A Day in the Life

TEACHER:
When our students arrive on campus for the day, they are greeted with a warm welcome from our staff. The student and staff member walk together to the student’s classroom where the student puts away their belongings, completes personal hygiene routines, and gets comfortable in their seat to begin academic lessons. Each arrival routine reflects the student’s individual needs in consideration for therapeutic support, sensory input, and communication.

STUDENT:
When I walk into school every morning, I love seeing my favorite paraprofessional, Miss Jessie. She is always right there at the door to say, “Good Morning.” On the way to class, Miss Jessie asks me about my morning. We love talking about basketball and racing cars. After we get to class, we put away our things and we all wash our hands, brush our teeth, and comb our hair. Then, we get in our seats. My physical therapist, Miss Lexie, helped me get a special chair that helps me sit comfortably and safely at school. Now I can learn better at school and focus on my lessons.

TEACHER:
Breakfast and lunch options are available to all students; mealtime takes place in the classroom to work on family mealtime skills. ACCEL’s nursing, therapy, and nutrition staff coordinate together to accommodate the specific dietary needs of each student, including allergies and food sensitivities, consistency of food and liquid, and use of adaptive utensils and/or cups.

STUDENT:
My favorite part of the day is eating with my friends. We have breakfast and lunch in our classroom every day. Each one of our meals is prepared just for us, and some of my friends help to bring them to our room. My occupational therapist, Mr. Matt, helped me get my special fork and spoon. I can do so many things now all by myself. My mom is so proud of me.

602.995.7366 | accel.org | info@accel.org

...meeting every special need
TEACHER:
The daily routine in the classroom is structured to support the pace and needs of each student while also allowing for group interactions and activities. **Students receive a blend of specialized instruction** in academics, independent living skills appropriate to their chronological and developmental age, development in vocational experiences and social interactions. The individualized needs for therapeutic support, organization of sensory input, and an effective communication system are crafted within the delivery of each activity or routine to ensure meaningful access and engagement.

Expectations are established with the use of concrete visual strategies such as “First, Then” boards and visual work systems that illustrate the structure of the activity or task. **ACCEL staff build customized rewards** at intervals that are the most meaningful for your child.

STUDENT:
Every day my teacher, Miss Abby, likes to start the day with our morning meeting and my favorite time is when we have a morning dance. **Everyone in my class likes to dance and it makes me so happy!** Miss Abby makes a plan for me, so I always know what to do first, and then what to do next. It feels so good to not be lost during class time.

We learn how to make sandwiches in our cooking class and we even made a paper mâché earth for our solar system lesson. When I am afraid to try something new, I remember that there is always someone nearby to help. We were working on a big project about the weather and I wasn’t sure if I could do it. Miss Abby was there to help and I did it! When we were done, I got a gold star. Now I have earned 5 gold stars and I get to pick a special item from Miss Abby’s prize bag. When we start something new we all participate in the way we learn best to make sure everyone can understand. At my school, all the kids are different, and the teachers and staff make sure all the students are included and everyone feels like they can do anything.

TEACHER:
At the end of each school day, **the teacher provides a written note that is sent home sharing the events and highlights of the day.** The teacher may also choose to post a photo or video from the day on a secure subscription-based app so you can share in your child’s daily experience.

STUDENT:
When it’s time to go home, my teacher writes a special note to tell my family all about my day. My mom always reads it right away when I get off the bus. **Today my teacher posted pictures of us practicing making our beds. I could tell my parents were impressed.** I am getting pretty good. I cannot wait to come back tomorrow; we are making marshmallow shooters!
Since 1980, ACCEL has been providing comprehensive instructional programming for children and adults who have special needs. ACCEL is a non-profit organization, and the only private special education school in Arizona nationally accredited by the National Commission for the Accreditation of Special Education Services (NCASES). Serving K-12 students, ACCEL’s educational program turns challenges into possibilities by making the greatest possible impact on the lives of our students.

ACCEL is dedicated to providing educational, behavioral, therapeutic, and employment training programs to individuals who have developmental disabilities. These services give them the necessary skills to learn to work, live successfully, and achieve independence. In 2019, ACCEL expanded its mission internationally to serve students who have developmental disabilities in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, where no special educational opportunities had existed for this community.

ACCEL is committed to doing the right thing for the students, adult members, and clients it has been entrusted to educate and support. The ultimate goal is to help individuals who have disabilities achieve a life of dignity and self-worth – something that all people, regardless of ability level, deserve.
District Partnership

From the time a student enrolls at ACCEL, exit criteria are identified through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process to support each student’s ability to return to their home school. The ACCEL team is in continuous communication with the district partner with status updates of progress made toward the exit criteria and invites collaboration for unique needs that arise during placement.

FAQs

What are the special education eligibilities served?
- Autism
- Vision Impairment
- Multiple Disabilities with Severe Sensory Impairment
- Multiple Disabilities
- Other Health Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Speech Language Impairment
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Mild Intellectual Disability
- Moderate Intellectual Disability
- Severe Intellectual Disability
- Developmental Delay
- Specific Learning Disability
- Emotional Disability

What is the length of ACCEL’s school year?
180 instructional days

Does ACCEL provide Medicaid claiming to district partners?
Yes, ACCEL provides documentation to each district to submit for Medicaid reimbursement for each of their students.

