Social skills groups, class units, and direct individualized teaching are utilized to provide students with strategies for acceptable behavior. Individual and classroom motivation systems reinforce appropriate social behavior and students are mainstreamed with their general education peers as appropriate.

## **DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS General Education Program of Study.
- To enable students to develop language and communication skills.

### ***POPULATION***

Students from birth through high school with educationally significant, bilateral hearing loss receive services.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Students with possible or confirmed hearing loss should be referred to Hearing and Vision Services. Eligibility is established by audiological and educational evaluation, in conjunction with the Individualized Education Program team meeting process.

### ***MODEL***

Infant/Toddler services are provided for students from birth to 3 years of age and include both home and center-based support for children and their families.

Preschool classes are available, either half-day or full day as appropriate, in a central county site. Three communication methodologies are available in preschool classes: Auditory/oral; Cued Speech; and Total Communication.

In Elementary and Secondary classes located in central county schools, one or more of the communication methodologies is available. In addition, mainstreaming in regular education classes is available, as appropriate. Interpreting is provided as needed, for classroom as well as for after-school activities.

Itinerant Services are provided to students who attend either their home school, or other special education classes. Some of these students may also receive interpreting services.

Related Services may include clinical and educational audiology, group and/or individual parent counseling support, speech and communication skill development, cochlear implant rehabilitation, sign language interpreting or cued speech transliterating.

## **VISION SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS General Education Program of Study.
- To support students with visual impairments by teaching them compensatory skills.
- To instruct students on the use of specialized materials and equipment.
- To provide consultation to school staff as appropriate.

### ***POPULATION***

Students from birth through high school with educationally significant visual impairment receive services.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Students with possible or confirmed visual impairments should be referred to Hearing and Vision Services. Eligibility is established by an ophthalmologic/optometric report and a functional vision evaluation, in conjunction with the Individualized Education Program team meeting process.

### ***MODEL***

Infant/Toddler services are provided for students from birth to 3 years of age in their family home.

A preschool class is available, in a central county site and provides a multisensory approach to the preschool curriculum and addresses all areas of developmental growth. Utilization of vision and compensatory skills are an integral part of these services.

Secondary service is available in a central county high school for students with visual impairments who need more intensive vision support. Students take a combination of regular high school courses and vision classes, which include academic support, training in assistive technology, and instruction in compensatory skill areas.

Itinerant Services are provided to students who attend either their home school, or other special education classes. Materials and specialized equipment may also be provided to these students.

Students may also receive Orientation and Mobility services to teach them how to safely travel in their school and community.

## **PHYSICAL DISABILITIES SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To provide individualized, comprehensive special education services and related services to students with a variety of physical and health related disabilities that facilitate access the MCPS Programs of Studies
- To consult with general education staff and parents to reinforce skill development.

### ***POPULATION***

Students from kindergarten through grade 12 with physician documented physical disabilities that significantly impact educational performance receive services. Typical disabilities include cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, and traumatic brain injury. Students generally demonstrate average cognitive ability and exhibit needs in motor development and information processing. Speech-language, vision, hearing and self-care needs also may be present.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Every effort is made to accommodate students with physical disabilities in their home schools. When physical and learning needs are significant and require intensive support, school Individualized Education Program teams should work with their special education supervisor to initiate a review by the Supervisor of Physical Disabilities prior to placement by the school team.

### ***MODEL***

This countywide model emphasizes a coordinated transdisciplinary approach that integrates services from special education instruction and related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language, assistive technology, and school health. Services may be delivered through either an itinerant model or a center based setting. These comprehensive services are provided within a general education facility. Students are instructed within general education classrooms to the maximum extent possible. Special educators, general educators, and related service staff collaborate to reinforce IEP skills across a variety of areas and settings. Curriculum and instructional materials are modified in order to meet the student's physical and learning needs. Regular communication with parents is maintained and encouraged to maximize student achievement.

## **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE RESOURCE SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To identify students with communication disorders.
- To remediate communication disorders and to facilitate the development of compensatory skills to allow students to reach their potential to understand and use speech and language in an educational setting.

