

School Age Day Treatment Program

Serving Children Ages 5 to 12

A program of Astor Services for Children & Families



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Astor's School Age Day Treatment Program Serving Children Ages 5 to 12



Astor's School Age Day Treatment Program (SADT) is an intensive, highly structured, school-based treatment program operated by Astor Services for Children & Families. An interdisciplinary team of trained professionals provides mental health and educational services to emotionally disturbed children ages 5 to 12. The program utilizes a holistic approach for developing the social, emotional, and educational needs of our children through a nurturing and supportive environment.

Children attend the program on a school schedule. The student day begins at 8:15AM and ends at 2:00PM. All children are placed in classrooms of eight children with one teacher and two teacher assistants. They receive all their mental health and educational services during the regular school day. However, family therapy sessions may be scheduled before, during, or after the school day.

The primary goal of our program is to return children to a less restrictive educational setting with community-based mental health services. Children who enter our program usually stay between 18 and 24 months, although some children stay for a shorter period and some remain in our program much longer. Over the past three school years, 54% of the children have gone to less restrictive settings, 20% have gone

to other day treatment programs, and 26% have gone to more restrictive settings. Most children make significant behavioral and academic progress while in the program, and some children are able to function above grade level in one or more subjects upon discharge. Our success is due to the level of integration of educational and mental health services within the program. These services include:

- **Education:** Taking into account his or her particular behavioral needs, our program provides an academic education individualized to the learning needs of the student. All core subject areas are taught, and the special areas of physical education, art, and computer lab are provided. Because of its impact on all instructional areas, reading instruction is given priority within the education program. All classes have reading instruction at the same time. This enables children to be placed in small groups across classrooms to make sure each child is in the reading group where he or she will obtain maximum benefit from instruction. Instruction is multi-modal and based on the learning style of the child. Classes consist of a maximum of 8 students, one special education teacher and two classroom assistants. Children are grouped both by age and level of academic functioning.
- **Summer Program:** All students are required to attend our 6-week summer session. Therefore all students must have 12-month programming on their IEP. Our summer session continues our

regular academic programs, with the addition of weekly field trips and several school-wide special events.

- **Mental Health Services:** Each child receives both individual and group therapy once a week during the school day. These services are provided by licensed psychologists and social workers. Individual therapy is provided to help the child to express thoughts and feelings in a safe context, so that they do not need to act these out in school or at home. Group therapy includes all the children in a class and is designed to help children develop social skills, especially with peers. In addition, the child's therapist provides the family with family therapy and/or parent counseling on a regular basis. Therapists are also available by telephone to answer questions, provide information about the child's progress, and talk about the child's behavior in school and at home. They make referrals to other support services in the community as well. Family participation in treatment is seen as essential to a child's success in our program.
- **Psychiatry Services:** A psychiatrist is available on a consulting basis two days a week. The psychiatrist evaluates all children entering the program and prescribes medication as needed. The psychiatrist is available to meet with parents to discuss medication needs and concerns.

- **Nursing Services:** The nurse in our program takes care of a variety of the children's needs. She works closely with the psychiatrist to make sure the psychiatric and medication needs of the children are being met, administers medication to those children who need them during the school day, takes care of children who have minor injuries, and assesses children who aren't feeling well. She monitors the health status of all the children and will contact families if their child is due for a physical and/or immunizations, or if the program feels the child needs medical attention for other reasons.
- **Occupational Therapy:** Our program accommodates Occupational Therapy when it is included in a child's IEP. We coordinate with each school district to provide this service. At times make requests for OT evaluations ourselves.
- **Speech Therapy:** Our program has two speech-language therapists on staff. Students receive speech therapy when it is included on their IEP. Therapy is individual, small group, or both.
- **Crisis Intervention:** Our program employs the services of three full-time crisis intervention counselors. Their primary tasks are preventing crisis through early intervention, providing verbal and physical crisis intervention services (including peer mediation), supporting other staff in the event of a crisis, training staff, and supervising in-

school suspension. They also coordinate with the transportation providers to resolve bus problems.



Behavior Change Program



At Astor's School Age Day Treatment Program we are committed to helping our students succeed in school, home, and community. We understand that many of our students have difficulty making good choices and doing the right thing at the right time. Students enter our program *because* of this problem. It is our job to help children find better ways to interact with others. Thus our program emphasizes behavior education, learning problem solving skills, and expecting and accepting the consequences for misbehavior.

The following are the elements of our behavior change program:

1. A *Treatment Plan* is created for all students. This plan identifies the behavioral goals and objectives that staff, parents and the students themselves see as necessary steps to removing the obstacles to returning to an in-district educational placement. The plan also contains the methods that the treatment team (including the parent) will use to help the child meet those goals and objectives. The treatment plan is reviewed and revised quarterly in a meeting that *parents are strongly encouraged to attend*.
2. Students are taught appropriate social skills and problem solving skills throughout the day in a variety of ways, including group and individual therapy, classroom discussion, and crisis intervention. A core model for this part of our program is Collaborative Problem Solving, an approach that emphasizes identifying the hurdles children face and including the child in finding solutions to overcome those hurdles.
3. To build positive self-esteem, we give frequently give recognition to the achievements of our students. Good work is posted in the halls. Positive behaviors a child has shown may also be posted in the hall. Certificates may be given for academic achievements. Incentive systems are

sometimes put into place to encourage positive bus behavior.

4. Astor's School Age Day Treatment Program uses a behavior management program called "Positive Classroom Discipline." Positive Classroom Discipline is a group incentive system, which means that students *as a group* receive rewards for cooperative behavior and consequences for uncooperative behavior. All rewards and consequences are given in terms of "time." The more cooperative and responsible the class is, the more time they earn. Children can also earn time for the class by making progress toward an individual goal. If the class is uncooperative or irresponsible, they "spend" their time on those behaviors. The time children earn is called PAT (Preferred Activity Time). PAT time is held during scheduled periods throughout the week and is a teacher-structured activity with academic content, such as math bingo.
5. The use of "time away" is common throughout the school. Time away is not a punishment, nor is it a consequence. It is a tool for allowing a student a period of time to regroup, calm down, etc. Time away is done in the classroom, in the hallway, or in the crisis room. The length of a time away is based on the individual child's need to calm down enough to be able to re-enter the classroom, but never exceeds 30 minutes.

Admissions and Payment

Children are admitted without regard to race, creed, color or country of origin. All children admitted have behavioral or emotional problems that seriously interfere with school, home, and community adjustment. Typically the problems may include limited frustration tolerance, inflexibility, aggressiveness, low self-esteem and depression, hyperactivity and distractibility, inability to relate positively to peers and adults, and delayed academic development.

Admission Process

1. Referral is made to the Astor's School Age Day Treatment Program by the local CSE. Referral information is sent by the CSE to the Astor intake coordinator and should include the most recent IEP, the most recent triennial evaluation, immunization records, and the most recent physical on record. Other supporting materials may be included at the CSE's discretion.
2. The Astor intake coordinator will contact the parent/guardian to set up an intake visit to the school. The visit *must* include the parent/guardian and child, and *can* include other interested persons.
3. The parent/guardian and CSE are informed if the student is suitable for admission. If the parent, CSE and Astor are in agreement, a start date is set.

4. The CSE chairperson arranges for transportation.

Payment

1. Tuition at ADTC is approximately \$35,000 for the regular school year and \$5,800 for summer school. Tuition is largely reimbursable by SED.
2. Transportation costs are not reimbursable.
3. Psychiatric services and family therapy are paid for directly by Medicaid and are not included in the tuition rate.
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All artwork in this brochure was done by students from Astor's School Age Day Treatment Program.