May Center School for autism and developmental disabilities

RANDOLPH, MASSACHUSETTS

Residential Services Q&A

At our May Center School in Randolph, Mass., we provide full-day, year-round educational and vocational services for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorder and related developmental disabilities.

Many families choose to combine school services with a community-based residential program at homes in nearby neighborhoods.

We recognize that making the decision to move your child into a residential program can be a difficult one. Most families who are considering this option have a number of questions and concerns. We offer answers to some of those commonly asked questions.

Please contact us at any time!

Q: Are your residences actual homes, or more like school dormitories?

A: Our residences are family homes in safe neighborhoods. We work hard to make each residence a warm and welcoming "home away from home" for the children who live there. Residences are well-constructed, well-maintained single-family homes with fenced backyards, picnic tables, grills, and space for outside activities. Inside, they are neat, clean, comfortable, and homey.

Children receive round-the-clock supervision provided by caring and competent staff. Each day is designed to reflect a typical day for any child. Staff and residents work together in the kitchen, preparing and cleaning up after meals as appropriate. They play games or watch TV together in the common living areas, and have access to exercise equipment and computers. Most residences offer shared bedrooms and bathrooms. Some single bedrooms are available, based on documented clinical needs. Our houses have alarms on all doors, and on windows if necessary, to ensure the safety of those who live there.

Q: What is the staff-to-student ratio? Is there continuity between day programs and residential life?

A: Our daytime staff-to-student ratio is 1:2; at night it is 1:4. We offer 24-hour "awake" staffing, and our overnight staff check on students every 15 minutes throughout the night. We can also provide 1:1 care, if that is a requirement of your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

To help students smoothly transition into their day, our school staff arrive at the residences at 7 a.m. on weekdays to assist with typical morning routines—personal hygiene, breakfast, and transportation to school.

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Q: How often will my child be able to participate in community outings?

A: Residential students have opportunities to join in community outings each week. They often go to parks for picnics and hikes, take trips to the zoo, see movies, visit the library, and go bowling. Many attend college and community sporting events and, on occasion, Celtics and Red Sox games! We go to retail establishments, like grocery and drug stores, to help students develop community-based skills. We also have outings to nearby restaurants to practice social skills and, just as importantly, to have fun together!

Q: How often can I visit my child? What kind of support is available for families?

A: You are always welcome! We have an open door/open visit policy. We do recommend that you make an appointment or select certain days or times to ensure your child is at home and available.

Over time, many families get to know each other and spend time together, helping create an even more family-friendly environment for the children.

During our designated home weekends each month, many students visit their family homes. On these weekends, a member of our Family Services staff is always on-call to provide support to families, should any questions or issues arise.

To help ensure continuity between home/school/residence, we offer free family training sessions and parent support groups. Each student has a case manager who provides the family with regular updates, and each family has its own Family Services representative.

Q: Can you help my child become more independent?

A: We focus on skill-building, quality of life, and enhanced independence for all the students in our care. Our residential services help students learn, strengthen, and generalize their independent living skills such as dressing, bathing, brushing teeth, and pitching in with household chores.

We also recognize the importance of helping students develop leisure skills and making sure they have their own personal time. While encouraging students to become more independent, our staff continuously provide support and supervision to ensure that each child's unique needs are met.

Q: I know my son works on his IEP goals in the classroom, but will he be able to work on them in the residence too?

A: Absolutely. Each residence provides another location and many additional opportunities for us to continue to address students' IEP goals. Some IEP goals—such as daily living and communication (speech and language) skills—can be addressed in the residences. Others—such as banking, purchasing, and safety skills—are addressed during community outings.

All staff members receive comprehensive and ongoing training, and all are supervised by highly qualified professionals. Whether we are working with our students in the school or residential setting, we use the same evidence-based techniques of applied behavior analysis (ABA).

Q: Are there on-site medical services at the residences?

A: Yes. To meet the medical needs of our students, we have a residential nursing staff, a nurse on-call system, and consulting physicians. A pediatrician and a consulting psychiatrist visit the school on a regular basis.

Q: What will happen when my child turns 22 and must transition into adult services?

A: In Massachusetts, if a student is already receiving services through an IEP, s/he may be automatically eligible for continued adult services when s/he turns 22. You should become familiar with federal and state laws (such as Chapter 688) that govern the agencies that provide these services. We will make every effort to meet your family's unique needs and guide you through the transition process.

Most families who require ongoing support choose to continue their relationship with May Institute beyond graduation. These young adults transition directly into our state-of-the-art day programs, and/or our nearly 100 group homes across Massachusetts, ensuring a seamless continuum of care.

To arrange a tour, please contact us at:

781.437.1300 or **info@mayinstitute.org**

Learn more about our May Center School, at:

mayinstitute.org/randolphschool

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May Institute is a national leader in the field of applied behavior analysis, proudly serving autistic individuals individuals with developmental disabilities, brain injury and neurobehavioral disorders, and other special needs.

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