

## SHAPE program goals

- To help families adjust to a new diagnosis of autism by providing research-based, “best practice” programming and a positive, supportive, realistic outlook.
- To teach parents and other family members the skills they need to work with their child, understand the challenges of autism, and structure the home environment in ways that decrease family stress, reinforce learning, and support development.
- To increase the child’s social skills.
- To develop communication strategies and expand the child’s communication skills, especially in the social/pragmatic arena.
- To replace challenging behaviors with more adaptive behaviors.
- To prepare the child for successful school experiences.

*A team of specialists  
will work with you to design  
a program that helps your child  
move from diagnosis  
toward successful participation  
in the mainstream  
of education*

## Eligibility and program hours

Children who are 3 to 5 years old with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum are eligible for this program. Placement in the program is determined by the child’s IEP team.

SHAPE provides one-on-one instructional hours that may occur in home or community settings. The IEP team determines the number of hours and best settings for instruction.

Note that a parent or adult care-provider must be present when program activities take place in the home. Program staff are not allowed to transport children.

For more information about SHAPE, contact the Sonoma County Office of Education Preschool Office at (707) 524-2712.



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# SHAPE

## School and Home Autism Program through Education



*An intensive, specially designed,  
and individualized program for  
young children diagnosed on  
the autism spectrum*





## Instruction is individualized

The range of instructional components used in the SHAPE program are based on careful and ongoing analysis of each child's learning style and needs. Although no one strategy is right for every child, the following instructional techniques are among the ones typically used:

- Structured teaching (*Schopler & Mesibov*)
- Sensory integration (*Williamson, Ayres*)
- Ecological analysis (*Odom*)
- Picture exchange system (*Frost & Bondy*)
- Social, emotional, and communication intervention (*Prizant, Greenspan, Wetherby*)
- Social Stories (*Grey*)
- Behavioral analysis and intervention (*McEachin & Maurice*)
- Full inclusion (*Odom*)
- Play group facilitation (*Wolfberg*)
- Parent training (*Gutstein*)

Individualized programs are developed by special education teachers with many years of education and experience, including specialized training for working with young children with autism.

## SHAPE uses a team approach

SHAPE provides a multidisciplinary team for each child. Each child's team includes his or her parents and a special education teacher, speech therapist, instructional assistant, and other specialists as needed. Other members of the multidisciplinary team may include:

- An occupational therapist to focus on fine motor skills and sensory integration issues;
- A psychologist to conduct any needed assessments and help develop behavioral plans and applied behavioral analyses;
- A school nurse to help parents understand issues related to medications the child's physician may recommend;
- An adaptive physical education teacher to help develop functional playground and gross motor skills;
- A marriage and family therapist to provide counseling support and resource referrals;
- An education specialist or SHAPE teacher with a strong background in autism and early childhood special education to provide consultation, training, and program development.

Team meetings are held on a regular basis to coordinate services and provide consistency.

Under the direction of an autism specialist or special education teacher, a SHAPE assistant may provide support in a special education class, community preschool, daycare, student's home, or other community setting.

## Parents have an important role

Parents play an important role in their child's learning by participating in team meetings, teaching sessions, and providing staff with input and insights about their child. Throughout the year, parent trainings are offered on a variety of topics. The SHAPE teacher/specialist also works with parents individually so they can support their child's program and facilitate learning at home.

## Assistants work one-on-one with children

Assistants are key players in this intensive and individualized program. They provide ongoing, direct, one-on-one support to children and their families. All SHAPE assistants work closely with a special education teacher and/or autism specialist. They receive training in:

- CPR and first aid
- Basic understanding of autism
- Sensory integration techniques
- Working with families
- Applied behavior analysis and discrete trial techniques
- Language development strategies
- Structured teaching format
- Data collection and observation
- Teaching social skills
- Facilitating play groups
- Social Stories
- OT/sensory motor strategies