

PARENT TRAINING, EDUCATION & SUPPORT

Family involvement is crucial to each student's success and is encouraged and supported. Parents have the opportunity to participate in consultative sessions with the educational team and, as appropriate, work with our team to observe their child in a classroom setting.

The educational program at Triton Academy provides the comprehensive implementation of educational methodologies effective for students with ASD along with practical training approaches to integrate key ASD interventions within the home. This program is offered every 2-3 months.

In addition, we keep parents informed through the use of daily communication logs, quarterly in-services on pertinent topics, bi-monthly parent support groups, and a monthly e-mail newsletter. We build an ongoing relationship with parents to support each student's growth and development.

Each family is assigned a Case Manager, generally the child's teacher, who organizes team correspondence, data collection, reports, and encourages family participation at all levels.

Referrals to Triton Academy are made through the IEP team at your child's district of residence. Contact your School Psychologist or Special Education Administrator for more information about making a referral to Triton. Your school district and Triton staff will work together to consider the appropriateness of your child's placement

ADVISORY PANEL

Amy Balchum, LSCW, Executive Director,
Ventura County Jewish Family Service

Lynn Dokken, Intervention Facilitator
Conejo Valley Unified School District

Steven Graff, PhD, Psychologist
Tri-Counties Regional Center

Mary Owens, Educational Specialist,
Diagnostic Center, Southern California

Valorie Potter, Special Education Teacher
Las Virgenes Unified School District

Caroline Ross, MS, Parent
Rainbow Connection Family Resource Center

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"Commitment to Quality Education for All"



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Ventura County Office of Education
Charles Weis, Ph. D., Superintendent

TRITON ACADEMY



An alternative educational program for students with autism who require a highly intensive and self-contained setting.

Founded June 2007

Operated in collaboration with the
Ventura County SELPA

MISSION

It is the mission of Triton Academy to assist students with Autism Spectrum Disorder to become independent, productive citizens by providing a nurturing, structured, self-contained, multidisciplinary educational program, which teaches pro-social life skills within a standards-based curriculum.

The **multi-disciplinary team** at Triton Academy combines therapeutic and educational strategies to promote each student's progress. Our team includes highly qualified Special Education Teachers, Instructional Assistants, Behavioral/Social Specialists, Occupational Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists, Psychologists, a Program Specialist, the School Principal and parents. The team develops an individual educational program based on each student's unique needs to enhance his/her emotional, social, and educational growth. All of the instructional team members are required to complete the Autism Certification program through the Ventura County SELPA.

There are two different instructional strands available at Triton Academy. The first strand is designed for upper elementary through high school students who are CAPA (California Alternate Performance Assessment) levels 3-5, for whom the characteristics of autism are the primary barrier to learning. These students require extensive instruction in multiple settings to acquire, maintain, and generalize skills necessary for application in school, work, home, and community environments. This strand uses a functional life skills approach based on CAPA standards to increase independence in school and community environments. Students in this strand work toward a Certificate of Completion.

The second strand is designed for middle and high school students who are close to grade level academically and who require a learning environment uniquely designed to address the needs of students with Autism. This strand uses state-adopted, standards-based curriculum and text books while emphasizing the application of skills in real life settings. Students in this strand work toward a High School Diploma.



The class size at Triton Academy will not exceed 8 students per class

Both the Individuals with Education Act (IDEA 2004) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB 2001) specify that educational services must be "scientifically based." Approaches used by staff at Triton are those that meet the highest level of scientific rigor for services to students with ASD according to Simpson (2005). However, as new evidence-based approaches are proven to be effective, Triton staff is committed to incorporating these approaches into the program.

- ☞ **TEACCH** is a structured educational approach based on the understanding that students with ASD often require increased visual structure and order to their day.
- ☞ **Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT)** is an instructional approach that emphasizes teaching "*pivotal behaviors*" central to wide areas of functioning and applicable to a variety of social and learning environments.
- ☞ **Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)** uses behavioral principles such as positive reinforcement, extinction of negative behaviors, and modeling and shaping of pro-social behaviors to assist students to successfully access their educational program.

OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS

- ☞ **Augmentative Communication Systems** assist students with limited verbal communication skills to interact more effectively with others and gain greater control of their surroundings.
- ☞ **Sensory Mediation Strategies** use a variety of sensory regulatory activities to create an individualized "*sensory diet*" to assist students in attending and participating in school.
- ☞ **The Social Skills Program** at Triton Academy provides direct instruction of skills using a variety of curricula. Instruction is individual- and group-oriented and may include the use of social stories. This component will be implemented and monitored by our School Psychologist and/or our Social Skill Specialist.

