

# The Preschool for Children with Autism at the Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center

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. – 11:30 a.m.

For an enrollment packet, please contact [jennifer.h.ask@vumc.org](mailto:jennifer.h.ask@vumc.org).



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