

Turning Pointe Autism Foundation

CN Therapeutic Day School Program Description

History

After interventions from specialists around the country, Kim & Randy Wolf were humbled by the progress they witnessed in their son Jack. With the conviction to offer the same proven interventions to children unable to access the same specialist, Kim & Randy decided to start a school. Their vision was to create an ideal learning environment for a student with autism. With comprehensive, clinical supports and a unique system called COPES, Turning Pointe Autism Foundation began in 2007 and Turning Pointe CN Day school was opened to more families.

Mission

Turning Pointe Autism Foundation creates opportunities and programs to educate individuals with autism through proven interventions to increase independence, encourage meaningful lifelong pursuits and enrich the community at large.

Purpose and Scope

Our program is designed to teach and develop a reliable system of communication, organization, positive behavior supports, emotional regulation, social skills and sensory regulation to individuals with autism whose needs cannot be met within their home school district. This focus helps our students gain access to education, their families, friends, and the community by building a foundation of independence and self-reliance.

Turning Pointe utilizes a 5-strategy interdisciplinary approach that supports the core deficits of autism spectrum disorder through Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) and assists students as they grow and learn to manage everyday challenges. Communication, organization, positive behavior supports, sensory and social skills (COPES) is our overall program model that guides student programming, data collection procedures and implements EBP's. This model uses the latest research and clinical expertise to help students develop new skills and enhance personal talents and strengths as they navigate towards independent thriving futures.

General Program Overview

Turning Pointe CN Day School is a therapeutic day school for individuals impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder who require a high degree of support and individualized instruction. Turning Pointe is approved to provide educational programming for Intellectual Disabilities, Speech or Language Impairment, Multiple Disabilities, and Autism for students 5-21 years of age. Our ISBE-approved program is currently serving students who are impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorders, providing middle school through transition-aged students with therapeutic interventions and ongoing opportunities in the areas of: communication, socially appropriate behavior and independent living skills.

Turning Pointe CN Day School operates from 8:15am–2:30pm Monday through Thursday, and 8:15am-2:00pm on Fridays during the regular school year from August to May. Our Extended School Year (ESY) session is an essential piece of our program as it ensures structure and consistency for our students during the summer, as well as decreases the likelihood of regression in skills. ESY focuses on maintaining and improving progress of student Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals, as well as

continuation of the same academic rigor as in the regular school year. ESY operates for approximately six weeks starting in mid-June and concluding at the end of July. Students are in attendance from 8:15am-1:15pm Monday through Thursday, and 8:15am-1:00pm on Fridays.

Classroom Structure Our classrooms are smaller in size with a high staff to student ratio to provide the assistance needed to support our students. Class sizes vary with no more than 8 students per classroom. All classrooms include at least one licensed special education teacher in addition to licensed paraprofessional staff. The amount of paraprofessional staff within a classroom is dependent on student's Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), the level of support needed, and the goal to foster independence.

All staff are certified or licensed according to their position and highly trained. Our multi-disciplinary team approach includes the following qualified professionals:

- Intensive Behavioral Interventionists (IBI's) which hold a Paraprofessional or Substitute Teaching License
- Special Education Teachers hold a Professional Educator License (PEL) and a Learning Behavior Specialist I (LBSI) endorsement
- Occupational Therapists (OT's)
- Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP's)
- Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA's)
- Behavior Specialist hold a masters in Applied Behavior Analysis and work under the supervision of a BCBA
- Administrators who hold a professional educator license with a General Administrative endorsement
- Registered Nurse (RN)

Related Services

Therapeutic services at Turning Pointe can be provided in an individual and/or group setting, and/or as consult services, as well as woven into our program throughout the day. Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists, and Board Certified Behavior Analysts work closely together to ensure cohesive programming for each student that works towards their goals. To promote generalization of skills, services can occur in a variety of settings and various times of the day (i.e. breakfast, community, life skills). Our therapeutic team maintains collaboration with family and other professionals to ensure consistency and home-to-school carryover. Parent trainings are offered to bridge the home-to-school gap as parents and families play a vital role in working with the school team on the goals.

Speech and Language Services

Certified speech and language pathologists work to help students increase functional communication and overcome other language barriers to actively participate in everyday life. Multi-modal communication assessments are conducted to determine communication modalities and deficits in receptive and expressive language. Therapy programming focuses on individual students' needs to request wants and needs, initiate and respond to social interactions, and protest or comment about the environment with multiple communication partners in various settings.

Occupational Therapy

Our certified occupational therapists work with our students in individual and group settings to increase independence in everyday activities and routines. Fine and gross motor skills, sensory processing, and visual-motor skills are assessed to determine current levels and the best strategies to utilize for success. Daily regulation strategies, environmental modifications, and safety are all key components. Sessions are tailored to specific needs to the students' and programming focuses on functional living skills, personal care, meal preparation, Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and sensory regulation and calming strategies.

