Southeast Regional Autism Center

Serving families from Camp Lejeune and surrounding areas
Characterized by disorders in behavior, social interaction, and communication, autism can create enormous stress on a family—stress that is magnified when effective services are not accessible.

The Southeast Regional Autism Centers in North Carolina and Georgia are dedicated to meeting the immediate and pressing need for services for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) throughout the Southeast.
The Southeast Regional Autism Center in Jacksonville, N.C., offers a comprehensive set of educational and behavioral services to children and their families, private agencies, and public schools throughout the Crystal Coast area and beyond. The Center also provides services to military families stationed in the Camp Lejeune/Cherry Point/Marine Corps Air Station New River catchment area.

Working closely with the families we serve, our behavior specialists use developmentally appropriate practices based on applied behavior analysis (ABA), the methodology universally recognized as critical for teaching children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) or other behavioral or developmental disabilities. Our state-of-the-art programming addresses all areas of a child’s development including language, peer interactions, and behavior.

The Center is a program of May Institute, a national nonprofit organization that provides comprehensive, research-based services to children and adults with ASD and other developmental disabilities, brain injury, mental illness, and other behavioral healthcare needs.

Our affiliation with the National Autism Center enhances all training and educational services provided through the Southeast Regional Autism Center, meeting best practice standards for evidence-based behavioral and educational interventions for children with autism.
Applied Behavior Analysis: Effective and Individualized

What most attracts parents to a program of applied behavior analysis (ABA) are its positive and reinforcing tone, its strong focus on teaching new skills, the documentation of progress in data-based reports and charts, its foundation in research, and the manner in which it is individualized for every child.

ABA is a methodology, or framework, that applies scientific interventions to address behavioral needs. ABA facilitates the development of language, social interactions, and independent living by applying basic behavioral practices — positive reinforcement, teaching in small steps, prompting, and repeated practice. In addition to building critical skills, ABA can also help reduce both everyday social problems and serious behavior disorders.

Hundreds of scientific studies have shown that ABA is the most effective method to teach children and adolescents with autism and other developmental disabilities. ABA has been endorsed by the National Institutes of Health and the Association for Science in Autism Treatment, and has been identified by the Surgeon General of the United States as the most effective way to treat autism.

For Military Families

ABA is the only treatment reimbursed by TRICARE’s ECHO program and the Autism Demonstration Project for military families with children with ASD.
Excellence in ABA Services

Professionals who use ABA techniques should have solid practical experience in the field and meet high educational and professional standards, including board certification by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB).

Board certification requires undergraduate- or graduate-level coursework and up to 1,500 hours of supervised practicum experience. Individuals with certification have received independent reviews to determine that their training is satisfactory. They also have passed examinations confirming their knowledge of the field. Board certification is a significant accomplishment and an indicator of the capability and expertise of staff.

May Institute consultants at the Southeast Regional Autism Center are Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) or Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBAs). They provide direct care, as well as supervision to a team of trained behavior specialists. All staff work with the support and oversight of doctoral-level senior staff, ensuring excellence of care.

“As many as 12,000 children in military families may have autism and their condition is made extremely difficult by the frequent changes of residences, schools, and other variables that accompany military life.”

A Broad Range of Clinical Services

Because each child and family we serve has unique needs, the Southeast Regional Autism Center offers a variety of highly specialized services. We begin with a thorough and accurate assessment of each child’s strengths, challenges, and preferences.

Our services are carefully matched to the specific concerns and needs of families, students, and school systems. Our staff develop individualized services, recommendations, and plans to achieve the specific goals and objectives identified as most crucial to the success of each child.

Guided by Leading Experts
May Institute’s leadership team and advisory board include world-renowned experts in the fields of autism, developmental disabilities, special education, early childhood development, applied behavior analysis, legal advocacy, and psychology.

May Institute and the National Autism Center have active affiliations with more than 55 universities, centers of excellence, and providers of ABA services across the country.
Home-Based Services

Home-based therapy is designed to help children with ASD improve communication, social and behavior skills, self-help skills, and learning skills such as imitation and attending.

