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and walk out with the ability to embrace the world



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Providing Excellence in Special Education since 1981

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## Welcome to the Gateway School

Hello. My name is Kevin Jones, and I am the principal of the Gateway School. Thank you for taking the time to discover more about our outstanding school program. As you can see from our materials, we provide a comprehensive array of direct services and supports to meet the special educational, related services, and social skills needs of classified students from Middlesex and nearby counties.

*Our philosophy focuses on preparing all of our students, to the maximum extent possible, to succeed in their school, community, and home – both now and after they transition as young adults. Using a collaborative model, we teach students to follow the rules, inspire them to learn, and provide positive reinforcement when they accomplish their goals.*

If students demonstrate challenging behaviors, we have experts available – counselors, certified behavioral therapists, and mental health professionals – to identify why they are struggling, and then design detailed plans to address their problem behaviors.

We motivate our students with age-appropriate and fun activities, so they can learn the practical skills necessary to succeed in future adult environments.

Please schedule a tour and visit our friendly and family-like school environment to see if we can help meet the needs of your child. I'm sure you will find our dedicated and compassionate staff ready to develop an individualized program to support the learning needs of your child.

— Kevin Jones, Principal at The Gateway School, Carteret, NJ





## Our Academic Program

The Gateway School of Carteret, New Jersey, operates as a private day school, approved by the New Jersey Department of Education, providing public school districts with an enhanced alternative program for students ages 5-21 with an array of special needs. The program uses an individualized and holistic approach to meet the functional academic and behavioral needs of the most challenging students from sending districts.



Our academic program is aligned to New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) and incorporates social, emotional, behavioral, and functional learning, in addition to the core content areas of language arts, social studies, math, including; science, technology, engineering and math through our STEM program. Our students also take part in courses in health, physical education, art, and music to complement the core classes.

Differentiated instructional strategies are practiced, and instruction is delivered through multiple approaches, including auditory, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic methods. We recognize that all students learn in multiple and various ways.

### Subject Areas of Our Academic Programs

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Our academic/instructional subjects include:

- ✓ Language arts and literacy
- ✓ Reading and Writing
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Science
- ✓ Social Studies
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Handwriting
- ✓ Computers

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Certified teachers assisted by trained paraprofessionals provide individualized and small-group instruction in a small-class setting. A multisensory approach is used with individualized and modified techniques. A wide variety of materials are used to help the student reach his or her full academic potential.

## Our Range of Standard Educational Programs and State-of-the-Art Programs

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Our academic/instructional programs include:

- ✓ Discrete Trial Trainer
- ✓ Edmark Reading Program
- ✓ Handwriting Without Tears
- ✓ IXL
- ✓ Life Centered Education
- ✓ Low-Level High-Interest materials
- ✓ News-2-You
- ✓ Reading A-Z
- ✓ Steck Vaughn materials
- ✓ Touch Point Math
- ✓ Unique Learning System

## Extended School Year

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Our school recognizes that for many students, it is vital to continue their academic and social skill development year round. To address these needs, the Gateway School offers a 30-day, full-day extended school-year summer program, available upon district approval, in order to continue the educational and support needs of a particular student.



*We encourage you to visit our school's website often to stay informed about any updates or changes to our academic and other support services.*



## Our Behavioral Support Programs and Services



The Gateway School strives to integrate a variety of behavioral support programs, treatments, and approaches that can provide a safe and nurturing educational environment dedicated to the vision that individuals with disabling conditions are entitled to a full and meaningful life. Our behavioral support programs seek to empower each student with skills for life, work, and recreation. We believe that every individual possesses the dignity and potential to contribute to a better world.

The range of behavioral health challenges and therapy support services can be unique for each student. Therefore, your child's specific needs and challenges will need to be discussed in detail. This approach is to ensure that we can better ascertain what programs would work best for a particular student.

