Specialty Services—
Providing behavioral intervention to young children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder

May Institute’s Specialty Services Program (SSP) is licensed through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and provides services for children under the age of 3 who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Our services are based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), and target the core characteristics of autism through individualized treatment programs that focus on early social, communication, play, and daily living skills. We address challenging behaviors with positive interventions that include teaching functional communication, reinforcing alternative behaviors, and using proactive strategies to support success.

Our specialty services include:
- initial assessment to determine the child’s strengths and weaknesses
- development of an individualized treatment plan
- ongoing collaboration with the family, early intervention, and other ancillary staff
- direct instruction in the natural environment, including the child’s home, childcare, and community settings
- data collection to evaluate and monitor progress
- parent consultation and education to encourage skill development and promote generalization of skills
- support during the transition process when the child turns 3

Promoting individual growth
Our program provides “best practice” interventions that incorporate research-based findings in the areas of ABA, child development, and positive behavior support. We tailor instruction to be developmentally appropriate for toddlers, and use materials, toys, and activities that are preferred by the child and family.

Our staff and program
When a child enrolls, the family begins working with a team of highly trained and qualified professionals. A Behavioral Consultant, who is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), oversees all programs. All direct staff have bachelor’s degrees as well as education and training in psychology, child development, and ABA. Many also hold master’s degrees in special needs and special education.

Our team includes speech, occupational, and physical therapists; a registered nurse; a licensed social worker; and a bilingual development specialist (English/Spanish).

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
May Institute offers a wide variety of services designed to meet the needs of children and their families with autism and other special needs. From early intervention, specialty services, and home-based programs, to support for students in the classroom, we can make a profound difference in your child’s life.
What is applied behavior analysis?

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a methodology that involves basic behavioral practices (positive reinforcement, repetition, and prompting) to support the development of appropriate, functional skills, while also addressing everyday social challenges. A good ABA program enables service providers to:

- conduct assessments to determine a child’s current skill level and to monitor progress
- collect and analyze data regularly to inform treatment decisions
- teach skills and address challenging behaviors that will lead to meaningful, positive changes for the individual and his/her family
- offer opportunities to generalize acquired skills (e.g., use them in other settings)

How can a family prepare for services?

Families should consider the intensity of home-based services and the logistics of having multiple providers in their home. Specialty services staff members will work closely with early intervention staff who are already in the home providing services.

Parents/caregivers are active members of their child’s treatment team. We encourage them to participate in services so they can become “co-teachers” during their child’s sessions. Active family participation encourages the child to use newly learned skills outside of sessions. We can also arrange for services to be provided in a childcare setting to accommodate working parents.

What happens when my child turns 3?

We are committed to helping families with the transition to other services when their child turns 3. The child’s early intervention agency will make a referral to the public school, Head Start, or local play groups. We will support this process by attending transition meetings, sharing treatment plans, and offering consultation to the school or program. Children may also continue with ABA services through their commercial insurance after they turn 3. We will help families communicate with their insurance company to determine eligibility and the cost of services. If a child is eligible for ABA services through a parent’s insurance, May Institute can continue to provide behavioral services after the child’s third birthday.