The Center provides intensive in-home behavior therapy and consultation to children and families within their homes and other community settings. We work closely with early intervention and/or public school teams to provide a comprehensive program for each child. Family support services focus on behavioral support plan development and parent training to ensure that the skills children learn during therapy sessions are maintained, applied, expanded, and refined at home. Our programs are based on the goals outlined on the child’s Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Trained in the principles of ABA, our staff provide one-on-one instruction from five to 40 hours per week to children with ASD, under the supervision of a senior therapist with a BCBA.

“Research tells us that intense intervention during the early years fosters the greatest hope for children with autism and other developmental disabilities.”

—Dennis C. Russo, Ph.D., ABPP, Chief Clinical Officer, May Institute

For Military Families

May Institute is one of the nation’s largest employers of BCBAs and BCaBAs, and is committed to making our services accessible to military families who have children with ASD.
Reassure parents that there are ways to help their children. Parents are so overwhelmed when they first learn of their child’s autism. I wish there was a way to let them know they will be happy again.

—Ann Guay, Parent
Parent Education Services

“Pathways” Parent Education Series
The Center offers an educational series designed for parents of children newly diagnosed with an ASD. The Pathways series provides critical information about ASD diagnosis, treatment options, and comprehensive services.

Meetings are 90 minutes and are held on a weekly basis. At the conclusion of the program, participants will receive a certificate of completion from the National Autism Center.

Ongoing Parent Training
The Center offers comprehensive trainings for parents who have a child with ASD. These trainings are designed to educate families about ABA interventions and treatment options, and may include the following topics: a review of ASD and evidence-based practice; effective management of difficult behavior; exploration of specific behavioral interventions, such as discrete trial instruction, as well as naturalistic procedures, such as pivotal response teaching; encouraging appropriate play and social skills; managing difficult transitions; and implementing functional behavior analysis.

Guiding Families After an Autism Diagnosis
Topics of the Pathways series include:
- Understanding ASD
- What’s Out There? Treatment Options
- Making Informed Treatment Decisions
- School and Community Resources
- Addressing Problem Behaviors: Part I
- Addressing Problem Behaviors: Part II
- Strategies at Home—How to Address Specific Developmental Concerns
- Enhancing Social Development—The Parents’ Role in Treatment

“We have been able to heal as a family. We have the tools now. We have the May; that gives us hope.”
—Doreen Goyette, Parent
School Consultation Services

The Center offers a unique, comprehensive continuum of consultation services to public schools, DoDEA schools, private agencies, and families. Our educational consultants work with staff and families to coordinate and enhance educational programming for students with learning, cognitive, and behavioral challenges across a full spectrum of services.

Through our school consultation program, we serve children and adolescents with many diverse needs and diagnoses, including: ASD; school adjustment and emotional/behavioral disorders; ADHD; acquired brain injury and neurological disorders; multiple disabilities; and psychiatric disorders.

We carefully tailor our services to the specific needs and concerns of each student, classroom, school, or district, developing highly individualized recommendations and plans. Our cost-effective school consultation services increase the competencies of public school staff and include training on the most contemporary best practice approaches to assessment, education, and treatment.

Diagnosis, assessment, and evaluation services include functional behavioral assessments; psychoeducational, clinical, and behavioral evaluations; and independent educational evaluations. Specialized consultation includes educational and behavioral program design; curriculum development; Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Individual Service Plan (ISP) formulation; and inclusive educational support.
Focus on Autism

May Institute offers training on effective teaching strategies for children with autism in the general education classroom. Topics include: identifying ASD; impact of ASD on educational performance; developing effective services and accommodations in general education settings; behavior support; social skills, communications, and academic modifications; design of the classroom to support students with ASD; and using paraprofessional staff to support students.

Professional Development for Educators

Our professional development workshops can be tailored for specific audiences, including special and regular education teachers, classroom aides, student support personnel, administrators, and parents.

Workshop topics include:

- Collecting and Analyzing Behavioral Data
- Curriculum-based Measurement
- Developing Effective Behavior Support Plans
- Early Intervention for Children with ASD
- Effective Disciplinary Practices
- Functional Behavior Assessment
- Inclusion Strategies for Children with ASD
- Individual Social Skills Assessment
- Overview of Mental Health Disorders
- Preventing Bullying
- Preventing School Violence
- Preventing Substance Abuse
- School-wide Social Skills Screening
- Social Skills Training
- Writing Measurable IEP Goals and Objectives

“This information was excellent, and the entire workshop has been extremely helpful. I am excited about bringing these ideas back to my district. Thank you.”

