

THE
DYNAMITE
PROGRAM

DISABLED

YOUTH

NEEDING

ASSISTANCE

MEDICALLY

INDIVIDUALLY

THERAPEUTICALLY

EDUCATIONALLY

DYNAMITE PROGRAM

The DYNAMITE (Disabled Youth Needing Assistance Medically, Individually, Therapeutically, Educationally) Program serves the needs of children with the most severe cognitive impairments. The philosophy of the DYNAMITE Program is to provide students with a caring and supportive environment that fosters the development of their individual strengths and meets their highly specialized needs. IEP goals and objectives selected for this population are based on the student's current level of functioning and developed utilizing the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS).

The Collaborative Therapeutic Model is utilized to support the students and classroom staff. This Model incorporates an interdisciplinary team of certified personnel trained in assessment procedure and program planning. This team consists of the following members: child study team, speech therapist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, teacher, nurse, parents, and a sending district representative. By using a team approach, these students are assured of receiving the most comprehensive services.

The Collaborative Team works together to perform functional assessments of the children and utilizes this information to develop the Individualized Education Program. In addition to assessment, members of the team perform their therapeutic services within the classroom setting. As they administer therapy in class, they are training the classroom teachers and paraprofessionals to provide follow-up support in each therapeutic area. This promotes generalization and reinforcement of therapeutic services throughout the day.

Students in the DYNAMITE Program are very medically fragile. Many of these students require a special feeding program and highly specialized nursing care in order to ensure their health and safety. Through the interactions of the teacher, specialists and parents, this program offers a caring, supportive and stimulating environment that fosters student growth and development.

GOALS

1. To develop each student's strengths in order to facilitate optimal independence.

2. To provide multi-sensory stimulation that fosters student growth and development.
3. To create a nurturing environment that enables the students to develop the Core Curriculum Content Standards at their individual level of functioning..

ENTRY CRITERIA

1. Classified as Severe Cognitively Impaired.
2. Chronological ages 5-21 years.
3. Pervasive developmental delays in the areas of language, adaptive skills, motor skills and cognition.
4. Requires adults to perform and/or provide essential care.
5. Requires support services through physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and nursing services.
6. May not be physically aggressive toward others.
7. Student needs for program placement are reviewed on an individual basis.
8. May not have the type of life threatening condition(s) that require acute care. (The program is an educational model and cannot accommodate certain medical needs.)

Staff/Student Ratio:

One staff member to three students.

Program Opportunities:

Program Components: The DYNAMITE Program provides students with many specialized program opportunities. Components of the program are as follows.

1. LIFE SKILLS – Life Skills are an integral part of the DYNAMITE Program. Since each child’s individual needs are unique, a specific life skills program is developed and implemented for each student to help them maximize their level of functioning. In order to achieve independence, personal hygiene and self-help skills are incorporated into the daily routines. Self concepts, the family, the community and current events are also covered in this area.
2. TECHNOLOGY – Students are provided with ongoing opportunities for adapted access to their environment through the use of various

equipment. For example, by using an environmental control unit (ECU), a student can activate a common food blender, radio or tape player by touching a switch located on their tray or wheel chair. Switches can also be used to activate communication devices or battery operated toys. Touch screens for computer access, headset and electronic books are also used in class.

3. **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT** – Interaction with others is a vital aspect of the DYNAMITE Program. Structured time is scheduled on a daily basis to encourage socialization. Students are encouraged to interact with one another and use social communication skills.

4. **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

ART – Through art, students are given the opportunity to express themselves creatively and work on motor skills, attending, socialization, communication skills, etc. The art experience also promotes feelings of positive self-esteem.

MUSIC – Music is a powerful medium for the DYNAMITE students. Music activities are structured to allow positive student interaction and an appropriate outlet for creativity and enjoyment.

5. **HEALTH, SAFETY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION** – Adaptive Physical Education is provided at the student's ability level. Body awareness, spatial awareness, and creative movement are reinforced through participation in a wide range of motor skills and group activities.

6. **FEEDING** – Students receive oral motor stimulation and feeding training. The emphasis is on providing a positive and safe feeding environment. Trained staff assist the students at lunch and provide adaptive equipment and techniques to maximize feeding potential.

7. **LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY** – Communication skills are an important part of all classroom interactions. Throughout the day, students are provided the opportunity to request, make choices and respond using various means of communication consisting of verbal speech, sign language, picture communication symbols or augmentative communication devices.

8. **SCIENCE** – Students are encouraged to use their five senses to begin exploring and interacting with their environment.

9. MATHEMATICS – Math concepts are integrated into all aspects of daily routines and supported through teacher directed activities.
10. SOCIAL STUDIES – Concepts of “self,” family members, the neighborhood, community, and current events are covered in this area.
11. PHYSICAL THERAPY – Physical therapy offers expertise that helps to develop functional mobility through the use of therapeutic exercise and adaptive devices.
12. OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY – Occupational therapy offers expertise that encourages student engagement in activities that promote successful participation in school and community environments. This includes educational tasks, activities of daily living, and social participation, play and leisure activities.
13. SPEECH THERAPY – Group and individual therapy services are provided as needed to facilitate functional communication. A total communication approach (verbal output, sign language, pictures, and voice output devices) are implemented to provide optimal opportunities of communication.