

ACADEMIC, CAREER, AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS (ACES) PROGRAMS

ACES Programs are special education classes intended to support students classified with Intellectual Disability (ID) or Multiple Disabilities (MD) and who participate in [New York State Alternate Assessment¹](#) (NYSAA). ACES Programs provide an opportunity to learn academic, work, and independent living skills in a District 1-32 school. Eligible students typically demonstrate the following characteristics:

ACES STUDENT PROFILE

- **Classification:** Students must be eligible for educational disability classifications of Intellectual Disability (ID) or Multiple Disabilities (MD) and be eligible to participate in alternate assessment, including New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA).
- **Cognition/Intelligence:** Students present with mild to moderate intellectual disability.
- **Achievement:** Academic abilities and skills are significantly below grade level expectations. Students may need additional support when working independently or in groups. Assistive technology devices may be used to support learning and interaction.
- **Behavior:** Students may demonstrate mild to moderate behavior challenges, but no aggressive or self-injurious behaviors. Behavior challenges may interfere with learning and socialization opportunities. The student's ability to carry out functional life skills such as grooming, dressing, eating, keeping safe, and socializing (known as adaptive behaviors) will be well below age expected levels. To assess adaptive behavior, a student's IEP Team administers an adaptive behavior scale. Students with low adaptive behavior scores are typically considered for the ACES program.
- **Independent Living Skills:** ACES Programs use the school and local communities to support students in learning daily living skills such as building relationships with peers and adults, grocery shopping, learning how to use a bank, etc.

ACES PROGRAM FEATURES

- **Class Structure:** Students are served in a special class in a District 1-32 school. The number of students in ACES special classes typically increase as students move from elementary school and middle school, to high school. In Kindergarten through eighth grade, most ACES Programs have up to 12 students in a special class, one special education teacher, and a programmatic paraprofessional (12:1+1). In high school (grades 9-12), ACES Programs have up to 15 students and one special education teacher (15:1).
- **Staff:** Teachers and support staff are trained in specialized instructional strategies and assessments that support students in learning and applying work and independent living skills at home, in school, and in the community.
- **Curriculum and Instruction:** ACES Program classes follow the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and essential skill building are incorporated into the program.

¹ See the NYCDOE's FAQ on New York State Alternate Assessment: http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/CDF2FCD1-773B-4438-A3C3-0BB4FBAB51DA/175935/NYSAA_FAQ_Families_Jan2015_FINAL1.pdf

ACES INQUIRY PROCESS

Here are the steps for determining if your child is eligible:

- 1. Inquiry:** If you think the ACES Program may be appropriate for your child, send an e-mail to the Central ACES Programs Team at SpecializedPrograms@schools.nyc.gov with your child's name, date of birth, NYC ID number, current grade, and current school. Make sure to state that you are interested in the ACES program. Families can also ask their child's IEP Team to help submit an inquiry.
 - Families and schools may contact the Central ACES Programs team at any time during the year to submit an inquiry or ask a question by emailing SpecializedPrograms@schools.nyc.gov.
 - For children entering kindergarten in September ("Turning 5"), it is recommended that families or schools contact the Central ACES Programs Team as soon as possible.
- 2. Acknowledgment by Central ACES Programs Team:** If you e-mail the Central ACES Programs Team, you will receive an e-mail to let you know your inquiry has been received. If you fax or mail a letter to the Central ACES Programs Team, you will receive a letter to confirm receipt.
 - If you submit an inquiry for your child, the Central ACES Programs Team will notify your child's IEP Team to let them know that you are interested in ACES.
 - If your child's IEP Team submits an inquiry for your child, you will also receive notification to let you know that the Central ACES Programs Team has received the inquiry.
- 3. Initial Review Eligibility for ACES:** The Central ACES Programs Team reviews each student's special education record to determine whether assessments are up-to-date and provide enough information about your child's intellectual ability and social, language, behavior, academic, and adaptive skills. In addition, the record is reviewed to make sure students meet the criteria for ID or MD educational disability classifications.
 - **Up-to-Date Assessments** - If updated or additional assessments are needed, your child's IEP Team will be asked to conduct any needed assessments. You will receive a letter from the DOE asking for your consent to conduct those additional assessments.
 - **Additional Information** - Families may also submit additional evaluations for review by the Central ACES Programs Team.
- 4. Eligibility Determination:** Based on the information gathered from the evaluations, observations, and any additional information from the teachers and service providers, the student's IEP Team, which includes the student's parent(s), in consultation with the Central ACES Programs Team, will determine if your child is eligible for the ACES Program. Eligible students' IEPs are written with guidance from the Central ACES Programs Team.

- 5. School Placement:** If your child is eligible for an ACES Program, you will receive a Prior Written Notice (PWN) and School Location Letter (SLL) providing an identified school with an available seat in the ACES Program. The ACES Program may be in a school other than your local district school. If the school is not near your home, your child will receive transportation to the school.
- 6. Visiting and Admission:** The School Location Letter (SLL) will contain the name of the contact person and the school's address. Please call the school to make an appointment for a visit. After visiting the school, contact the IEP Team to inform them whether you are accepting or declining the offer.
- 7. Registering at New School:** If you accept the ACES placement offer, please take the School Location Letter along with a copy of your child's birth certificate, and two proofs of your address to register your child at the new school. (Visit the [DOE website](#)² for details on "What to Bring" for registration).

² <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/NewStudents/default.htm>