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**Occupational Therapy (OT):** A therapy that helps improve functional physical skills that involve using muscles. These skills may include: handwriting, shoe tying, and dressing.

**Physical Therapy (PT):** A therapy that helps build strength, mobility, and motor skills. These skills may include: running, throwing, and catching.

**Speech-Language Therapy:** A therapy that helps improve communication skills, including receptive language, expressive language, comprehension, and social pragmatics.

***What are the expectations at FMA?***

All students have the ability to learn. At FMA, we set high expectations for all our students and challenge them to complete their best work. With continued support from their families, teachers, and peers, it is expected that the students with ASD will become contributing members of society, who can live as independently as possible.



## Resources

These are just a few of the many resources. For more information, ask about our binder in the office of the FMA.

[www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)

[www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)

[www.autismresearchnetwork.org](http://www.autismresearchnetwork.org)

[www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)

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# Hey! We've Got Great News!



**Autism Inclusion at FMA**

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## **At FMA:**

We educate all learners, including almost 30 students on the autism spectrum.

## **What is autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?**

ASD is a developmental disability that affects social interaction, communication, and behavior. ASD includes a group of disorders: classic autism, Rett syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder, pervasive developmental disorder-not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS), and Asperger syndrome. ASD can be associated with intellectual disabilities, as well as motor coordination and physical health issues.

## **Inclusion**

At FMA students with ASD are frequently included with their typically developing peers. Inclusion is the full acceptance of all students and leads to a sense of belonging within the classroom community. The benefits of inclusion for all students and teachers have been studied and well-documented. One study shows that students with disabilities who are educated within an inclusive setting do better academically and socially than in non-inclusive settings, while students without disabilities serve as positive speech and behavior role models and are more accepting, tolerant, and patient (Carnahan, Hume, Clarke, & Boarders, 2009).

When included, students with ASD are supported by a network of therapists, teachers, and paraprofessionals.

## **What does inclusion look like?**

At FMA all children attend school-wide events, fieldtrips, and social activities. Some students are included during academic times, according to each child's specific needs. Other students are fully included in general education classrooms. In addition, there are students in substantially separate classrooms, who use a specialized curriculum to access the state-wide standards.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***What causes autism?***

Current research indicates that there is no one cause of autism. It is believed that genetic risk and environmental factors impact early brain development. Much research continues to be conducted in this area.

### ***How common is autism?***

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identify around 1 in 88 American children as on the autism spectrum. Studies show that autism is four to five times more common among boys than girls.

### ***What are the early indicators?***

Each individual with autism is unique. Typically by 18 months it is evident that a child has difficulties in social interaction, playing,

and verbal and nonverbal communication. As children grow up, signs differ from moderate to very severe and can include: inability to start and maintain a conversation, playing alone, lacking empathy, increased sensory reactions, and repetitive body movements. Autism must be diagnosed by a doctor.

### ***What does it look like?***

While every person with ASD is different, there are still several common behaviors. Some things you might see or hear include: hand flapping, loud vocalizations or screaming, covering one's ears, and playing with fidget toys.

### ***What treatments are available?***

There is no cure for autism. However, there are many treatment therapies that have been proven effective. Some of these include: occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language therapy, DIR/floortime therapy, and applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy.

**Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA):** A systematic method of instruction that uses a series of prompts and positive reinforcement to generalize learned behaviors and reduce negative behaviors.

**DIR/Floortime:** A relationship-based therapy designed to help improve relationships, language, and thinking.