CN Day School Program

History

In 2007, Randy and Kim Wolf developed a program of supports with therapists that proved life-changing for their family. Their son, Jack, had been diagnosed with autism at eighteen months and was engaging in the most destructive behaviors associated with the disorder. 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 specialists, Kim & Randy decided to start a school. Their vision was to create an ideal learning environment for students. With comprehensive academic and clinical support, Turning Pointe Autism Foundation began in 2007 and Turning Pointe CN Day school was opened to families.

What began in a modern day one-room-schoolhouse setting of a townhouse in south Naperville, is now a thriving 34,000 sq. ft. center on the northside of town. After moving into the new space in 2012 with just five original students, Turning Pointe CN Day School increased census by 700%. Currently, we serve 18 area school districts. Despite our steady growth, the need for our program has rapidly outpaced our ability to add classrooms and faculty. The list of students waiting for placement in our program - especially since the pandemic began in March 2020 - is tragically long. Serving the original therapeutic day school population, Turning Pointe also now boasts additional pilot day andemployment programs for adults. Committed to best practices, the devoted team of professionals build on proven results and outcomes of programs. As the professionals learn more, the practices and policies evolve.

TURNING POINTE
AUTISM FOUNDATION

Purpose and Scope

Our program is designed to teach skills within the areas of communication, socially appropriate behavior, and functional living to individuals with autism or other related disabilities 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 an interdisciplinary approach that supports the core deficits of autism spectrum disorder, multiple and intellectual disabilities, and speech/language disorders through Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) and assists students as they grow and learn to manage everyday challenges. Communication, socially appropriate behavior, and functional living skills, with an emphasis on skill generalization, is our overall program model that guides student programming, data collection procedures, and implementation of 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.

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 m terials 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. 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 transitionplans and determine appropriate post-high school goals. The goals are incorporated into students' programming throughout the day and aim to build student independence. At Turning Pointe, we are dedicated to our students' goals for adulthood.

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.
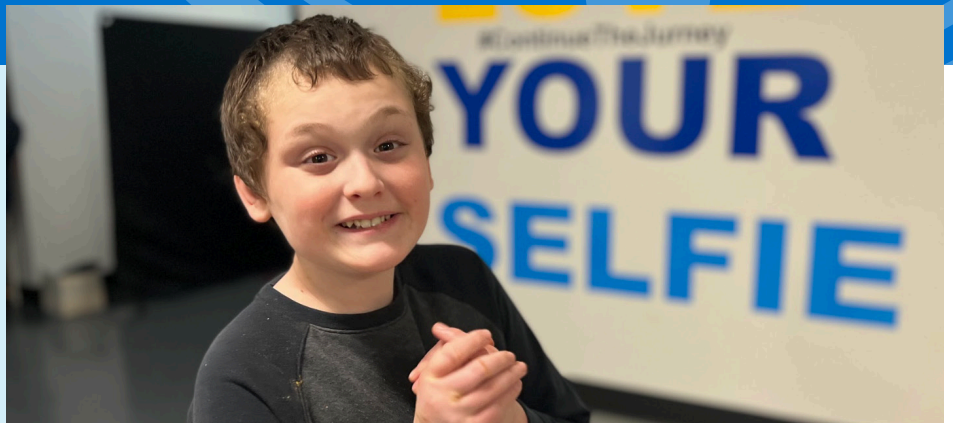
General Program Overview

Turning Pointe CN Day School is a therapeutic day school for individuals impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder and other related disabilities 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 64 students 5-21 years of age. Our ISBE-approved program is currently serving students who are impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorders and other disabilities, providing elementary 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 provides 5.25 hours of instructional time operating from 8:45am–2:00pm Monday through Friday during the regular school year from August to May. Our Extended School Year (ESY) session is an essential piece of our program available for those students whose teams have deemed it appropriate, 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 27 days starting in mid-June and concluding at the end of July. Students are in attendance from 8:45am-1:15pm Monday through Friday.

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, in addition to the required paraprofessional with more than 5 students 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 1 (LBS1) endorsement
- Occupational Therapists (OT's)
- Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP's)
- Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA's)
- Behavior Analysts hold a Masters in Applied Behavior Analysis and work under the supervision of a BCBA
- Administrators who hold a professional educator license (LBS1) with a General Administrative endorsement
- Registered Nurse (RN)

Classroom Structure

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Related Services

Therapeutic services at Turning Pointe can be provided in an individual and/or group setting, and/or as consult services, aswell 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 at a frequency and delivery model per individual student IEP's. To promote generalization of skills, services can occur in a variety of settings and at 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 training is 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.

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.

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 student specific needs and programming focuses on functional living skills, personal care, meal preparation, Activities of Daily Living (ADL), and sensory regulation and calming strategies.

