


May Center School for brain injury and
neurobehavioral disorders

NORWOOD,
MASSACHUSETTS



MAY CENTER SCHOOL:

*Community
Specialization
Empowerment
Independence*

Welcome to the May Center School!

The May Center School for Brain Injury and Neurobehavioral Disorders is a nationally recognized school that provides exceptional services to children, adolescents, and young adults, ages 5–22, with a broad range of neurobehavioral challenges. These include brain injury, genetic or chromosomal disorders, seizure disorders, mood disorders, and intellectual and neurodevelopmental disorders.

Our school is a warm and welcoming place where students establish a strong foundation to build a meaningful life. We

provide full-day, year-round educational, behavioral, medical, and rehabilitative services, and use established treatment and educational methods based on the latest instructional, clinical, and applied behavior analytic research. School services may be combined with an on-campus or community-based residential program at one of several homes in nearby neighborhoods.

Located in Norwood, Mass., 25 miles from Boston and less than 30 miles from Providence, R.I., the May Center School is a Massachusetts Chapter 766-approved school.





“When Jalisa was 2½ months old, we found out that she had Costello Syndrome, a disorder that causes delayed development and intellectual disability. Unfortunately, the public schools were not able to meet her needs. When she came to the May Center School, I saw an immense leap in her ability to understand math. Now she can add, subtract, and multiply, and she’s able to use money. They just know how to teach her in a way that she can learn. They treat her appropriately, and she responds appropriately. And being at the school has opened up a whole new social world for her. She was so happy to go to the prom!”

SUSAN, JALISA’S MOTHER

Children and adolescents with neurobehavioral disorders and related challenges need a special place where they can receive the individualized services necessary to rebuild their lives.

Our students need a “home away from home” where they can belong, and an environment that supports skill development and rehabilitation, and fosters new friendships.

The May Center School is just such a place. Here, students from around the country learn to overcome obstacles, develop critical life and communication skills, control impulsive and aggressive behaviors, and become more independent. Children with traumatic brain injury learn to walk and talk again.

With the support of a highly trained and compassionate staff, students continue to learn and grow while receiving the specialized services they need to achieve their personal best. Some of our students graduate from high school, others focus on career and vocational skills; and others return to a less restrictive environment with new life skills, a sense of pride, and hope for the future.

MAY CENTER SCHOOL: *Empowerment*





May Center School Snapshot

Age range served:	5–22 years
Educational method:	Small group and 1:1 instruction
Clinical method:	Applied behavior analysis (ABA)
Staff-student ratio:	1:2 during awake hours
Class size:	6–7 students
Average enrollment:	50
Length of program:	Full-day, 12-month
Residential living:	Available
Average number of residential students:	30

Expertise

Established in 1992, the May Center School for Brain Injury and Neurobehavioral Disorders is one of only a few select pediatric programs in the United States focusing on both education and rehabilitation of children and adolescents with neurobehavioral, genetic, and related disorders. We are dedicated to providing the highest quality education available.

Our academic instruction programs are based on published best practice standards for teaching children and adolescents with academic, social, physical, and/or behavioral difficulties resulting from a wide range of diagnoses.

Our staff have extensive experience with the challenges of navigating states' special education regulations and medical care requirements in order to ensure a child is placed in the most appropriate and least restrictive educational and rehabilitative setting. Approximately 71 percent of our students move on to less restrictive settings within 36 months.

Using an integrated, multidisciplinary approach based on each student's strengths, needs, and preferences, our caring and highly trained professional staff members have helped hundreds of students reach their potential for nearly 30 years.



**ANDREA POTOCZNY-GRAY,
M.ED., CBIS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



“We are committed to a nurturing environment where children with unique challenges are served by an integrated, multidisciplinary team. Our approach to behavioral challenges is based on applied behavior analysis and compassionate care. All our students are good kids who are trying their best and we are here to help.”

JOSEPH RICCIARDI, PSY.D., ABPP, BCBA-D, CBIST
SENIOR CLINICAL DIRECTOR

We successfully serve students with a broad range of abilities, including those with the most difficult learning and neurobehavioral challenges.

Our school and residential programs are staffed by specialists and teachers specifically trained in the treatment of brain injury and neurobehavioral disorders. We employ more than 50 highly specialized staff members, including doctoral and master's-level supervisors, certified brain injury specialists, and licensed and credentialed professionals.

Our multidisciplinary team includes:

- Certified Special Educators, Counseling, Nursing, Psychology, Rehabilitation specialists (PT, OT, SLP) Doctoral-level clinical leadership with board certification in behavior analysis (BCBA)
- Certified brain injury specialists (CBIS)
- Professionally licensed special education teachers
- On-site nursing staff
- On-site physical therapists
- On-site occupational therapists
- On-site speech therapists
- Vocational/employment training specialists
- On-site licensed, clinical social workers
- Consulting psychiatrist, orthotist, and other professionals from major teaching hospitals and universities

A Multidisciplinary Approach

Education. Behavior. Rehabilitation. Medical. While other programs for children with neurobehavioral disorders focus primarily on one or two of these areas, the May Center School addresses these areas equally.

