

The Watson Institute Friendship Academy



Friendship Academy operates an approved private elementary, middle and high school program which is complemented by a school based partial day hospital program. Friendship Academy is licensed by the PA Department of Education and Department of Welfare.

Recognized as experts in the area of special education and school based mental health, Friendship Academy staff provide training and consulting services to area agencies and school districts. In addition, Friendship Academy is a training site for university programs in special education, social work, psychology and nursing.

Education Program

Friendship Academy serves as an educational placement option for students ages 5 to 21 with serious emotional and behavioral challenges. It is a resource for children from school districts located in Allegheny and surrounding counties. Once a student is accepted into the Friendship Academy program, the school district continues to remain involved in the planning and monitoring of the student's progress with a goal of eventual full-time inclusion back in the home school district. The curriculum is standards based, aligned to the assessment anchors integrating technology, hands on learning, and real world applications.

School Based Partial Hospital Program

As a psychiatric school based hospital program, the program provides intensive treatment services during the school day to children and adolescents. The treatment program emphasizes a skill based approach, including emotional management and problem solving. Students are also taught cognitive behavior therapy skills to improve perception of self, situations, and critical events.

Individual Positive Behavior Support

The program uses a continuum of proactive positive behavior support strategies. As required by Chapter 14 and IDEA 2004, Positive Behavior Support Plans are developed for each student and integrated within their Individualized Education Plan. Data on all students is collected, analyzed and used to make decisions for each child. Our goal is to teach students appropriate behaviors and pro-social skills.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Support

Watson Financial, a "best practice" school-wide positive behavior support system, teaches new behaviors, self-management and consumer math. It is a token economy where students earn money for demonstrating proper behavior and acting responsibly and includes components of self-monitoring and honesty to help change behaviors for the better.

Related Services

Friendship Academy offers health and psychological services, specialized reading instruction, speech and language therapy, occupational and physical therapy, and other related services to meet individual needs. Watson Institute's Neuropsychological & Diagnostic Clinic, part of Watson's Psychological Services Department, offers cognitive evaluations when the treatment team feels that behavior issues may be the result of brain functioning. This service is utilized to assist with diagnosis and treatment.

Transition Services

We provide transition services that prepare students for careers, citizenship and life-long learning. Classes include career path identification, vocational assessments, and job skill acquisition. Students develop competence, confidence and connections through participation in the three components of this program: school-based learning, work-based learning and career education activities.

For more information visit our website at www.thewatsoninstitute.org
Or call Friendship Academy at 412-361-2801