Behavior Intervention

Behavior Interventions are founded on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). ABA is a treatment approach that applies principles of learning theory to produce positive and meaningful changes in behavior. Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) utilize function-based interventions to decrease maladaptive behaviors and increase socially appropriate behaviors. Replacement behaviors are taught proactively to increase student success. Interventions are customized, adjusted as needed, and created in conjunction with evidenced-based practices.

Curriculum and Program

Turning Pointe CN Day School students have the opportunity to take the same courses as their home school districts, but with intense individual attention, individualized modifications and accommodations, and greater structure. Each student has an individualized program that is created specifically for their individual goals and is aligned to the Essential Elements (EE's). Essential Elements are grade level expectations determined by the state on what students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should know and be able to do. Turning Pointe's overall aim is to bridge the achievement gap between the grade level expectation and the students' current level.

Turning Pointe uses a wide variety of materials and assistive devices with varying communication software to accommodate every student's individualized needs. Materials, lesson plans, and community-based opportunities are all adapted to fit the developmental needs of each student. Academic and IEP progress is reported quarterly and distributed to parents/guardians and students' home school districts.

The following subjects are interwoven throughout a student's day and occur in a variety of settings, including the community, to promote generalization of skills:

- *English and Language Arts:* A variety of materials and supports are utilized to assist students in making progress in understanding text, comprehension abilities, writing for a purpose, using language to communicate and inquire about their world. Resources that support students English and Language Arts programming may include but are not limited to: Links, Reading A-Z, Boardmaker
- *Math:* Fundamental math concepts are taught with an emphasis on number sense, geometry and spatial reasoning, measurement, and problem solving. Resources that support math skills may include but are not limited to: Links, Touch Math, Splash Math
- *Science:* Real-life application of fundamental science topics from Physical, Life, Earth Science are unified. Emphasis is placed on topics such as: matching and measurement, recognizing and observing, life processes, cooking, nutrition, and weather. Supporting resources: Links, Science A-Z

- *Social Studies*: Social studies courses study a variety of subject areas in geography, current issues, government, and history. Topics that are examined may include but are not limited to: relationships between people and the physical environment, human interactions, contemporary issues facing the U.S., weather and climate, emergencies and community helpers, current events, laws and rules, and community and socialization. Supporting resources: [Links](#)
- *Physical Education*: Health enhancing key concepts are taught and may include: demonstrating control in performing movement, spatial awareness, rules and safety, health-related fitness and effects on the body, following directions, remaining on task, accepting responsibility, participation in group activities and working cooperatively, health promotion and illness prevention, hygiene and proper care, identify environmental health risks, basic body parts and systems, nutrition and diet, positive vs. negative behaviors and choices.

Curriculum Resources & Assessments

- *Links* - Links is a comprehensive functional curriculum used for teaching skills and concepts that students need to be successful in school and the community. Links focuses on independence, includes assessments and progress monitoring, uses evidence-based practices, and is aligned to the Essential Elements.
- *Reading A-Z* - Includes several resources for reading comprehension, vocabulary building, lesson plan ideas, and assessments that are leveled and allow for differentiating instruction.
- *Touch Math* – Multisensory math program that teaches key concepts through hands-on activities
- *Splash Math* – A comprehensive high-tech math curriculum that allows the flexibility for personalized math lessons and monitors student progress. Various topics that are aligned to Common Core are covered in a fun and engaging way.
- *Boardmaker* – A resource and curriculum collection of standardized picture symbols used to support and teach communication skills.
- *Essentials for Living (EFL)* – The Essential for Living assessment tool and curriculum is one of the resources used to determine current levels in the areas of communication, behavior, and functional skills.
- *The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABBLIS-R)* – This assessment tool and curriculum guide assists in identifying language and other critical skills that are in need of intervention in order to develop an educational program that helps the acquisition of new skills.
- *The Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS)* – The AFLS assists in evaluating, tracking, and teaching functional skills to help individuals become more independent at home, school, and in the community. This system assesses the following skills: basic living, home, community participation, school, vocational, and independent living.
- *Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)* – A language and social skills assessment program for children with autism or other intellectual disabilities based on the principals of Applied Behavior Analysis.
- *TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile (T-TAP)* – Comprehensive formal assessment that assesses strengths, interests, and abilities in the areas of: vocational skills and behaviors, independent functioning, leisure skills, functional communication, and interpersonal behavior both in the home and school environment.
- *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)* – Evaluates receptive vocabulary, as well as identifies strengths and weaknesses in identifying nouns, verbs, and attributes, in order to implement evidence-based interventions.

