



Education Program Description

The Shafer Center for Early Intervention, located at 11500 Cronridge Drive, Suite 130, Owings Mills, Maryland. The main phone number is 410-517-1113. The Shafer Center is operated under the legal authority of Shafer Center for Early Intervention, Inc. The Shafer Center was created in an effort to provide a rich and comprehensive learning experience for children on the autism spectrum. The program is focused on providing a challenging and multidisciplinary educational environment that seamlessly integrates academic, speech and language goals, sensory needs and social opportunities.

The Shafer Center is a mixed grade/mixed age, co-educational program, for children ages 2-12 years old. We serve children in Nursery (2 through 4 years old), Kindergarten, and Elementary 1st through 5th Grade. The program has an enrollment capacity of 35 children and accepts children on the autism spectrum as well as children who have cognitive impairment, multiple disabilities, speech or language impairment, and/or developmental delays.

The Shafer Center provides six mixed grade/mixed age classroom programs: Pioneer, Discover, Explorer, Voyager, Pathfinder, and Endeavor.

The Pioneer classroom contains no more than six (6) students. The goal of the Pioneer class is to teach students pre-learning skills by building a strong foundational knowledge base in order to learn in a 1:1 and/or group setting. The Pioneer class is six (6) hours per day with up to two and a half (2.5) hours of group instruction and the remainder of the day is one-on-one instruction. Group instruction is utilized to introduce and expose students to new skills and provided by a Certified Special Educator. Students placed in the Pioneer classroom have needs in domains including, but not limited to: Pre-Academics, Functional School Skills, Language and Communication, Play and Leisure, Social Skills, and Special Areas (health, science, social studies, art, music, and technology).

The Discover classroom contains no more than six (6) students. The Discover class goal is to establish a base of functional academic and life skills, which will lead to greater independence. The Discover class introduces and exposes students to new skills in a group setting, while acquisition occurs in centers, the natural environment, and one to one instruction. The Discover class is six (6) hours per day with up to three (3) hours of group instruction and the remainder of the day is one-on-one instruction. A Certified Special Educator provides group/class instruction, with the students' 1:1 aide supporting both teachers. Instruction is provided to establish a base of functional academic and life skills to increase the students' independence. Students placed in the Discover classroom have needs in the domains including, but not limited to: Academics, Functional Life Skills, Language and Communication, Motor Skills, Play and Leisure, and Special Areas (health, science, social studies, art, music, and technology).

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The Voyager classroom contains no more than six (6) students. The Voyager class goal is to build upon a strong foundational knowledge base to further classroom readiness and pre-academic skills in a one-to-one and group learning environment. The Voyager class expands upon pre-requisite reading skills using the Science of Reading in the area of phonics to build reading independence. The Voyager class is six (6) hours per day with up to three and a half (3.5) hours of group instruction and the remainder of the day is one-on-one instruction. A Certified Special Education Teacher and Teaching Assistant lead group instruction. ABA instruction will occur with the student's 1:1 therapist for two and a half (2.5) hours per day. Students placed in the Voyager classroom have needs in domains including but not limited to: English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Imitation, Language and Communication, Generalization of skills, Classroom Readiness, Motor Skills, Vocational Skills, and Special Areas (health, science, social studies, art, music, and technology).

The Pathfinder classroom contains no more than seven (7) students. The goal of the Pathfinder class is for students to demonstrate increased independence and generalization of functional academics and life skills. The Pathfinder class is six (6) hours per day with up to 2.5 hours of group instruction and the remainder of the day is one-on-one instruction. Group instruction can occur in dyads, when two students are paired together intentionally, and will be provided by a Certified Special Educator and Teaching Assistant, with support from the student's 1:1 therapists. ABA Instruction will occur in the natural environment, utilizing Natural Environment Teaching (NET), provided by the student's 1:1 therapist. Class instruction is designed to increase independence and generalization of functional academic and life skills. Students placed in the Pathfinder classroom have needs in domains including, but not limited to: Academics, Vocational Skills, Social Skills, Language and Communication, Adaptive and Functional Life Skills, and Special Areas (health, science, social studies, art, music, and technology).

The Explorer classroom contains no more than seven (7) students. The Explorer class is designed to teach students literacy and math skills while they actively participate in a group-learning environment. The Explorer class works to build classroom independence and expand upon skills using the Science of Reading in the area of reading phonics in order to increase reading fluency. The Explorer class is six (6) hours per day with up to four (4) hours of group instruction and the remainder of the day is one-on-one instruction. A Certified Special Educator and a Teaching Assistant provide group instruction. ABA Instruction will occur with the student's 1:1 therapist for two (2.5) hours per day. Students placed in the Explorer classroom have needs in domains including but not limited to: English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Language and Communication, Classroom Readiness, Self-Management, Imitation, and Special Areas (health, science, social studies, art, music, and technology).