— Public School Teacher and May Institute Training Participant
Social Skills Development Groups

This program is for children and adolescents with autism and other special needs who have difficulty understanding social cues and developing friendships. The goal is to teach kids the social skills they need to make new friends and have successful community experiences.

The program offers social groups designed to meet the different needs of children and adolescents who range in age from 5 to 19. Whenever possible, typically developing children join the groups. Sessions are held once a week and include structured lessons, social games, video modeling, role playing, and parent training.

While typical children acquire basic social skills (such as turn-taking and initiating conversation) simply by exposure to social situations, children with autism spectrum disorders often need to be taught these skills explicitly. The lack of socialization and mutual communication skills may affect all areas of a child or adolescent’s life — home, school, and community — hindering his or her ability to progress along with non-affected peers.

Our social groups focus on:
- reciprocal conversation
- expressing feelings
- empathy
- friendship skills
- greetings
- self regulation
- pragmatics of language
- cooperative play skills
Medical Staff Education

The Center offers training to medical professionals on the early identification of autism. This training will assist doctors, residents, and other medical personnel in serving as champions for the early detection of ASD in children.

Training components for medical staff may include: an understanding of the basics of autism spectrum disorders, their growing prevalence, indicators, and the critical role early identification and early intervention play in improving children’s long-term outcomes; utilizing easy screening tools; referring children for comprehensive evaluation and diagnosis; effectively discussing positive findings with families, what these findings mean, and next steps in intervention; and, providing families with information on evidence-based behavioral and educational treatment services for children with ASD.

Responding to a Critical Need

The autism study released in 2007 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) further emphasizes the critical need in this country for early diagnosis, intervention, and treatment. These new statistics—for the first time placing the prevalence rate of autism at one in 150 children—“confirm that ASDs are more common than previously thought and are conditions of urgent public health concern.”

“Medicine, psychology, education, and other fields of study are consistently coming to the same conclusion: Evidence-based practice is critical for effective treatment and care.”

—Susan M. Wilczynski, Ph.D., BCBA, Executive Director, National Autism Center
Often people think that children with autism can’t learn because they have autism. We believe that all children can and will learn through scientific, data-driven educational methods.”

– Ethan S. Long, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Vice President, May Institute
May Institute

May Institute is a nonprofit organization that provides educational, rehabilitative, and behavioral healthcare services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and other developmental disabilities, brain injury, mental illness, and other behavioral healthcare needs.

Since its founding more than 50 years ago, May Institute has evolved into an award-winning national network that serves over 25,000 individuals and their families annually. With corporate headquarters in Randolph, Massachusetts, the Institute operates more than 200 service locations in the Northeast, Southeast, and on the West Coast. Four May Institute schools serve children and adolescents with ASD. A fifth school serves children and adolescents with brain injury.

The Institute works with more than 200 school systems each year, providing training and consultation services to administrators, teachers, and students.

An active center of research and training, the Institute maintains affiliations with more than 55 universities, hospitals, and human service agencies worldwide.

National Autism Center

The National Autism Center is dedicated to serving children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) by providing reliable information, promoting best practices, and offering comprehensive resources for families, practitioners, and communities.

The National Autism Center has completed an unprecedented three-year project — the National Standards Project — to establish a set of standards for effective, research-validated education and behavioral intervention for children with ASD.

An advocate for evidence-based treatment approaches, the Center identifies effective programming and shares practical information with families about how to respond to the challenges they face. The Center also conducts applied research as well as develops training and service models for practitioners. Finally, the Center works to shape public policy concerning ASD and its treatment through the development and dissemination of national standards of practice.
“Autism takes such a toll on a family. It has a ripple effect—it impacts so many aspects of the family, not just the development of the child, but finances and relationships. The demands of caring for an autistic child cause a lot of stress.”

—Dea Hauges, Autism Walk Participant; The Bayonet, April 2007