Effective communication, behavior and sensory regulation are important goals for many students with ASD. Therefore, occupational and speech-language therapists and behavior specialists are available to support students' individual needs as identified by the IEP team.

- ☞ **Occupational Therapists (OT)**— Our OTs are state-licensed and National Board Certified (NBCOT) and are highly experienced in working with students with ASD and sensory differences.
- ☞ **Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP)**— Our SLPs are state-licensed, credentialed, and have experience working with students with ASD.
- ☞ **Behavioral/Social Skills Specialists**— Our Behavior Specialists are certified Behavior Intervention Case Managers (BICM) and are highly skilled in developing positive behavior support plans and environmental accommodations which address the need of learners with ASD.

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS OF OUR TEAM INCLUDE

- ☞ **School Psychologists**— Our School Psychologists collaborate with the educational team to provide effective academic and behavioral strategies for learners with ASD. They are also trained and experienced in the comprehensive assessment of students with ASD.
- ☞ **School Nurses**— Our school nurses will maintain contact with physicians and parents to closely monitor medication and other health needs.



Ventura County Office of Education

TRITON ACADEMY

Principal's Note

Educational Support Services

Guiding Principles
of
Triton Academy

Academic Program



Welcome

Ventura County Office of Education

TRITON ACADEMY

Triton Academy specializes in serving students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, who face learning, language, and social challenges. Our focus is on developing comprehensive educational programs that meet the individualized needs of each student.

Through intensive small group classroom instruction, our program encompasses the particular learning strengths and abilities of each of our students. We structure each student's academic, personal, social and vocational program to address their individual needs. Consequently, we are able to meet each student at his/her specific performance levels. At Triton Academy we pride ourselves on the use of small class sizes, individualized instruction, evidence-based academic and behavioral methodologies, the continuous use of formative assessments to monitor each student's growth and development and a comprehensive support service program. This creates an environment conducive for a positive educational experience for both students and their parents.

By incorporating personal, social, behavioral and vocational skills development into the academic program at Triton, we focus our efforts on preparing students to become competent, confident, productive, and independent citizens of our community.

The name "Triton" refers to a mythological Greek god, the messenger of the deep. Triton's special attribute was a twisted conch shell, on which he blew like a trumpet to calm or raise the waves. Triton was selected as a symbol for the Ventura County Office of Education Autism Program, as it is our belief that a supportive environment with specially trained staff will provide the calm and nurturing environment that students with Autism require in order to learn and reach their full potential.

Academic Program

The Ventura County Office of Education Triton Academy is a public school for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and related developmental disabilities who have not been successful in their home district special education program. Triton Academy implements a multi-disciplinary team approach, combining therapeutic and educational strategies created to enhance the child's progress. The team includes special educators, school psychologists, behavior specialists, teachers, paraprofessionals, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists. Together, the team, with collaboration from the child's parents, assesses the child's individual needs and creates a program that will optimize his/her personal, social, vocational and academic growth.

As Triton Academy is committed to a multi-disciplinary and cutting-edge educational philosophy, the team at Triton believes it is important to continue to search out new therapeutic and educational strategies. As research reveals the efficacy of these new strategies, they will be incorporated into the program at Triton Academy. The current techniques utilized at Triton Academy are evidenced-based interventions for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Our teaching philosophy is based on a whole student approach, allowing each child to work on his/her specific learning needs by utilizing their strengths and interests. Our students experience an age-appropriate standards-based academic curriculum, taught individually and in small groups.

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Guiding Principles of Triton Academy

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Triton Academy has well defined, observable expectations for each student's personal, social, and academic growth and development. We expect that our students will attend school daily, come ready to learn, and participate in all activities and assignments.

CHOICE AND COMMITMENT

Students, parents and teachers choose to be at Triton Academy. No one is forced to attend or participate. Everyone must make and uphold a commitment to the school and to each other. We agree to dedicate the time and the effort necessary to achieve success.

SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION

We believe there are no shortcuts when it comes to helping our students succeed personally, socially, and academically. Therefore, Triton students participate in a small group setting in classes no larger than 8 students.

FOCUS ON RESULTS

All Triton students are exposed to academic rigor that is suitable to their individual skill and ability level. Individual effort, responsible behavior and persistence are encouraged and taught, along with parent and teacher support. Students are assessed on a regular basis to continuously monitor each student's progress and to adjust instruction accordingly. We use standards-based curriculum at levels appropriate for each student and a variety of assessment tools to monitor student growth and development.