Education Program Description

The Endeavor classroom contains no more than eight (8) students. The Endeavor class goal is to expand the depth of academic and classroom independence given increased group learning experiences with fading supports. The Endeavor class is six (6) hours per day with up to six (6) hours of group instruction. Group learning will occur as a whole class and overseen by a Certified Special Educator and Teaching Assistant. A Certified Special Educator and Speech-Language Pathologist will lead co-taught group instruction, with a focus on social competencies. There will be no ABA instruction within the Endeavor classroom, as the focus will be on group learning and academic needs. Students placed in the Endeavor classroom have needs in the domains including but not limited to: English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Problem Solving, Independent Downtime and Leisure Skills, Social Skills, and Special Areas (health, science, social studies, art, music, and technology).

The Shafer Center employs MSDE certified Special Education Teachers, Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Bachelors-level teaching assistants, and behavior therapists to implement the children's academic programming or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The Shafer Center also provides individual Speech-Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and intensive one-on-one ABA Therapy. In addition, we contract licensed physical therapists and a licensed music therapist to provide services as a related service as indicated on an IEP.

The Shafer Center's program is based on the child's current skill level and overall level of development. Prior to entry into The Shafer Center, each child receives an observation, file review, and a baseline assessment of their skill sets. They are then matched into their respective classrooms, using this information. This allows the child to pave the way for his or her learning opportunities, in turn allowing the teams to maximize on those learning opportunities to make the child's learning experience the most meaningful for them. Each classroom is designed to create an environment where every learning activity focuses on increasing academic, social and language skills while increasing the child's independence, curiosity and love of learning. We incorporate play, leisure, safety, activities of daily living, and community skills to allow the child to make the most out of their time.

Each child is treated as an individual who brings his or her own strengths to every classroom opportunity. While the program is designed on overarching academic curricula, children have individualized goals that utilize their strengths to support their unique needs. The curricula and individualized goals are flexible to adjust modifications and expectations as each child progresses at their own rate.



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Maintenance and generalization of skills is a focus of The Shafer Center's program. It is essential that children not only acquire skills but that each skill is generalized to a variety of functional and natural situations as quickly and efficiently as possible. We examine and/or create every possible learning opportunity throughout the day where skills can be practiced. This is the optimum way to ensure skills are maintained, functional, and utilized in each child's everyday life.

Our facility offers six (6) class types, a library, an occupational therapy room, multiple individual treatment rooms, and staff offices.

The Educational Program at The Shafer Center for Early Intervention is directly run by the Director of Education and overseen by the President and the Vice President of Clinical Programs:

- President: Helen Shafer (Helen.Shafer@shafercenter.com)
- Vice President of Clinical Programs: Dr. Christine Accardo, Ph.D., BCBA – D, LBA
(Christine.Accardo@shafercenter.com)
- Director of Education: Megan Gosey, M.Ed., (Megan.Gosey@shafercenter.com)

Education Program Description

Pioneer

The goal of the Pioneer class is to teach students pre-learning skills by building a strong foundational knowledge base in order to learn in a 1:1 and/or group setting. The Pioneer class introduces and exposes students to new skills in a group setting, while acquisition occurs in centers and one to one instruction.

Child/Staff Ratio

- Class taught by a bachelor or master's level special educator
- Up to 6 students in a class
- One-on-one adult support for all students

Sample Schedule of School Day

9:00-9:30	Morning ADL
9:30-10:00	One to One ABA
10:00-10:30	One to One ABA
10:30-11:00	ELA
11:00-11:30	Math
11:30-12:00	Specials
12:00-12:30	Recess
12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	One to One ABA
1:30-2:00	One to One ABA
2:00-2:30	One to One ABA
2:30-3:00	Afternoon ADL

PE	MON 11:30
Art	TU 11:30
STAR Group	TU/TH 1:00

Programs/Curriculums Utilized

- Maryland Common Core Standards
- VB-MAPP
- Early Literacy Skills Builder
- Equals Math Curriculum
- STAR Curriculum

Education Program Description

Discover

The Discover class goal is to establish a base of academic and life skills, which will lead to greater independence. The Discover class introduces and exposes students to new skills in a group setting, while acquisition occurs in centers, the natural environment, and one to one instruction.

