

Accotink Public Education Center (APEC)

Executive Summary

APEC is a special needs, language-based, literacy-rich Pre K - 3 Center serving children with developmental disabilities including receptive and expressive language disorders and specific learning disabilities in reading, mathematics and written expression. This unique early childhood program combines the best teaching practices supported by current research on brain function, language acquisition, and reading. APEC uses the collaborative model of pairing speech/language therapists with master teachers providing the highest level of therapeutic intervention in a rich, challenging and engaging safe environment. Research studies show a critical need for strong preschool programs and the importance of the preschool years to children's long-term success.

APEC is open to all children throughout the District of Columbia; however, focus is directed to the children in Wards 7 and 8. Our student population is diverse, consistent with the demographics of the District of Columbia and Wards 7 and 8.

Our first year of operation starts with eighty students in the 4 – 5 year-old age range. APEC reaches out to the community and develops a comprehensive recruitment strategy and partnership with Child Find, Head Start, DCPS and other agencies involved with early identification and intervention. The eighty children attend class in eight highly structured classrooms. The multidisciplinary team consists of four speech/language therapists, sixteen teachers (eight master teachers and eight co-teachers), a clinical psychologist and an occupational therapist. This team will work collaboratively in implementing on-going assessments to track students' progress and ensure each child receives appropriate instruction.

It is our mission to help our students optimize their potential, both educationally and emotionally, to enable them to become increasingly adaptive and self-directed so they can return to a less restrictive environment with the confidence that allows them to become productive members of society. We believe that our students will be equipped with the tools and the knowledge to become high achievers, proficient readers and critical thinkers. Staff and administration work closely with parents in a collaborative manner in order to achieve high standards. All educational approaches support the development of the whole child through a balance of investigation, play and instruction.

All children learn and benefit from innovative approaches that integrate the most current research in education reform and student achievement. All children are provided with alternative instructional strategies that accommodate a variety of learning styles and that draw on multiple intelligences. All students are taught the positive values and critical thinking skills necessary to become productive and caring citizens. All children are active participants in their community, empowered to make a difference.

APEC offers a rich, language-based educational program designed to meet developmental, academic and social needs in a warm, intellectually challenging environment. Instruction is individualized, and instructional materials and methodology are equated learning with styles and developmental needs of students. The instruction employs a diversity of materials and techniques.

On-going evaluation is an integral part of the instructional program. Classes are small with 5 : 1 ratios. All classrooms have a master teacher and a co-teacher. The focus of APEC is on students with disabilities; however, students without disabilities and English Language Learners are also welcome.

Students are supported in their learning by the support services of speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists and a clinical psychologist as identified in their Individualized Educational Program. A multidisciplinary team approach ensures that all of the students' needs are appropriately addressed. A school-wide behavior management program reinforces appropriate behavior. Under IDEA each student's primary goals are set in their IEP and are measurable, observable and objective. Parents/guardians are an integral part of the educational program with daily communication and IEP development through collaborative goal setting.

The staff systematically employs behavior management principles to bring structure and predictability into the classroom and school environment. APEC students become increasingly more adaptive and self- directed.

The Accotink program was established in 1967. APEC is the newest Accotink School and brings the wealth of successful history and resources of its programs. We are motivated by the opportunity to provide preschool and grade school students scientifically based interventions designed to eliminate the need for remediation in secondary school.