

# Autism Spectrum Disorders

*One in 50 children in Katy has been identified with  
an autism spectrum disorder!*

## *The Rise in Autism*

*1980: 1 in 10,000*

*1995: 1 in 500*

*2001: 1 in 250*

*2004: 1 in 166*

*2007: 1 in 150*

*2009: 1 in 110*

*2012: 1 in 88*

*2014: 1 in 68*

*2015: 1 in 45\**

*The CDC released autism prevalence rates on March 28, 2014, however, the data was collected in 2010, which begs the question, "What are the real prevalence rates?"*

*In November 2015, a new government survey found that 2.24% of U.S. kids have been diagnosed with autism — or 1 in 45 children aged 3 and older. This new report is based on data collected during the yearly National Health Interview Survey, from interviews of parents about their children, and is the first report of the prevalence of autism in the U.S. to include data from the years 2011 to 2014, according to the researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).*

### **SIGNS OF AUTISM**

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by:

- social impairments
- cognitive impairments
- communication difficulties
- repetitive behaviors

Because Autism is a spectrum disorder, it can range from very mild to very severe and occur in all ethnic, socioeconomic and age groups. Males are four times more likely to have autism than females. Some children with autism appear normal before age 1 or 2 and then suddenly “regress” and lose language or social skills they had previously gained. This is called the regressive type of autism.

#### **Early Signs:**

A person with ASD might:

- Not respond to their name (the child may appear deaf)
- Not point at objects or things of interest, or demonstrate interest
- Not play “pretend” games
- Avoid eye contact
- Want to be alone
- Have difficulty understanding, or showing understanding, or other people’s feelings
- Have no speech or delayed speech
- Repeat words or phrases over and over (echolalia)
- Give unrelated answers to questions
- Get upset by minor changes
- Have obsessive interests
- Flap their hands, rock their body, or spin in circles
- Have unusual reactions (over or under-sensitivity) to the way things sound, smell, taste, look, or feel
- Have low to no social skills
- Avoid or resist physical contact
- Demonstrate little safety or danger awareness
- Reverse pronouns (e.g., says “you” instead of “I”)
- Gives unrelated answers to questions

#### **People with autism may also:**

- Have unusual interests and behaviors
- Have extreme anxiety and phobias, as well as unusual phobias
- Line up toys or other objects
- Play with toys the same way every time
- