

# Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support

## ASD Family Resource Guide



### Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD Programs)

The ASD Nest and ASD Horizon Programs are two different special education programs in District 1-32 schools that serve some students with autism. Each program works to strengthen academic and social skills, but they have different eligibility criteria and serve students in different types of classes. The same application process is used for both ASD Nest and ASD Horizon Programs.

ASD PROGRAM OVERVIEW – ASD Nest	ASD PROGRAM OVERVIEW – ASD Horizon
The ASD Nest Program is a partnership between the NYCDOE and <a href="#">New York University's (NYU) ASD Nest Support Project</a> .	The ASD Horizon Program was developed by the NYCDOE. Rethink Ed Platform Solutions provides support and instructional materials.
CLASS STRUCTURE	CLASS STRUCTURE
The ASD Nest program serves students with autism in a classroom with general education students. This class is a small Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, with one special education teacher and one general education teacher. As students get older, the class size increases. There is no classroom paraprofessional in this model.	The ASD Horizon program serves a maximum of eight (8) students with autism in a Special Class (SC). This class is taught by one special education teacher and one classroom paraprofessional (8:1+1). Opportunities for inclusion with general education students are encouraged.
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION	CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
ASD Nest Program classes follow the New York State Learning Standards and the same curriculum used in all NYC DOE schools. ASD Nest teachers are trained in specialized teaching strategies for students with autism, including a special social curriculum called Social Development Intervention (SDI) developed by NYU. SDI is an evidence-based program that supports the social/emotional development of ASD Nest students. SDI is taught in small groups and reinforced throughout the day.	ASD Horizon Program classes follow the New York Learning Standards and the same curriculum used in all NYC DOE schools. ASD Horizon teachers are trained in special strategies for students with autism. <a href="#">Rethink Ed Platform Solutions</a> provides support including evidence-based instructional materials, based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). These materials support the academic and social/emotional development of ASD Horizon students.
SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS	SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS
Related service providers use SDI to help students improve social functioning. This social language curriculum is taught in small groups.	Related service providers work together with classroom teachers using Rethink lessons to address ASD Horizon students' communication and socialization challenges.

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<b>ASD STUDENT PROFILE ASD NEST</b>	<b>ASD STUDENT PROFILE ASD HORIZON</b>
Students accepted to the ASD Nest Program must meet the following criteria:	Students accepted to the ASD Horizon Program must meet the following criteria:
<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>
Students must be eligible for an educational disability classification of Autism.	Students must be eligible for an educational disability classification of Autism.
<b>COGNITION / INTELLIGENCE</b>	<b>COGNITION / INTELLIGENCE</b>
ASD Nest students have average to above average intelligence with consistent development including verbal and nonverbal abilities, working memory, language, and attention.	ASD Horizon students typically have below average to average intelligence with areas of strengths and weaknesses.
<b>ACHIEVEMENT</b>	<b>ACHIEVEMENT</b>
ASD Nest students have academic skills on or above grade level. Students are able to work independently and in small groups with minimal support. Students participate in standard assessments, including New York State (NYS) Math and English Language Arts (ELA) exams. Accommodations are provided as written on the student's IEP.	ASD Horizon students have academic skills on or near grade level. Students benefit from instruction based on the principles of ABA and can work independently with some support. Students participate in standard assessments, including New York State (NYS) Math and English Language Arts (ELA) exams. Accommodations are provided as written on the student's IEP.
<b>LANGUAGE / COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>LANGUAGE / COMMUNICATION</b>
ASD Nest students have language skills on or close to age level, except in social language. These skills include staying on topic, and using socially appropriate nonverbal gestures, responses and facial expressions. For example, ASD Nest students may have difficulties that include unusual responses and/or misunderstanding others' statements and/or behaviors.	ASD Horizon students may have mild to moderate language difficulties. They may have difficulty expressing themselves and understanding what others are saying. They may also have difficulty with social language. Students entering kindergarten can speak in at least 2-3-word, meaningful sentences and older students are able to string words together to express needs and wants, but need support to communicate effectively in social situations.
<b>SOCIAL FUNCTIONING</b>	<b>SOCIAL FUNCTIONING</b>
ASD Nest students have mild to moderate social delays. ASD Nest students may demonstrate challenges in interacting and/or playing with peers or adults, with handling changes in routine, and with monitoring and controlling their own emotions and behaviors.	ASD Horizon students may have mild to moderate delays in playing and interacting with other students. Students may participate in social activities, but often prefer to engage in activities by themselves.
<b>BEHAVIOR</b>	<b>BEHAVIOR</b>
ASD Nest students may have mild behavior challenges, but are not physically aggressive, do not engage in self-injurious behaviors, and do not show "escape behaviors," such as running away from staff or exiting the classroom or school building.	ASD Horizon students may have mild to moderate behavior difficulties. They are not physically aggressive, and do not engage in self-injurious behaviors. ASD Horizon students do not show "escape behaviors," such as running away from staff or exiting the classroom or school building.

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### ASD PROGRAM ADMISSIONS PROCESS

**1. Submit an application:** If you would like to apply for the ASD Nest or ASD Horizon Program you can submit an application at any time.