We understand how a child's educational, behavioral, rehabilitation, and medical needs are related, and we develop a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to improve all four. As we work with students, we take great care to address neurological issues that may impact academic and behavioral learning. This approach allows for the most successful reintegration into home, school, and community.

Delivering Educational Services

From the first day a child enters our classrooms, we carefully begin to create a very personal learning experience, assessing his or her needs, and developing specific goals and objectives. We regularly measure progress, reevaluating and adjusting each individual program as necessary in an effort to constantly challenge, motivate, and encourage each student.



We work with family members, school districts, and other members of the child's life to create an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student. The IEP prioritizes academics, behavior, activities of daily living, communication, exercise and leisure, and transitional education that includes vocational education and preparing for adult life.



In-School Technology

We utilize high-impact technology that has transformed the way our teachers instruct and our students learn. One hundred percent of our students have regular and direct access to iPads or the TAP-It portable smartboard.

ABA: Effective Science with a Soft Touch

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is an approach to skills development and behavioral intervention based on behavioral science. Decades of research has shown that ABA is an effective approach for children and adults with developmental and neurobehavioral challenges. Interventions have been developed to help students improve social skills, communication abilities, and problem-solving, as well as to improve neurobehavioral problems such as aggressive, disruptive, and self-harming behavior.

While grounded in science, ABA is practiced with compassion and concern for the whole child and family. Clinicians are trained in compassionate care, the appreciation of cultural differences, and sensitivity to the effects of trauma on development.

One of the most important principles in ABA is that students are not to be blamed for the behavioral challenges they present. Problem behavior is not the result of a flawed personality or lack of trying. Instead, the source of challenges is not the student, but the unfortunate circumstances that have happened to the student over time. Neurodevelopmental disorders, injuries to the brain, and a difficult learning history have led to the current situation. With this fundamental principle in mind, behavior analysts work to determine the circumstances that currently evoke and maintain the challenges and then develop strategies for change that will improve behavior and learning. This approach is highly optimistic and affirming of a student's strengths and potential for success.

Positive Development Through Behavior Support

A child or adolescent's development can suffer during the course of a neurodevelopmental disorder or brain injury. This is sometimes called a neurobehavioral disorder and takes the form of delayed development of emotional self-regulation, inhibition of impulses, social cognition, and motivation for school achievement. A neurobehavioral disorder can impede normal child development and can lead to lasting barriers to success in adulthood.

Our behavior analysts work with a small caseload of students and their teachers. With students, the behavior analysts develop a positive, nurturing, and supportive relationship. They collaborate on goals and plans for skill development and personal growth.

With teachers, behavior analysts help develop evidence-based individualized interventions to improve engagement with school-work, social skills, and effective problem-solving. The emphasis is on positive behavioral development, where problems and challenges are addressed by skill building to support a more effective adult.

Meeting Multiple Rehabilitative Needs

Our multidisciplinary approach to rehabilitation combines highly qualified, caring professionals with best practice treatment techniques. Students have access to one-on-one therapeutic services with occupational (OT), physical (PT), and speech (SLP) therapists to improve daily living, fine and gross motor, and communication skills.

Children also have access to specialty services including psychiatry, brace clinics, and audiology clinics. A dedicated team of registered nurses is on site to meet a broad range of medical needs.

MAY CENTER SCHOOL: *Specialization*



Every member of a child's treatment team works tirelessly to help him or her adjust to the psychological, emotional, and social changes that take place following a brain injury or neurobehavioral disorder. Social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, special education teachers, and staff with expertise in ABA and neurological impairments are a part of this important interdisciplinary team.

Medical Services

Many of our students require specialized medical services that must be carefully monitored. We are committed to providing excellent medical care. Our on-site nurses provide 24/7 primary care nursing coverage; two nurses are on call at all times.

We work closely with families and treating physicians to provide each student with an individualized healthcare plan. Each student is assigned to a specific nursing case manager who is accessible to parents and guardians. Transportation to and from medical appointments outside the school is provided for residential students. Laboratory services are available for all students. A consultative psychiatrist is on-site on a regular basis.

An Inside Look: Facility Highlights

- Nine large, bright, and airy classrooms equipped with modern technology and educational materials
- A newly built adaptive playground with freedom swings, slides, and activities for students in wheelchairs
- A rehabilitation gymnasium equipped with parallel bars, nautilus, weight area, and swings for physical therapy and occupational therapy
- A computer lab and library with hundreds of books, multi-sensory teaching materials, and other resource materials
- A spacious cafeteria
- Enhanced space for vocational and transitional skills training
- A comprehensive rehabilitation suite and dedicated space for related services
- Three expansive new student residences directly on site and community-based homes
- Therapy rooms for speech/language and communication services



“The sense of community and friendship that students find here adds a truly meaningful component to their school experience. In a student body with so many interests and abilities, each student can find a peer.”

ANDREA POTO CZNY-GRAY, M.ED., CBIS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Student Life

We want our students to enjoy rich, full lives by participating in the world around them and we strive to create an environment that promotes fun and friendship across all age groups. Built into our educational plans and programs are ongoing opportunities for personal and social development, community activities, and meaningful relationships with other students.