### ***POPULATION***

Students suspected of having a speech and/or language disability, ages 3 to 21 years, are eligible for assessment. Students identified as having an educationally significant speech and/or language disability are eligible for intervention services.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The decision to provide services is made by an Individualized Education Program team after completion of a speech-language assessment. A speech-language pathologist must be a member of the initial Individualized Education Program team that makes a recommendation for services.

### ***MODEL***

Speech-language services consist of the following components:

- Screenings and assessments
- Primary services in speech and language
- Related services in speech and language
- Consultation with general education and special education teachers
- Consultation with parents

When services are recommended, the goals, type and frequency are determined by the impact of the student's needs on classroom performance. Services are provided through a consultative or direct service model. Direct service may be provided to students individually or in small groups with ongoing consultation with other team members. Integrating services into the student's classroom environment may involve the use of in-class as well as pullout models. These services consist of remediation of speech-language deficits, development of compensatory strategies, and consultation regarding accommodations in the educational setting.

## **PRE-KINDERGARTEN LANGUAGE DISABILITIES SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To provide instruction in the understanding and use of oral language for successful functional communication.
- To provide instruction in the development of pre-academic skills in preparation for kindergarten learning.

### ***POPULATION***

Pre-kindergarten language disabilities classes serve three and four-year-old children with moderate to severe disorders in receptive and/or expressive language which significantly impact their ability to communicate and learn in typical preschool environments.

Students referred have essentially normal vision and hearing and typically demonstrate average cognitive ability, emotional development, and motor skills. Students' language disorders are not the result of environmental, cultural, or economic differences.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Students are placed through the Central Individual Education Program team meeting process.

### ***MODEL***

Pre-kindergarten language disabilities services provide speech and language supports and related services within a developmentally appropriate, play-based class. This model consists of a 2.5-hours daily class focusing on individualized instruction to address communication goals and objectives. A parent educator provides consultation to the speech pathologist as well as on-going training and support to parents and caregivers to facilitate the transfer of communication skills to the home setting.

## **ELEMENTARY LANGUAGE DISABILITIES SERVICES KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 1**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To improve student skills in understanding and use of oral language as a basis for the development of academic skills.
- To facilitate development of compensatory strategies that enable students to communicate effectively.

### ***POPULATION***

Language disabilities services are provided to students in kindergarten and first grade with a moderate to severe disorder in receptive and/or expressive language that significantly impacts educational performance. Students have essentially normal vision, and hearing, and typically demonstrate average cognitive ability, emotional development, and motor skills. The students' language disabilities are not the result of environmental, cultural, or economic differences.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Individualized Education Program team recommends placement for language disabilities services in consultation with Speech and Language Service staff and supervisor of special education. A speech-language pathologist must be a member of the school Individualized Education Program team.

### ***MODEL***

Language disabilities services offer students the following instructional/intervention components:

- Development of receptive and expressive oral language skills as a basis for academic learning through a multi-disciplinary approach with integrated services provided by a speech-language pathologist.
- Development of compensatory strategies to accommodate for oral language deficits.
- Emphasis on explicit teaching and practice of functional communication skills needed for effective oral communication with peers and adults in the school setting.

## **AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION CLASS AT CARL SANDBURG**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To enhance language development, vocabulary development, and expressive communication skills of students with augmentative and alternative communication needs.
- To provide a variety of communication approaches with the goal of independent, interactive communication via low-tech communication displays, high-tech voice output devices, and other forms of aided communication.

### ***POPULATION***

The class is designed for students who are nonspeaking or have limited speech with severe intelligibility issues in Kindergarten to grade 2. The class is designed for students who are in the emergent stages of augmentative and alternative communication development. While speech is valued and supported, the emphasis is on the use of alternative communication systems across the school day.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Individualized Education Program team in consultation with their Special Education Supervisor, the Carl Sandburg staff and the Interdisciplinary Augmentative Communication and Technology Team determines placement.

### ***MODEL***

The Carl Sandburg augmentative and alternative communication classroom, meets the highly specialized needs of students in a center-based school. Students develop communication and literacy skills and access the curriculum through a variety of augmentative communication and assistive technology systems and strategies. Students transition to the upper grades at Carl Sandburg or to less restrictive environments.

## **AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION TRANSITION CLASSROOMS**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To enhance language development, vocabulary development, and expressive communication skills of students with augmentative and alternative communication needs.
- To provide a variety of communication approaches with the goal of independent, interactive communication via low-tech communication displays, high-tech voice output devices, and other forms of aided communication.