If your child is entering kindergarten next year, we recommend you let us know as soon as possible. If your child is currently in grades K-12, work with your child's IEP Team to complete and submit an application. All assessments needed for the application process can be completed by your IEP team.

- Work directly with your child's IEP Team to complete and submit the application.
  - If your child is going into kindergarten, submit the ASD application as early as possible during your child's preschool year.
  - Kindergarten students should also participate in the general [kindergarten enrollment process](#) .
  - In grades, 1-12, submit the ASD application anytime.
- You or your child's current school can send the completed application by:
  - e-mail: [ASDPrograms@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:ASDPrograms@schools.nyc.gov) (*strongly preferred*)
  - fax: (718) 391-6887

Visit the [Specialized Programs](#) on the DOE website to download and print the ASD Programs application.

**2. Confirmation of Application:** After we receive your application we will send you a letter to let you know we received it. When an application is submitted, we will also contact your child's IEP Team to discuss the information provided on the application and ask any follow up questions.

- If you do not hear from the Central ASD Programs Team within one week of submitting your application, please contact [ASDPrograms@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:ASDPrograms@schools.nyc.gov) or call 718-391-6830.

**3. Initial Review for an ASD Program:** The Central ASD Programs Team reviews your child's special education record. We will see if testing is up-to-date and provides all the information about your child's intellectual ability and social, language, behavior, academic, and adaptive skills we require. In addition, we make sure your child meets criteria for an educational classification of autism on his/her IEP.

- **Up-to-Date Assessments:** If the Central ASD Programs Team needs more information about your child or if the assessments are not current, we will ask your child's IEP Team to get your consent and conduct any additional assessments needed. You will receive a letter from the DOE asking for your consent.
- **Additional Information:** Families may also submit additional evaluation materials with their application for review by the Central ASD Programs Team. Materials containing additional information should be no more than one year old for applicants in grades PreK-5 and no more than two years old for applicants in grades 6-12.

**4. ASD Program Admissions Process & Timeline:** If the information provided during the initial review indicates your child may be a candidate for either an ASD Nest or an ASD Horizon Program, a Central ASD Team member will work closely with you and your child's IEP Team to schedule an observation. The DOE may also conduct additional evaluations as needed and will ask for your consent. The DOE conducts the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) for children who may be eligible for the ASD Nest Program. We will request your consent for this evaluation.

Following the initial review, the Central ASD Programs Team will contact you with next steps in your child's ASD Program admissions process. If your child's clinical information indicates that s/he:

- **May be a good candidate for an ASD Program:** You and your child's school will be contacted by a Central ASD Programs Team member to review the information and discuss the next steps in the process.

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- **Does not meet admissions criteria:** Your child's IEP Team will work with you to determine an appropriate special education program and/or service recommendation to meet your child's needs. You can submit a new ASD Program application at a later date if new information about your child becomes available.

**5. ASD Program Admissions Observation:** If the initial review shows that your child may meet at least some of the eligibility criteria, an observation will be scheduled either by an ASD Program School or by an ASD Central Team member. The ASD Central Team will review your child's observation report and if your child meets admissions criteria and there is availability we will offer an ASD Program placement. You and your child's current school will receive a copy of the written observation report and you will be contacted by the Central ASD Team to discuss the results.

**6. Admissions Determination:** An admissions determination is based on the information and data gathered from your child's psychoeducational evaluation, autism diagnostic testing, observations, and any additional information submitted. The Central ASD Programs team will discuss whether your child meets the admissions criteria for an ASD Nest or an ASD Horizon Program with you and your child's IEP Team. Once a student is accepted to an ASD Program, his/her IEP will be written by your child's IEP Team with guidance from the Central ASD Programs Team.

**7. Visiting an ASD Program:** If your child is accepted to an ASD Program you may visit the school where the program is offered. Because ASD Programs are not in every school and there are a limited number of seats, student applications are assigned a specific school. We are not able to accommodate requests for specific schools. Families of accepted students will be contacted by the school being offered to arrange a school visit and to enroll at the school.

### INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS ACCEPTED TO ASD PROGRAMS

Families of newly accepted students will receive a Prior Written Notice (PWN) and School Location Letter (SLL) following the IEP meeting. The SLL will specify the school your child will attend. Upon receipt of the SLL, families of accepted students should bring the documentation needed to enroll their child at the school as soon as possible<sup>1</sup>. It is important to register at the ASD Program school as quickly as possible so that transportation, if included on the IEP, is not delayed.

- **Transportation:** Special education transportation is provided to and from school. Work with your child's IEP Team to receive special education transportation as an IEP service. The need for special transportation accommodations such as limited travel time or a temperature-controlled vehicle, must be supported by medical documentation
- **ASD Summer Program:** The ASD Nest and the ASD Horizon Program follow the ten-month District 1-32 school calendar from September through June. The NYC DOE provides an optional summer program for students in ASD programs in kindergarten through fifth grade, and those entering ninth grade. The purpose of the summer program is to promote continued social development.

A Central ASD Programs Team member will work closely with your child's IEP Team and will also have ongoing contact with you regarding your child's application.