Learning is not limited to the classroom. Many students actively participate in after-school and weekend activities including hiking, kayaking, skiing, ice skating, and biking, as well as regular community outings.

From sports teams to Special Olympics, from dances to prom night, and from family dinners to graduation day, students take part in, and learn from, many typical child and adolescent experiences that mark their rites of passage and positively impact their transition to adulthood.

Student Snapshot

The journey from childhood into adulthood has been long and sometimes difficult for 20-year-old Nick. He has cerebral palsy and left-side paralysis as the result of a traumatic birth, as well as seizure disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and Tourette syndrome. Even so, these challenges have not kept him from growing into an accomplished and confident young man. When Nick came to the May Center School as a residential student, he was extremely shy, somewhat disorganized, and had difficulty doing basic math. He has made tremendous progress since then, both in academics and with his social skills. “He’s a whole different kid,” says his mother Judy. “Now he can do math problems that used to frustrate him. He’s also learned how to keep himself calm and organized.” Today, Nick works as a cashier at the school store and volunteers at a local soup kitchen. He enjoys reading, music, writing short thriller stories, and sharing jokes with staff members. And he loves going to the movies. In fact, one of Nick’s aspirations is to become a movie director.

MAY CENTER SCHOOL: *Community*

Julianna



“The May Center School has been a fantastic place for my daughter to live, learn, and grow.”

JANE JOHNSTONE
MAY CENTER SCHOOL PARENT



Residential Life

For families who need more intensive support for their child, we combine day school services with residential living in our three brand new on-campus residences or one of our community-based homes.

The decision to move a child to a residential program can be a difficult one. Our staff work diligently to address the concerns of families before, during, and after a move. We create a home-away-from-home that is safe and nurturing, while encouraging students and their families to maintain a strong connection with regular phone calls and visits.

Every student's residential experience is unique and personalized. It focuses on behavioral, social, and independent skills development, and addresses the child's medical and rehabilitative needs. School and residential staff work together to coordinate IEP goals so the learning doesn't stop at the end of the school day.

Building Family Partnerships

We understand the unique, complex, and sometimes overwhelming needs that accompany the range of diagnoses of the students we serve, and how these needs can profoundly impact a family. Our Family Services staff work closely with parents. This partnership results in the best possible care for students, and provides families with the necessary support, information, and guidance throughout their child's journey.

Staff resolve day-to-day issues, and are available to provide emotional and practical support when families must make important decisions about “next steps,” such as employment training and placement, and independent living.

Family Services staff members are personal advocates for students and parents both inside and outside the school. They coordinate services with other team members and departments, streamlining communication and making sure that each child's individual and often-changing needs are met.

Transitional Planning Education

Recognizing that work has a positive, therapeutic impact, we include vocational activities in a child's treatment plan. When a student turns 14, our vocational staff collaborate with the student, teachers, and parents to identify interests and develop specific vocational goals. Through this process, we match students with internal positions.

Guided by a job coach, students successfully accomplish a variety of tasks at the school such as working in the school store or cafeteria, delivering mail, or recycling. In this way, we create a working environment that is a stepping stone to community employment.

For the first year, students are "paid" with material reinforcers that are meaningful to them. At age 15, they are eligible for financial reimbursement for their work. Many are also able to obtain volunteer or paid employment in the community.

Students work under the supervision of a job coach at local businesses, social service agencies, and at school. These work

and volunteer experiences develop and strengthen skills that will help students live more independently and result in a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

The Journey Into Adulthood

We seek to help students become as independent as possible as they grow through childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood. Our job as professionals is to guide students through these transitions by helping them develop the skills they need.

The May Center School is a place where children and adolescents tackling many challenges are treated with dignity and respect and encouraged to reach their maximum potential. It is a place that gives students a firm foundation to build a satisfying and successful life.



“Our multidisciplinary team works tirelessly to achieve the best possible outcomes for each of our students. Student driven goals guide our teaching in the areas of job skills, self-advocacy, and independent living.”

KRISTEN MOLINSKI, M.ED., DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

MAY CENTER SCHOOL: *Independence*



To learn more or to arrange a tour,
please contact us at:

508.588.8800 or
mayinstitute.org/norwoodschool

MAY CENTER SCHOOL FOR BRAIN INJURY AND NEUROBEHAVIORAL DISORDERS

One Commerce Way
Norwood, Massachusetts 02062
info@mayinstitute.org

About May Institute

May Institute is a national leader in the field of applied behavior analysis, proudly serving individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities, brain injury and neurobehavioral disorders, and other special needs.

Founded nearly 70 years ago, we are a nonprofit organization that provides educational and rehabilitative services across the lifespan. We also provide consultation services to professionals, organizations, and public school systems. The organization is one of the largest and most well-respected providers of special education schools for students with autism and other special needs.

In addition to the May Center School for Brain Injury and Neurobehavioral Disorders, May Institute operates five schools that serve children and adolescents with ASD and other developmental disabilities.

MayInstitute
Shaping Futures. Changing Lives.

© 2023 May Institute