### Behavioral Therapy Services

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#### Application of Behavioral-based Interventions and Techniques

We use techniques to reduce and/or eliminate maladaptive behaviors, including:

- ✓ Aggressive behaviors
- ✓ Attention-seeking behaviors
- ✓ Destructive behaviors
- ✓ Non-compliant behaviors
- ✓ Self-Injurious behaviors

#### Functional Behavioral Assessments

To ascertain the function or reason for problem behaviors, we use a variety of assessment tools, including:

- ✓ Direct observation
- ✓ Parent and staff interviews
- ✓ Review of records



- ✓ Screening tools
  - Functional Assessment Screening Tool (FAST)
  - Functional Assessment Interview (FAI)

### **Collaboration With Instructional Staff & Related Service Professionals**

We work with a variety of professionals, including:

- ✓ Classroom and specials teachers
- ✓ Counselors
- ✓ Occupational therapists
- ✓ Physical therapists
- ✓ Speech therapists

### **Behavioral Intervention Plan Development**

Based on the results of the Functional Behavioral Assessment, we develop a behavioral intervention plan. This plan describes the problem behavior, hypothesizes as to why the behavior occurs, and outlines positive intervention strategies.

### **Curriculum Development Based on the Needs of the Individual**

We develop a curriculum that is tailored to the needs of each student. This curriculum is designed to help the student acquire skills, including:

- ✓ Academic skills
- ✓ Activities of daily living
- ✓ Community skills
- ✓ Functional communication
- ✓ Leisure and play skills
- ✓ Safety skills
- ✓ Social skills
- ✓ Vocational skills

### **Direct Staff Training**

We train staff on a variety of behavioral topics, including:

- ✓ Data analysis to monitor and determine the effectiveness of interventions
- ✓ Design and implementation of data collection

## **Parent Assistance and Training**

Parents are taught specific behavioral techniques to assist in the generalization of skills learned in school to the home and community environments.

## **Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI)**

We utilize the non-violent crisis intervention program, which is a safe, non-harmful behavior management system designed to help staff provide for the best possible care, welfare, safety, and security of disruptive, assaultive, and out-of-control individuals – even during their most violent moments. Crisis intervention is a small segment of time in which staff members must intervene with another person to address a particular behavior.

## **Our School-Based Program**

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In collaboration with Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care (UBHC), we offer a school-based program. The goal of this program is to create a healthy environment for learning that promotes academic and life success for all of our students. UBHC and the Gateway School partner to develop prevention and intervention strategies to meet this goal. This service, offered at no charge to the parents, allows us to better address the mental health and psychiatric needs of some of our more challenging developmentally disabled students.

**The school-based program provides a range of free and confidential mental health services, including:**

- ✓ Case management/referral services
- ✓ Crisis intervention
- ✓ Family counseling
- ✓ Individual counseling
- ✓ Medication management with child psychiatrist
- ✓ Staff consultation
- ✓ And more

A child psychiatrist visits once a week to meet with specifically identified families/students for medication management. Our mental health clinician works collaboratively with the psychiatrist, staff, families, and students.



Through this process, students are observed, and teachers are advised. From there we develop a behavior plan, which monitors the student's progress. In addition, this program provides individual and family counseling and facilitates crisis intervention as needed to support the positive mental health of our students.

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying are continuously monitored. We are specialists in investigating, reporting, and resolving any incidents of maltreatment.

## Meet Some of Our Behavioral Support Staff

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### **Debra Shanin, MSW, School Social Worker**

Debra provides individual and group counseling to the Gateway School students and works closely with all classroom teachers. She graduated with an MSW degree from NYU and brings almost 30 years of experience in the field of social work and human services.

Some of her specific focuses are providing counseling services for those students who are deemed appropriate. She provides individual counseling – utilizing talk therapy as well as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) – to each student and helps them reflect on the connection between their feelings and their behavior. She offers group counseling – using reality talk and board games – to enhance students' social skills in a peer environment.

### **Allison Rawlins, BCBA**

Allison is the Board Certified Behavior Analyst at the Gateway School. She earned her Bachelor's degree from the College of New Jersey in Elementary Education and History in 2009 and a Master's degree from Rider University in Applied Psychology: Applied Behavior Analysis in 2014. Her role is to work with the students and staff at the Gateway School to help students reduce interfering behaviors while increasing appropriate behaviors through the use of applied behavior analysis.