### ***POPULATION***

The class is designed for students in Kindergarten to grade 2 who are nonspeaking or have limited speech with severe intelligibility issues, who are already using augmentative and alternative communication devices, but would benefit from an intensive class to expand their use these devices. While speech is valued and supported, the emphasis is on the use of alternative communication systems.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Individualized Education Program team in consultation with their Special Education Supervisor, the transition class staff and the Interdisciplinary Augmentative Communication and Technology Team determines placement.

### ***MODEL***

Students develop communication and literacy skills while accessing the general education curriculum through a variety of augmentative communication and assistive technology systems and strategies. Students participate with their typical peers in general education classrooms and other school activities when appropriate as a way to generalize the use of their augmentative and alternative communication systems.

## **OCCUPATIONAL AND PHYSICAL THERAPY**

### ***GOALS***

- To provide comprehensive occupational and physical evaluations as requested by Individualized Education Program team meetings.
- To provide students with educational disabilities related services of occupational and physical therapy as identified on individualized educational plans.
- To reinforce skill development by training and consulting with team members and parents.

### ***POPULATION***

Students age 3 to 21 with an educational disability whose Individualized Education Program designates occupational therapy and/or physical therapy.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Individualized Educational Program team, after completion and review of an evaluation by a qualified examiner in occupational therapy and/or physical therapy, recommends service.

### ***MODEL***

The goals, type, and frequency of therapy services are determined by the impact of student needs on classroom performance. Therapy is provided through a consultative or direct service model. In the consultative model, training is provided to the school staff and parents. Direct service is provided to students individually or in small groups and includes consultation with other team members. Service delivery models are aimed at integrating therapy into the student's classroom environment. The goal of all therapy is to facilitate independence and mastery of skills in specific areas of identified needs.

## **TRANSITION SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To provide a coordinated set of activities that promotes movement from school to post-school settings.
- To provide system-wide linkage for students age 14-21 to the community services they need to achieve independence after completing their formal education.

### ***POPULATION***

Students with disabilities beginning at age 14, or younger if appropriate, with an Individualized Educational Program are eligible for transition services.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Transition services are identified as part of the Individualized Educational Program team meeting process.

### ***MODEL***

Transition services are delivered through direct and/or indirect service models. The transition planning process includes:

- Consideration of post secondary outcomes for students including post secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living and community participation.
- Identification of student secondary transition service needs which may include instruction, related services, community experience, employment or postschool or adult living, daily living skills, and/or functional vocational evaluation.
- Development of transition activities based on Individualized Educational Program goals and objectives.
- Linkage to post secondary activities and services.

## **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To ensure that students with disabilities have access to the MCPS Programs of Studies.
- To provide consultation and support services to staff, students and parents in the assessment, selection, and use of assistive technology.

### ***POPULATION***

Assistive Technology Services provide support for students with a wide range of Assistive Technology needs from infant/toddler through age 21. The Interdisciplinary Augmentative Communication and Technology team (InterACT) supports students who may be non-speaking, severely limited in verbal expression, and/or limited in written communication due to physical disabilities.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Students requiring Assistive Technology services are identified through the Individualized Education Program team meeting process. Assistive Technology is generally considered appropriate when the student's current educational plan requires the addition of specific assistive technology devices and services.

### ***MODEL***

Assistive Technology Services provides a continuum of support services to local schools on a variety of levels. Training is provided system-wide to staff on the mandates that address assistive technology consideration since most of these decisions are implemented at the school level. Individual school teams may request consultation for situations requiring a greater level of expertise in considering assistive technology. For students receiving services from the Interdisciplinary Augmentative Communication and Technology team, systems and strategies include a range of options such as language boards, electronic communication devices, computer adaptations, and other forms of aided communication and assistive technology. Training the user, the school team and parents in the use of these systems is an integral part of the assistive technology consultation.

## **PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM SERVICES AND CENTERS**

### ***GOALS***

- To provide opportunities for young children with disabilities to interact with more able peers and, if possible, move to less intensive special education services.
- To provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for preschoolers with disabilities to maximize school readiness by the time they are eligible for kindergarten.