PARENT SUPPORT AND TRAINING

We believe that parent involvement and support is crucial to the growth and development of each child. Parents have various opportunities to offer support to their child while at Triton. Since parents are our partners, we encourage attendance at all meetings and/or events pertaining to their child including IEP meetings, phone and school conferences, home visits and parent education activities. We work together to develop effective strategies for home and school.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND INDEPENDENCE

Student success is constantly encouraged and recognized. Integration back to a comprehensive school setting may be recommended based upon each student's progress at Triton Academy. Students work toward achievement of post-high school goals including, (but not limited to), independent living, college, technical training, and job placement. All students are provided opportunities to develop personal interests and skills through electives, work experience, and other extracurricular activities, including community based instruction.

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Educational Support Services

To assure that students make the most of the learning opportunities available, Triton Academy offers a variety of support services to accommodate each student's academic program. These services, in addition to our standards-based core curriculum, provide for a comprehensive educational experience that is individualized and meets each student's personal, social, vocational, and academic needs.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT- The Triton Academy behavioral and social skill development program is the foundation for promoting positive school behaviors and the development of appropriate social skills. Our staff members are highly trained and certified in Non-Violent Crisis Prevention Intervention (NCPI), Behavior Intervention Case Management (BICM) and Social Skills Development. We believe that students who learn to display positive behavioral and social skills, experience great academic success.

Our students will practice appropriate social skills through structured group lessons in the classroom and community. These activities are designed to assist students to increase their ability to cooperate with others, make appropriate choices, accept responsibility and appropriately report conflicts to staff. These skills will be developed in a supportive and nurturing environment.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES- Triton Academy psychological and behavioral counseling services are provided by a credentialed school psychologist, who focuses on helping students develop age-appropriate social and emotional skills. Additionally, our psychologist applies strategies that will enhance the development of each child's self-esteem, interpersonal development and school to community transition.

Our Psychologist consults with teachers, staff, students, and parents continuously and promotes individual social and emotional growth, both at home and at school. More extensive services may be provided based on individual student need including referral to county mental health services.

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SERVICES- Our Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) provides services to improve students' speech and language development. Our SLP assists students in developing their conceptual understanding, appropriate social vocabulary, functional use of language, pragmatic problem solving skills and ability to interact in topic relevant conversations with their peers and adults.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES- The Triton Academy Occupational Therapist (OT) provides individual, group, and consultative services. Our OT assists students with sensory, perceptual, and motor skills development. Therapeutic goals address gross and fine motor development, visual motor integration, visual-perceptual skills, self-care skills, independent living skills, and prevocational skills. Interventions may include sensory integration strategies, sensory diet application, environmental modifications and use of adaptive equipment. These interventions are integrated into the daily classroom routines.

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Principal's Note

Welcome to Triton Academy.

Triton Academy specializes in serving students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) who face learning, language, and social challenges. Our overriding mission is to assist students with ASD to become independent, productive citizens by providing a standards-based, structured learning environment that encompasses personal, social, and vocational skills development within each student's academic program.

At Triton Academy, we individualize each student's program to meet the goals and objectives defined by the referring IEP team. Although the instruction is individualized for each student, classrooms at Triton use a small group format and evidence-based methodologies to deliver academic content. Each student is monitored through the use of formative assessments to continuously measure progress while at Triton. The data collected from these assessments is used to determine where necessary adjustments are needed and to define student strengths.

Triton Academy has a comprehensive transition program which includes the WorkAbility I Program. This is a service that is funded by the state of California and allows students to gain work experience on and off campus. This program facilitates the student's transition from the school setting to adult life.

Enclosed are materials that will further describe the Triton Academy program. Once you have had an opportunity to look over the materials, we encourage you to visit our campus. Feel free to contact us to schedule a visit and/or address any further questions that you may have about our program.

Sincerely,

Holly Minear
School Principal

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On behalf of the Ventura County SELPA, we are delighted with the opening of Triton Academy, a cutting edge program designed for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). For several years, the twenty-one school districts in our SELPA have articulated the need for a highly structured program for students with ASD who are not able to have their needs met on a comprehensive school campus. We are proud that the Ventura County Office of Education has agreed to develop a top quality program, with small class sizes and highly trained and dedicated staff to address the needs of these unique students.

Mary E. Samples
Assistant Superintendent
Ventura County SELPA

Ventura County Office of Education, Triton Academy Offers:

- ◆ Small Class Sizes
- ◆ Social Skills Training
- ◆ Standards-based Instruction
- ◆ Integrated Computer Technology
- ◆ Individualized Academic Interventions
- ◆ Comprehensive Transition Program
- ◆ Extended School Year
- ◆ WorkAbility Program
- ◆ Diploma and Certificate of Completion Tracks
- ◆ Parent Training and Consultation

For further information contact:

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