### **Nadia Hernandez, BCBA**

Nadia graduated from Endicott College with a Master's degree in Applied Behavioral Analysis and Autism studies. Following graduation, she was certified as a BCBA in 2018. Nadia has worked in a variety of settings, including private schools, home therapy settings, preschools, and adult vocational centers. Her focus includes planning, developing, and monitoring a range of individualized behavioral support services. Nadia's goal is to meet the needs of students diagnosed with a variety of developmental, emotional, and social/communication challenges. She collaborates closely with the teachers and paraprofessionals to ensure that each student receives the most effective treatment.





## Our Creative Expression Programs

The creative expression programs at the Gateway School are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic. Our integrated programs of music and painting are all keys that can unlock the fullest potential of each student.

A strong emphasis is placed on self-expression through participation in a variety of highly motivating activities that enhance social skills development.



### Music Programs

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We employ a certified music teacher who designs individualized classes to motivate the students in performing arts. Group sessions are focused on increasing self-expression, socialization, and communication through activities such as rhythmic instrumentals, music listening, movement songs, and songwriting using digital technology. Classes focus on the students' IEP goals and reveal the hidden talents of our learners.

#### Our music program includes:

- ✓ Adaptive music lessons
- ✓ Chorus
- ✓ School wide music productions
- ✓ Voice class

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## Art Program

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Inspiration is the key for every artistic work produced in art class. Each student is given the opportunity to create their own style and use art as a means of expression.



### Our art program includes:

- ✓ Annual art exhibits
- ✓ Visiting a local museum
- ✓ Exposure to different art styles, principles, and techniques

*The art program was featured in "I Am an Artist," a film documentary that explores the world of children with disabilities. In this documentary, young adults gain confidence under the gentle guidance of their teacher.*

## Winter and Spring Shows

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Each year, the expressive music and art skills our students have developed are featured in our winter and spring shows, in addition to other special events.



## Our Life Skills (Activities of Daily Living)

At the Gateway School, life skills development is an integral part of the transition program we begin implementing when a student turns 14, or earlier if appropriate. Below are the main goals we strive to achieve with each student to the best of their abilities.

Developing practical and functional living skills in order to prepare students to be future adults – whether in the home, community, or work environment – is key to their development.



### Independent Living and Activities of Daily Living Objectives

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Our life skills instruction has a variety of objectives, including:

- ✓ Communication and social skills
- ✓ Cooking, cleaning, and laundry skills
- ✓ Functional academics and reading
- ✓ Hygiene, health awareness, and nutrition
- ✓ Impulse control and coping strategies
- ✓ Managing home tasks, such as making a bed
- ✓ Organizational skills
- ✓ Overall daily living skills
- ✓ Problem solving and conflict resolution
- ✓ Self-advocacy
- ✓ Time and money management

### Community-Related Life Skills Development

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Our life skills instruction develops a variety of skills, including:

- ✓ Banking, debit card use, and check writing
- ✓ Familiarity with public transportation, travel training, and exposure
- ✓ Functional academics and reading, such as signs, prices, maps, and money use
- ✓ Shopping and purchasing
- ✓ Use of the public library



## Parent and Family Support

Our job is not complete unless we strive to support parents and families on an individual basis. We strive to understand some of the challenges you face every day. Our goal is not only to serve our students during the day, but also to inform and educate the parents and families at home. Through education, workshops, and our website, we strive to build a stronger support system for all of our students.



### Our School's Website

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It is vital that each family stays in touch with the information we supply on our website, from our "Parent Resources" section to our ongoing monthly articles. In addition, as a child ages and begins a transition process, it is even more crucial that the families stay informed about the regulations, laws, and services that can be in place to better serve each child through the years.

### Workshops

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Throughout a given school year, we host a variety of workshops and seminars to better assist families regarding the complexities of raising a child with special needs.

Some of these workshops or seminars are presented by professionals in the field of special education, including the state agencies supporting families.