What related services are available at ACCEL?
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Vision Services

Does ACCEL provide extended school year (esy)?
Yes

ACCEL is excited to collaborate with your school district on data and evaluation for the student’s specific needs including adaptive seating, ESY, district funding for one-on-one support, and readiness to return to the student’s least restrictive environment (LRE). ACCEL also offers a competitive tuition structure for all students.

“Criteria are identified in order to support each student’s ability to return to their home school.”
ACCEL’s behavior department consists of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA’s), Board Certified assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBA’s), and Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT’s). The BCBA/BCaBA on campus will participate as an engaged member of each student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) team if behavior is an area of need. They can administer a functional behavioral assessment when necessary to create an individualized behavior intervention plan. The behavior department also trains school staff in behavior management and crisis intervention, as well as collaborates with the therapy department and classroom teams.

ACCEL’s therapy department provides therapeutic intervention to each student as prescribed in their IEP and support to each classroom. These services help optimize student performance and their ability to access the educational curriculum. The therapy department’s offerings extend beyond the usual scope of occupational, physical, and speech therapy to include vision services, adapted aquatics, and music therapy.

We have a variety of options available for augmentative communication, assistive technology, and adaptive seating. Our multidisciplinary approach offers multiple solutions, and we can be available to collaborate with outside providers for a student upon parental consent.

With a comprehensive partnership with the school district, it is easy to see how the entire educational team’s collaborative practices can be effective in order to optimize programming and communication for every student.
ACCEL’s vocational department focuses on the development of independent living skills and preparing our students to be ready for the workplace. Our staff considers the range of opportunities for future employment and provides individualized training that meets the interests and abilities of our students. Individual growth is achieved through learning, practicing, and generalizing skills through such programs as the dog treat making workshop, horticulture program, and creative design workshop, as well as access to our studio apartment and a kitchen, all within the campus and community experiences.

The structured program with curricular focus on social engagement and soft skills such as flexibility, problem-solving, accepting feedback, and building a sense of responsibility and confidence, lay the solid foundation for a successful transition following high school. Students begin their skills training and development for tasks and activities within the school campus to ensure readiness indicators are present in order to transition to job experiences in the community. Students also practice interviewing, completing job applications, developing a resume, and participating in performance evaluations throughout the various on-the-job training opportunities.

Community partners provide job experiences at businesses such as retailers, libraries, recreational facilities, gyms, and animal welfare organizations.
ACCEL Staff

Founded in 1980, ACCEL provides exceptional service for disadvantaged and underserved populations. All classroom staff are trained in behavior support and crisis intervention and maintain current certification in First Aid and CPR. Staff receive a Level 1 Fingerprint Clearance background check to become employed. The ACCEL team currently includes the following professions:

- Certified Special Education Teachers
- Paraprofessional
- Occupational Therapist (OT)
- Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP)
- Music Therapist
- Physical Therapist (PT)
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), Board Certified assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA)
- Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)
- Nursing Staff
- Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI)
- Job Coach
- School Administration
- Aquatics Specialist
- Adaptation Specialist

Staff are supported and provided mentorship from a master teacher/paraprofessional upon hire and on an on-going basis. All staff are provided opportunities for continuing their professional growth and training.

The behavior department supports classroom staff to utilize effective strategies in the delivery of their differentiated instruction for each student. The adaptation team supports each classroom in individualizing and adapting educational materials and work systems to align with themes and academic lessons.

“All classroom staff are trained in behavior support and crisis intervention...”
Individual growth is achieved through differentiated instruction, practicing and generalizing skills. ACCEL knows that individual student growth and achievement is evidenced in the opportunity for students to practice skills and concepts in various environments.

Our classrooms typically have a 2:1 ratio of students to staff, with approximately 10 students per classroom. The small size, low student to teacher ratio, rigorous structure, and comprehensive programming prove to be an effective combination that leads to success, growth, and independence for our students.

Our full-time nursing staff are available and ready to support the routine and spontaneous medical needs of each student.

The partnership with parents is critical to our students’ success and is enhanced through daily communication from the classroom teachers regarding progress and changes in growth.

- ACCEL’s curriculum map is linked to Arizona’s Academic Standards.
- ACCEL utilizes a variety of curricular resources including but not limited to Science Research Association (SRA) Corrective Reading and Math, Handwriting without Tears, Unique Learning Systems, and Touchpoint Math to name a few.
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals are aligned to the Arizona Academic Standards.
- The adaptation team supports each classroom in individualizing and adapting educational materials and work systems to align with themes and academic lessons.
- Daily living skills and vocational readiness skills are embedded within classroom routines and in targeted activities each day.
- Therapeutic strategies are integrated throughout the school day to ensure access and optimal engagement.

“Partnership with parents is critical to our students’ success.”