

**Belmont Public Schools
Preschool Program**

Specific Program Description

Assignment: Special Education

School: Belmont system wide

Population Served: Special Education Students Aged 3-5

Grade: Pre-K

Program Description

(General population, program goal, program design, relationship to regular education, entrance criteria (if appropriate), etc.)

This program is designed to provide support to Belmont residents aged 3-5 years old found to have deficits in any developmental area of one year or more. This support is delivered along a continuum of in district services to out of district placements. In district service provision may consist of consultation and related services only; an inclusion classroom or a combination of inclusion and self-contained classroom models. Out of district placements are typically self-contained models with a focus on significant and multiple areas of deficits.

Students are referred to Belmont Preschool for evaluation through area Early Intervention Programs; area community preschools; local pediatricians; or parents. Based on reports; interviews; observations and screening tools, children are evaluated in all areas of need by the Belmont staff consisting of Speech/Language Pathologists trained in Early Language Development; an Occupational Therapist trained in sensory integration and a Physical Therapist trained in mobility assessment. Also available are the School Psychologist and Early Childhood Special Educators and specialists. Students may be evaluated in the following areas: Speech/Language; Fine and Gross Motor; Sensory Integration; Play Skills; Functional and Pragmatic Language; Social/Emotional Development; Cognitive Development and Behavioral Assessments.

As a result of the evaluations, children are referred for services based on the significance of their delay and the numbers of areas of delay. Related services only models are recommended if a child demonstrates a one year delay in a single area of development or a one year delay in multiple areas, but has demonstrated continued progress in all other areas. Related services are provided in a therapeutic environment individually or in small groups and dyads, based on need. If children are found to have a delay of at least one year in multiple areas, and sufficient progress is considered improbable without special accommodations and modifications even with related services, and a child is considered able to benefit from peer modeling and small group instruction, a slot in an inclusion classroom may be recommended. If a student is not developmentally able to benefit from peer models or is not developmentally able to participate in small group instruction, a self-contained out of district placement may be recommended. . Length of the classroom day; week and year is flexible and dependent on the needs of the student.

A typical preschool classroom slot is 2.5 hours per day. Full day classroom programs run 5 hours per day. Classrooms are scheduled on a continuum of three to five days and inclusion to self-contained. Each inclusion classroom consists of a highly structured environment servicing a small group of up to 15 students including eight tuition paying students and seven children on IEPs. Self-contained classrooms service up to seven children on IEPs. Classroom accommodations are in place in all rooms including supportive schedule visuals; visual task analysis; behavioral supports; transition tools; adult and peer modeling; and frequent opportunities for small group and dyad teaching. In addition, the instructional material is modified individually for pace and volume as needed although it is drawn directly from the early childhood education standards. Students are typically scheduled along the continuum depending on level of need. Classroom placements include placement in an inclusion classroom or a combination of self-contained and inclusion sessions.

Each class has a low teacher/student ratio and is taught by a teacher with Special Education certification with the assistance of two classroom assistants. Consulting to each classroom is a Speech/Language Pathologist; an Occupational Therapist and a Physical Therapist. Also available are the School Psychologist and the Early Childhood Liaison. Additional Professional Aides; Specialists or Health Aides are added as needed to support students with significant mobility; vision and hearing; medical or behavioral issues in order to allow them to access the curriculum and maintain safety.