### Additional Support Components

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**We provide other types of parent and family support, including:**

- ✓ Parent-teacher conferences
- ✓ Progress reports
- ✓ Serving as a liaison with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), and other transition/adult agencies (such as PrimeTime Center)

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### ***We Are There for You***

*Questions, concerns, feelings of being overwhelmed with options and choices ... these are all real-world challenges, and we work to provide the information you need to help your child over the years. At the Gateway School, our teachers, therapists, and staff at all levels strive to complete your family support system to the best of our abilities.*



## Our Related Services

The Gateway School's related services are an integral component of the educational team. We provide occupational therapy, physical therapy/adaptive physical education, speech therapy, and nursing services based on a child's IEP. We employ a collaborative model that utilizes current evidence-based treatment interventions. We strongly encourage home and school communication so that we can partner with families to design each child's individualized program.



### Our related services include:

- ✓ Collaborative team meetings with classroom staff
- ✓ Collaborative use of physical, sensory, communication, and health strategies
- ✓ Coordination of services with sending districts
- ✓ Individual/small-group sessions
- ✓ Ongoing staff education to promote the well-being of our students
- ✓ Staff and parent training in specific techniques
- ✓ Utilization of a dynamic treatment model

## Occupational Therapy

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### Our occupational therapy services include:

- ✓ Academic readiness skills
  - ✓ Classroom seating and positioning for educational success
  - ✓ Development of modifications for independence in handwriting/self-care
  - ✓ Life skills
  - ✓ Pre-vocational skills
  - ✓ Self-regulation and coping skills
  - ✓ Sensory motor, perceptual motor, and fine motor skills
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## Physical Therapy/Adaptive Physical Education

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**Our physical therapy/adaptive physical education services include:**

- ✓ Balance and strength training
- ✓ Functional mobility skills
- ✓ Home exercise programs as well as parent training
- ✓ Integration of activities such as swimming
- ✓ Integration of intramural sports
- ✓ Orthopedic concerns
- ✓ Training in gross motor coordination skills

## Speech Therapy

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We utilize a total communication approach to facilitate effective interactions with others.

**Our speech therapy services include:**

- ✓ Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC)
- ✓ Oral motor and feeding interventions
- ✓ Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS)
- ✓ Speech generating devices
- ✓ Verbalization, gestures, and sign language
- ✓ Voice Output Communication Aides (VOCA)

## Nursing

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**Our nursing services include:**

- ✓ Administering first aid, emergency care, and daily prescribed medications
- ✓ Completing annual health screenings
- ✓ Maintaining health and immunization records
- ✓ Providing parent support and guidance regarding student well-being
- ✓ Providing physical assessments (completed by a certified registered school nurse)
- ✓ Providing skilled nursing care
- ✓ Providing staff training in medical procedures and precautions



## Social Skills Services

At the Gateway School, parents and guardians can feel comfortable knowing that their children are not only receiving professional academic support, but also interacting with their peers in a physically and emotionally safe environment. Students participate with their peers in structured and invigorating recreational and cooperative team-building activities that encourage social skills.



### Goals and Objectives of Our Social Skills Services

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Goals and objectives of our social skills services include:

#### Peer Relationships and Friendships

- ✓ Dealing with peer pressure
- ✓ Dealing with teasing/bullying
- ✓ Friendship management
- ✓ Getting attention in positive ways
- ✓ Introducing yourself appropriately
- ✓ Properly using the phone
- ✓ Sharing friendships

#### Conversational Skills

- ✓ Allowing others to join conversation
- ✓ Entering/exiting a conversation
- ✓ Flexibility of topic; continuing flow when the topic changes
- ✓ Greetings
- ✓ Staying on topic
- ✓ Taking turns in conversation; not interrupting others
- ✓ Tone of voice

#### Eye Contact

- ✓ Using eye contact to acknowledge the listener
- ✓ Using eye contact when talking to others

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### **Body Language**

- ✓ Body language cues
- ✓ Indicating that you're listening to others

### **Cooperative Play Skills**

- ✓ Choosing an activity
- ✓ Compromising
- ✓ Ending a game
- ✓ Joining others in play
- ✓ Winning and losing

### **Assertiveness Skills and Conflict Resolution**

- ✓ Criticism and compliments
- ✓ Peer pressure
- ✓ Self-advocacy

### **Empathy**

- ✓ How to convey that you understand others' feelings
- ✓ How to read nonverbal cues

### **Emotions**

- ✓ Appropriately expressing your own emotions
- ✓ Identifying your own emotions
- ✓ Keeping calm
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Reading others' facial expressions

### **Expectations From Home**

- ✓ Encouraging students to get together with peers
- ✓ Encouraging time management skills
- ✓ Internet safety
- ✓ Parent feedback/input



## Our Career Education and Transition Program

Transition services at the Gateway School are defined as a set of activities that are designed in an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities. This includes community participation, independent living, structured learning experiences, and in-school activities. The transition plan is a vision of the student's future after graduation that is defined by the student with input from the parent, the school team, and community participants. We emphasize functional vocational education training with development of academic proficiencies.



