

For Immediate Release
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Clippard Family YMCA's Expanded Fall Preschool Now To Be One Of Only A Few Local State Approved Preschool Providers for Autism Scholarship Program

Already with a long history of providing socialization and support opportunities for families who have a child with autism, the Clippard Family YMCA has just been approved by the Ohio Department of Education as a private provider for the Autism Scholarship Program – making it one of the area's few preschools providing students with all of the therapy and other services that are written into their Independent Education Plan (IEP).

As part of its expanded all day inclusive preschool, the Colerain based YMCA branch will operate an Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Learning Center including 1:1 instruction using ABA, speech and occupational therapy, swimming, music, and sensory and gross motor gym activities. Children with autism and other disabilities will also be included with other YMCA preschool students for social and peer interaction.

ABA is a positive reinforcement approach that teaches behaviors and skills by reinforcing desired or acceptable behaviors. Because children with autism are less likely to learn from everyday environment, this approach fills in that gap by focusing on simplified instruction and consistent reinforcement.

In addition to the Clippard Family YMCA's inclusive preschool, the branch also offers Autism Family Nights where siblings and parents can participate in recreational activities or simply visit with one another. The FREE monthly events for YMCA members and non-members host more than 200 families on average.

The efforts of the YMCA to create an environment where kids with and without disabilities, and their parents, can thrive is a very personal one for David Martorano, YMCA district vice president overseeing the branch, and his wife. They are the parents of four children, two of whom have autism.

"I know firsthand the challenges faced by families like ours. Most insurance companies don't cover costs of early intervention and some children require intensive therapy that many families can't afford," said Martorano. "Our approval as a provider for the Autism Scholarship Program will offer parents a preschool option where they know their kids will receive the most critical intervention and education during these early years."

About the Clippard Family YMCA preschool: Beginning this fall, the expanded preschool will be able to serve 60 kids daily from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in newly renovated classrooms. With a continued emphasis on character values and early learning content standards (kindergarten readiness) activities will be focused on fostering creativity, self-esteem, cooperation and

independence. Unique to the Clippard Family YMCA's preschool will be weekly swim lessons, exercise in the gymnasium, technology-based equipment, and daily interaction with seniors.

To register a child or learn more, the public can call the Clippard Family YMCA at 513-923-4466. Hamilton County vouchers will be accepted.

As the area's largest youth and family-focused not-for-profit, the YMCA reinforces character values through assets-based programs and services to more than 143,000 individuals, kids and families annually. Adult mentors encourage young people to be caring, responsible, respectful, and honest through sports, summer camps, structured child and afterschool care, and leadership building programs. Branches offer quality time for families, resources for parents, and a variety of opportunities for seniors to be active. The Membership for All sliding scale fee structure means everyone, no matter their ability to pay, can always benefit from the YMCA. Last year alone more than 17,400 families and individuals enjoyed healthier and happier lives because generous partners helped the YMCA in its vision to be accessible to all.

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