### ***POPULATION***

Three and four-year-old children served through Preschool Education Program services demonstrate delays or disabilities that impact their learning. Those with mild delays are served in community settings, while children with moderate to severe disabilities attend school daily to benefit from services in a cohesive, team-planned approach.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Central Individualized Education Program team initially recommends services through a preschool center. This preschool center's Individualized Education Program team may recommend placement in a different Preschool Education Program service following consultation with the coordinator.

### ***MODEL***

The preschool center model provides a range of options for peer interaction and special education services. When possible, these centers are located in schools that serve other preschoolers or house a day care center. School-based services typically consist of two or three classes with one class that serves students with severe disabilities. Pairing classes that have students with less intensive special education needs allows for student interaction and possible movement to a less restrictive setting. As part of the preschool center, teaching teams meet once per week to coordinate activities, address the learning theme to integrate therapy goals, and to review data collection or outcomes for children. Parent education is an important component of these services and parent educators hold regular meetings.

## **PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM ITINERANT & MEDICALLY FRAGILE SERVICES**

### ***GOALS***

- To address needs of students served in an itinerant model by consultation and training of general preschool staff members in conjunction with related services.
- To maximize learning opportunities for children with disabilities who are not medically released to attend services in a school, but who are available for learning experiences in preparation for school attendance.

### ***POPULATION***

Three and four-year-old children served by itinerant staff have mild disabilities that impact learning. Delays or disabilities may be in more than one developmental area, but the general preschool is able to accommodate the student through special education consultation.

Three and four-year-old children served through Medically Fragile services have medical conditions that prohibit school attendance. These students demonstrate developmental delays from mild to severe and require special education services in their homes.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Central Individualized Education Program team initially recommends itinerant and medically fragile services. The local preschool team in other Preschool Education Program services may recommend these options for children after consulting with the coordinator.

### ***MODEL***

Itinerant and Medically Fragile Services staff members provide specialized instruction and consultation to staff and parents in the community, general schools, and home settings countywide. A case manager/parent educator provides parent education, helps with transition to kindergarten and other services, and coordinates IEP meetings. Related services are provided at local elementary schools. Students who are not medically released to attend school receive all special education services at home. A transition plan is designed to help students and parents when students receiving Medically Fragile services are able to attend school.

## **PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM CLASSIC EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSES (ECC)**

### ***GOALS***

- To provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for young children to maximize their readiness for kindergarten.
- To identify the best modes of learning and accommodations for young children with multiple educational disabilities.
- To provide opportunities for interaction with children who receive more intensive special education services.

### ***POPULATION***

Three and four-year-old children served through this model require special education services primarily as a result of multiple, moderate educational disabilities or delays that impact two or more areas of learning. Children usually require more than one related service with techniques and methods from those services implemented by the classroom team to encourage generalization of skills.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Central Individualized Education Program team initially recommends placement in a Classic/Early Childhood Class.

### ***MODEL***

The Classic/Early Childhood Class model provides play-based, thematic instructional services within which specialized instruction and therapy techniques are integrated for each child. Preparing children for kindergarten and identifying accommodations that facilitate learning is a primary focus. For four-year-old children who are identified as needing fast-paced special education instruction with integrated therapy, a limited number of classes are available. Teaching teams usually meet once a week to coordinate activities and plan integrated therapy to address the learning theme. Parent educators assist parents in making the transition to kindergarten by providing information about the process and available services.

Three-year-olds typically attend classes in the morning and four-year-olds in the afternoon. Although most Classic/Early Childhood Classes are self-contained, whenever possible, children interact with peers in other MCPS pre-kindergarten classes and with day care centers located at the school.

## **PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM INTENSIVE NEEDS CLASSES**

### ***GOALS***

- To enable young children with significant communication disabilities, with a sensory integration component, to learn in a larger, less structured setting by the time they become eligible for kindergarten.
- To teach young children with significant communication disabilities strategies for making connections to the rest of the world through self-calming, sensory routines, visual strategies and/or assistive technology.

### ***POPULATION***

Intensive Needs Classes serve three and four-year-old children with severe communication and sensory integration disabilities that impact their ability to learn from their surroundings. Some children have a diagnosed learning problem such as autism or pervasive developmental delay. Some children may have difficulty learning in other general or special education preschool settings. Children who are overwhelmed by large spaces or are bothered by different kinds of sensory stimuli such as lights or sounds to such a degree can be served in Intensive Needs Classes.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Central Individualized Education Program team initially recommends placement in an Intensive Needs Class.