Curriculum & 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. Instructional approaches for each approved category used may include, but is not limited to:

Autism
• Continuous objective measurement of performance to ensure effective instruction
• Systems of reinforcement to teach and maintain a variety of skills across multiple conditions and environments
• Individualized comprehensive behavior packages to reduce challenging behavior, and teach and improve communication and other socially important behaviors
• Through functional assessment, identify and alter environmental variables to prevent challenging behavior
• Behavior chains used to teach a variety of complex multi-step skills in smaller units
• Individualized sensory diets allow students to access sensory items throughout lessons

Intellectual Disabilities
• Systematic instruction across multiple environments to promote generalization of skills
• Succinct instructions provided and supplemented with a variety of visual supports
• Behavior management strategies are implemented following identification of function of behavior and builds on skills to meet individual needs of students
• Large and complex tasks are broken down to smaller components to promote success and independence
• Variety of sensory items and experiences are incorporated into daily lessons

Speech & Language Impairment
• Individualized instruction to promote success, ongoing gains, and maximize carryover across settings
• Increased time with Speech Language Pathologist
• Teach new and socially important behaviors by systematically and differentially reinforcing smaller approximations to increase a variety of skills
• Community-based instruction to promote maintenance and generalization of skills

Multiple Disabilities
• Systematic prompting and fading procedures to teach new skills
• Multiple opportunities to practice skills in a variety of settings to promote generalization
• Technology-aided instruction and intervention
• Unique behavior intervention plans to teach and increase adaptive behavior

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, identifying environmental health risks, basic body parts and systems, nutrition and diet, and 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 (ABBLS-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 socials 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 skill 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.

Reading Milestones — Alternative language-controlled program effective for students with language delays and other learning disabilities.

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 which are a part of on-going staff training, may include but are not limited to:

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

Clinical Model

Turning Pointe utilizes an interdisciplinary approach that supports the core deficits of autism spectrum disorder, multiple and intellectual disabilities, and speech/language disorders through Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) and assists students as they grow and learn to manage everyday challenges. Communication, socially appropriate behavior, and functional living skills, with an emphasis on skill generalization, 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 — A variety of communication skills are targeted to maximize student independence across all environments. Skills are taught throughout the year within a student's IEP and other individualized programming. Targeted skills from evidence-based assessments are measured regularly in the areas of expressive, receptive, pragmatic, syntax and/or grammar, and are leveled and individualized to best meet each student's needs. Communication skills may include but are not limited to requesting items/activities, asking for help, asking/answering questions, greetings, protesting and conversational skills. Students will have the opportunity to practice these communication skills within the structured school environment and during regularly scheduled community-based activities throughout the year. Communication programming is driven by current research and interventions within the field of Speech Language Pathology.

Socially Appropriate Behavior — Behavior analytic programming is utilized to impact skills and skill deficits within the area of socially appropriate behavior(s). Individualized programming focuses on skill deficits, determined by assessment, that directly affect the specific student, their caretakers, educators, and/or peer relationships within their everyday lives. These skills may include but are not limited to: waiting, accepting no, increasing on task behavior, and/or decreasing maladaptive behavior(s). To promote skill generalization, students are exposed to a variety of settings and situations in which to practice these skills in both structured settings and within a naturalistic teaching environment. Socially appropriate behavior programming is driven by current research and interventions within the field of Applied Behavior Analysis.

Functional Living Skills — Functional programming is designed to increase skills in the areas of functional living skills, vocational/supported employment opportunities, independent living and Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). Students will develop skills in order to maximize independence through programming focused on: fine/gross motor activities, toileting, dressing, grooming, meal preparation, housekeeping, chores, task completion, assembly, job readiness, etc. The overall goal of this clinical field is to promote students' ability to live as independently as possible and access vocational opportunities based on individualized skill sets and living arrangements. Functional living programming is driven by current research and interventions within the field of Occupational Therapy.

Programmatic Outcomes

All students that attend Turning Pointe CN Day School's program will maximize independence by mastering 80% of targeted skills based on Turning Pointe's Independence Rubric (from intake date to exit date). Student specific data will be collected quarterly and analyzed both program wide and per individual student annually. All students that attend Turning Pointe's CN Day School's program will decrease maladaptive behavior resulting in crisis management by 80% from baseline levels to exit date. Student specific data will be collected quarterly and analyzed both program wide and per individual student annually.

Reintegration — Skills necessary for a student to reintegrate into the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) include: socially appropriate behavior, independence with a decreased staff-student ratio, and functional communication skills. Skills are tailored to the specific student and their goals, with an emphasis on skill generalization to the new team and environment to which the student is reintegrating.

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 and revisited quarterly during progress reporting. If a student is ready for reintegration, the IEP team determines the best schedule, process, and supports that the student will need. Turning Pointe offers staff to assist in transitions and a fading process for student success. BCBA's collaborate with the home school district and Turning Pointe team, to constantly monitor and collect relevant data to assess how the process is going, when to increase time, and if other supports are needed, etc.

Since opening, Turning Pointe has had one student transition to partial days back to their home school district, and two students who are currently in the planning process of reintegration. Generalization of skills is a major component in Turning Pointe's teaching methodologies. This allows students to understand and apply the knowledge and skills they have learned to other settings, such as another school and their home life.

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 student specific IEP programming. Data is collected using a program wide online data collection system. Data in all areas is analyzed regularly to monitor progress, maximize instruction and behavioral interventions, and also used to adjust 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 training, 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.