### Community-based Instruction (CBI)

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CBI activities include:

- ✓ Food shopping
- ✓ Job sampling/Structured Learning Experiences (SLEs)
- ✓ Recreation
- ✓ Travel training
- ✓ Volunteering

Students are given the opportunity through Structured Learning Experiences (SLEs) to work at a local participating business that has agreed to partner with us. Our staff works closely with the personnel of each business prior to and during the SLE placement. Employment specialists (SLE instructor and/or job coach) from our staff accompanies each student to the SLE site to assist them in performing their required tasks. They also ensure appropriate interaction with coworkers, customers, and supervisors.

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Students have community-based SLEs at the following types of work sites:

- ✓ Chain stores
- ✓ Libraries
- ✓ Offices
- ✓ Plant nurseries
- ✓ Restaurants
- ✓ Retail stores



### In-School Activities

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In-school activities include:

- ✓ Classroom businesses held either daily or weekly
- ✓ Employability skill development (resume writing, interviewing skills, job applications)
- ✓ In-school job and work safety training
- ✓ In-school Structured Learning Experiences (SLEs)
- ✓ Prevocational instruction
- ✓ Job-related social skills training
- ✓ Vocational Interest Inventories
- ✓ Accessing vocational resources, such as Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Centers for Independent Living

*We also seek out individual job opportunities based on student interest. The school staff is committed to assisting students in acquiring the skills that will enable them to live independently, be actively involved in their communities, and be able to find employment and the appropriate supports.*



## Our Technology

Technology is continuously evolving. At the Gateway School, we always look toward the future to ensure our students have access to the tools and proven instruction that helps to further their skills and abilities as they get older. Through desktop applications and hardware, STEM, handheld devices, and robotics, we are always building a technology-based foundation to help our students move from academics to real-world life skills. Our staff is kept up to date on the use and application of our technology solutions to better serve our students.



### In-Classroom Devices

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We infuse technological support and academics across all areas of our program, from web-based instruction in all content areas, to student support through communication devices such as FM systems and iPads, to our established STEM Lab (which focuses on science, technology, engineering, and math instruction through hands-on, project-based learning).

#### Our technology solutions include:

- ✓ Augmentative and Alternative Communications (AAC) systems to assist students with difficulties communicating, expressing themselves, and sharing their needs
- ✓ Interactive white board learning, such as MimioTeach
- ✓ Software-based educational solutions, such as Unique Learning System, News-2-You, IXL, Reading A-Z, and Scholastic News
- ✓ Technology solutions to allow students to work on projects at home under the supervision of a parent/caregiver
- ✓ Utilization of iPads, Chromebooks, tablets, and other computers to assist students in building both academic and life skills in the classroom as well as the community

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## STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Lab

STEM instruction focuses on hands-on, project-based learning in science, technology, engineering, and math. Throughout the curriculum, students are given a problem and tasked with finding various ways to solve it. Students work independently and in small groups on building models; coding; media recording; and photo, audio, and video editing. Our STEM program is highly engaging for all students.



**Our STEM Lab program is a project-based learning environment where students are engaged in:**

- ✓ Group lessons and skill building
- ✓ Hands-on and minds-on connections
- ✓ Interactive activities
- ✓ Technology-driven instruction

**The STEM program also provides job readiness skills, including:**

- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ Critical thinking and problem solving
- ✓ Literacy and adaptability
- ✓ Presentation skills

*In summary, the technology we use acts as the perfect bridge for students with a variety of challenges and disabilities and furthers our continued mission to enable each student to reach their fullest potential.*



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