- *Sensory Processing Measure (SPM)* – Standardized assessment for school aged children intended to support the identification and treatment of children with Sensory Processing Disorders. Items covered in the home and classroom forms include: social participation, vision, hearing, touch, taste, smell, body awareness, balance and motion, planning and ideas.
- *Social Skill Checklist* – Qualitative checklist completed by multiple communication partners to help evaluate social skills, such as: conversation skills, problem solving, understanding emotions, complimenting, and flexibility.
- *Science A-Z* – Leveled content and high-interest activities are available to teach a variety of science units that cover all four domains: Life, Earth and Space, Physical, and Process Science. Reading instruction and literacy are interwoven into the curriculum.
- *Augmentative & Alternative Communication Profile* – Assessment tool that measures subjective functional skills for developing communicative competence using AAC systems, re-evaluate skill level, and/or monitor progress.
- *AAC Evaluation Genie* – Informal diagnostic tool used to identify skills areas related to language representation methods found on AAC systems. 13 subtest areas can be administered to help build a framework to assist in selecting an appropriate AAC device.

Turning Pointe CN Day School is committed to providing ongoing services to our students as they become adults. This is why transition and vocational programming is a critical component of our programming and begins once they enter Turning Pointe. Our classroom teams and parents collaborate on transition plans and determine appropriate post-high school goals. The goals are incorporated into the students programming throughout the day and aim to build student independence. At Turning Pointe, we are dedicated to our students' goals for adult hood.

Evidence-Based Practices

Evidence-based practices (EBPs) include empirically supported techniques found within research journals, textbooks and accredited education programs. EBPs utilized by Turning Pointe may include but are not limited to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Antecedent-based | • Prompting |
| • Differential Reinforcement | • Video Modeling |
| • Partner Augmented Input (PAI) | • Functional Communication Training |
| • Communication Systems | • Discrete Trial Training |
| • Social Stories | • Structured Teaching |
| • Task Analysis | • Precision Teaching |
| • Visual Supports | • Errorless Teaching Procedures |

These practices are a part of on-going staff training.

Clinical Model

Turning Pointe utilizes a 5-strategy interdisciplinary approach that supports the core deficits of autism spectrum disorder through Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) and assists students as they grow and learn to manage everyday challenges. Communication, organization, positive behavior supports, sensory and social skills (COPEs) is our overall program model that guides student programming, data collection procedures and implements EBP's. This model uses the latest research and clinical

expertise to help students develop new skills and enhance personal talents and strengths as they navigate towards independent thriving futures.

- **Communication** – Communication is reciprocal process that involves listening and speaking in equal measures. Key strategies, such as Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) and Partner Augmented Input (PAI) are utilized to address communication/deficits in expressive and receptive language. Communication programming is developed by the SLP team in conjunction with the therapeutic team.
- **Organization** – The arrangement and preparation for the day in order to provide structure to help students cope with interruptions in routines and successfully execute the day. Schedules and routines are tailored and flexible to meet each student’s unique and changing needs. Daily and mini schedules, timers, visual supports, and proactive teaching are used to support students to interact in app?, pay attention to detail, reduce maladaptive behaviors, and increase independence. Organization supports students to navigate transitions successfully and stay on track.
- **Positive Behavior Supports** – Individualized behavior intervention plans are developed which provide tools and strategies to replace maladaptive behavior with positive behaviors. A protocol is outlined for staff to respond effectively to our students’ needs and implement the plans consistently and with fidelity. Positive Behavior Supports programming is developed by the BCBA team in conjunction with the therapeutic team.
- **Emotional Regulation** – Self-management programs are tailored to each student to identify escalation from a calm organized “green” state to a disruptive and nonresponsive “red.”
- **Sensory and Social** – Sensory dynamics and socials skills is a component that teaches processes to receive and organize information through the senses and how to use them successfully to participate in everyday activities and respond appropriately in social situations. Sensory and social programming is developed by the OT team in conjunction with the therapeutic team.

Programmatic Outcomes

All students that have attended Turning Pointe’s CN Day School’s program for one full quarter will maximize independence by 50%. Individualized targets will be chosen and measured based on current level of performance and subsequent skill mastery in the following three areas: functional communication, socially appropriate behavior, and independent living skills based on Turning Pointe’s Independence Rubric.

Student specific data will be collected quarterly and analyzed both program wide and per individual student annually.

Turning Pointe’s overall goal is to help students function in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The reintegration process will be discussed, evaluated, and agreed upon at the student’s IEP meeting.

Data Collection

Continuous student specific data is taken for all Turning Pointe students on IEP goals, academic performance and socially significant behaviors. Data collection procedures may be outlined by specific curriculum resources and/or assessments or created by Turning Pointe specialist. Data collected in all area is analyzed regularly to maximize instruction and behavioral interventions and also used to make adjustments to student programming as necessary.

Family Partnership

Family partnership is a key component of the Turning Pointe philosophy. The involvement of parents and families in the education process is critical to students' success. Parents are active participants in their child's education through trainings, meetings and student conferences, and on-going collaboration. Daily home notes are sent home for reciprocated communication regarding daily student happenings. Remaining connected through daily home notes is essential to maintain program consistency and work together towards student progress and accomplishments.