Child/Staff Ratio

- Class taught by a bachelor or master's level special educator
- Bachelors' level teaching assistant
- Up to 6 students in a class
- One-on-one adult support for all students

Sample Schedule of School Day

9:00-9:30	Morning ADL
9:30-10:00	One to One ABA
10:00-10:30	One to One ABA
10:30-11:00	Specials
11:00-11:30	One to One ABA
11:30-12:00	One to One ABA
12:00-12:30	Recess
12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	ELA
1:30-2:00	Math
2:00-2:30	One to One ABA
2:30-3:00	Afternoon ADL

PE	MON 10:30
Art	TU 10:30
STAR Group	TU/TH 2:00

Programs/Curriculums Utilized

- Maryland Common Core Standards
- VB-MAPP
- Early Literacy Skills Builder
- STAR Curriculum
- Equals Math Curriculum

Education Program Description

Voyager

The Voyager class goal is to build upon a strong foundational knowledge base to further classroom readiness and pre-academic skills in a one-to-one and group learning environment. In the Voyager class, students are introduced to group learning while students learn to reference the teacher and each other. The Voyager class expands upon pre-requisite reading skills using the Science of Reading in the area of phonics to build reading independence.

Child/Staff Ratio

- Class taught by a bachelor or master's level special educator
- Bachelors' level teaching assistant
- Up to 6 students in a class
- One-on-one adult support for all students

Sample Schedule of School Day

9:00-9:30	Morning ADL
9:30-10:00	ELA Group
10:00-10:30	ELA One to One
10:30-11:00	Math Group
11:00-11:30	Specials
11:30-12:00	Math One to One
12:00-12:30	Recess
12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	One to One ABA
1:30-2:00	One to One ABA
2:00-2:30	One to One ABA
2:30-3:00	Afternoon ADL

PE	MON 11:00
Art	TU 11:00
STAR Group	TU/TH 1:30

Programs/Curriculums Utilized

- Maryland Common Core Standards
- Principles of Orton Gillingham
- SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words)
- Equals Math Curriculum
- STAR Curriculum

Pathfinder

The goal of the Pathfinder class is for students to demonstrate increased independence and generalization of functional academics and life skills.

Child/Staff Ratio

- Class taught by a bachelor or masters level special educator
- Bachelors level teaching assistant
- Up to 7 students in a class
- One-on-one adult support for all students

Sample Schedule of School Day

During the 2026-2027 school year, this class is not running.

Programs/Curriculums Utilized

- Maryland Common Core Standards
- VB-MAPP
- Principles of Orton Gillingham
- SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words)
- Equals Math Curriculum
- STAR Curriculum

Education Program Description

Explorer

The Explorer class is designed to teach students literacy and math skills while they actively participate in a group-learning environment. The Explorer class works to build classroom independence and expand upon skills using the Science of Reading in the area of reading phonics in order to increase reading fluency.

Child/Staff Ratio

- Class taught by a bachelor or masters level special educator
- Bachelors level teaching assistant
- Up to 7 students in a class
- One-on-one adult support for all students

Sample Schedule of School Day

Explorer 1

9:00-9:30	Morning ADL
9:30-10:00	ELA
10:00-10:30	ELA
10:30-11:00	Math
11:00-11:30	Math
11:30-12:00	Specials
12:00-12:30	Recess
12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	One to One ABA
1:30-2:00	One to One ABA
2:00-2:30	ELA Intervention
2:30-3:00	Afternoon ADL

PE	WED 11:30
Art	TH 11:30
STAR Group	M/W/F 1:00

Explorer 2

9:00-9:30	Morning ADL
9:30-10:00	ELA
10:00-10:30	ELA
10:30-11:00	Specials
11:00-11:30	Math
11:30-12:00	Math
12:00-12:30	Recess



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12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	ELA Intervention
1:30-2:00	One to One ABA
2:00-2:30	One to One ABA
2:30-3:00	Afternoon ADL

PE	WED 10:30
Art	TH 10:30
STAR Group	M/W/F 1:30

Programs/Curriculums Utilized

- Maryland Common Core Standards
- Equals Math Curriculum
- SIPPS
- Principles of Orton Gillingham
- STAR Curriculum
- Visualizing and Verbalizing

Education Program Description

Endeavor

The Endeavor class goal is to expand the depth of academic and classroom independence given increased group learning experiences with fading supports.

Child/Staff Ratio

- Class taught by a bachelor or masters level special educator
- Bachelors level teaching assistant
- Up to 8 students in a class

Sample Schedule of School Day

9:00-9:30	Morning ADL
9:30-10:00	One to One
10:00-10:30	ELA
10:30-11:00	ELA
11:00-11:30	Specials
11:30-12:00	ELA Intervention
12:00-12:30	Recess
12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	Math
1:30-2:00	Math
2:00-2:30	One to One
2:30-3:00	Afternoon ADL

PE	WED 11:00
Art	TH 11:00
STAR	M/W/F 2:00

Programs/Curriculums Utilized

- Maryland Common Core Standards
- Equals Math Curriculum
- Accessing English Language Arts
- STAR Curriculum
- Visualizing and Verbalizing