### ***MODEL***

Each Intensive Needs Class is located adjacent to a Preschool Education Program Classic/Early Childhood Class and is designed to provide a small, highly structured learning environment that incorporates sensory integration techniques. Typical preschool themes that emphasize early literacy and mastery of concepts are used within the structured environment. Direct instruction includes developmental concepts, turn-taking, and appropriate interaction with other people. Diagnostic teaching addresses various areas, such as, identifying sensory triggers and implementing procedures to desensitize the child, teaching a child self-calming techniques, or using various teaching methods including discrete trials for some children. The instructional team maintains close communication with parents and parent educators, and teachers are available to consult with parents about behaviors children demonstrate at home. Parent educators hold meetings during the day and evening on topics requested by parents. A major goal for children served in an Intensive Needs Class is to prepare for less restrictive services.

## **PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM BEGINNINGS**

### ***GOALS***

- To provide access to specialized educational services targeted at maximizing each child's developmental growth given severe disabilities
- To provide diagnostic and prescriptive instruction for young children in the area of assistive technology for accessing the environment both communicatively and physically

### ***POPULATION***

Three and four-year-old children who attend Beginnings have severe or profound physical and/or cognitive disabilities that impact their ability to communicate and/or learn. They usually require instruction with great repetition and many opportunities for practice at home and in school. Children in Beginnings often require intensive related services in order to benefit from their education. Many have significant feeding and/or oral motor issues or use feeding tubes for nutrition. Most children require physical assistance to move, walk, communicate, or attend to instruction.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

The Central Individualized Education Program team initially recommends placement in a Beginnings class

### ***MODEL***

Most of the instruction in Beginnings is diagnostic in nature in that staff members maintain detailed records about the techniques that are successful in helping a child learn to react and interact with the environment. All trans-disciplinary staff members implement techniques used by therapists to keep children available for learning. Movement, oral motor/feeding and environmental accessibility are important learning areas for the children. Whenever possible, part of the diagnosis that takes place involves identifying the most effective communication mode for each child. Most Beginnings classes are located in neighborhood schools where active interaction opportunities are implemented with other preschoolers or older children. A Beginnings class may be located in a special center for children who require the services of a nurse and/or specialized equipment. Close communication with parents is maintained and parent educators hold meetings during the day and in the evening on topics requested by parents.

## **MONTGOMERY COUNTY INFANTS AND TODDLERS PROGRAM CENTERS**

### ***GOALS***

- To identify and provide early intervention services for young children with developmental delays, ages birth to three years, to maximize school readiness and minimize the need for special education services at age three.
- To assist family members and/or caretakers of young children with developmental delays aged birth to three years, in enhancing their child's development and linking to community services if needed.

### ***POPULATION***

Children with a 25 percent delay in one or more developmental areas or with a diagnosed condition with high probability of delay, ages birth to three years, and their family members are served through this model.

### ***PLACEMENT PROCESS***

Any individual concerned about a child's development is required to refer the child and family to the Montgomery County Infant and Toddlers Program single point of entry. Interagency staff members assess children in all areas of developmental concern and if the child meets the criteria for developmental delay, an Individual Family Service Plan is developed with family members.

### ***MODEL***

Each geographically located Infants and Toddlers Center provides comprehensive, interagency services for families who suspect delays in the development of their young children, birth to three years of age. Initially, service providers assess young children in the areas of concern and if eligible, develop an Individual Family Service Plan with family members. The Individual Family Service Plan focuses on the priorities of family members in addressing delays of their child. Service providers, such as teachers and therapists, work with caregivers to teach them how to assist the child in developing age-appropriate skills. Federally mandated "natural environment" for services changes from a home or day care focus early in life, to possible school-based settings as the child nears age three. The Individual Family Service Plan is based on a family's desires for enhancing the development of their young child. As children transition out of Infants and Toddlers services at age three, team members complete linkage to community resources and refer children for consideration of special education services in MCPS. As part of this process, Montgomery County Infant and Toddlers Program coordinates parent education activities and conducts visits to preschool services in MCPS.