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**The NEST and HORIZON Autism Spectrum Disorder Programs
within the
New York City Department of Education**

The NEST and Horizon programs are two Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) programs available in New York City public schools in Districts 1-32. The primary goal of both programs is to provide academic and behavioral supports to students from kindergarten to 12th grade who have an ASD diagnosis. The programs have different class structures, curricula, means of instruction, and means of providing social/emotional supports.

The NEST program structure is an “Integrated Co-Teaching” (ICT) class where students are educated with age-appropriate peers in the general education classroom. ICT provides access to the general education curriculum and specially-designed instruction to meet the students' individual needs. This setting provides a general education teacher and a special education teacher, and 40% of the students have IEPs while 60% do not. The Horizon program, on the other hand, is an 8-1-1 classroom setting, with eight students, one special education teacher and one or more supplementary school personnel.

In order to be accepted into either program, the student must be:

- classified as having autism;
- able to participate (including with appropriate accommodations) in state testing; and
- meet the criteria for the relevant program.

For the NEST program, students must have:

- average to above average intelligence;
- academic skills at or above grade level;
- language/communication skills which, with the exception of social language, are at or close to age level;

- mild to moderate delays in social functioning; and
- only mild behavior issues.

For the Horizon program, students must have:

- below average to average intelligence;
- academic skills which are at grade level;
- language/communication skills which are up to mildly to moderately delayed in all areas;
- delays in social functioning; and
- moderate behavioral issues (but not physically aggressive, self-injurious, or exhibiting “escape behaviors”)

Students who meet the criteria for each of the programs must also go through an **application process**. All families, except those of students entering kindergarten, will need to work with their child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to complete and submit the application, <https://bit.ly/2SjhRlf>.

The application process includes: submission of an application, confirmation of receipt of the application by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), and initial review of the application by NYCDOE. If the information provided indicates that the student may be a candidate for the program, a member of NYCDOE’s ASD program will work with the IEP team and the family to conduct a tour and explain the admissions process and timelines, observe the student, and make an eligibility determination.

NYCDOE will provide eligible students in either program with **transportation**.

Each program provides options for **summer services**, with each program following the ten-month Districts 1-32 school calendar from September to June.

To learn more about these programs, contact your child’s IEP team and/or the NYCDOE’s ASD team at ASDprograms@schools.nyc.gov or (718) 391-6872. You can also obtain detailed information from the NYCDOE’s Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support’s ASD Family Resource Guide, <https://bit.ly/2SjhRlf>.

If you have any questions, you can contact NYLPI during intake hours: Monday-Friday, 10am-3pm at **212-244-4664**.