The Preschool for Children with Autism at the Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center is an intensive communication intervention program for very young children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Speech-language pathologists, a special education teacher/behavior analyst, occupational therapists, feeding therapists, and specially-trained teaching assistants work as a team to provide comprehensive services in communication, behavior, pragmatics, and sensory-based and fine-motor needs.

The focus of the program is to assist children in developing functional communication skills that will accelerate their social, academic, and behavioral development. A variety of evidence-based interventions along with principles of Applied Behavioral Analysis are incorporated throughout the day.

Specifically, the program provides:

• emphasis on language development and social-pragmatic skills
• use of assistive technologies as needed (visual supports, picture systems, signing, speech generating devices)
• referral for other evaluations and treatments as needed (PT, GI psychology, pediatrics, neurology, psychiatry, genetics, behavior therapy)
• a variety of evidence-based treatment approaches and models, individualized to the child’s needs
• occupational therapy consultation and/or “push-in” support
• developmentally-appropriate and highly-motivating activities
• regularly scheduled OT and feeding therapy consultation
• a special education/BCBA teacher providing program support, behavior consultation and intervention, as well as transition support for our students when they move on from the program
• social work consultation for family support
• a robust parent education program including topic-based discussion groups

The preschool operates three days a week, Tuesday-Thursday, from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon.

For an enrollment packet, please contact jennifer.h.ask@vumc.org.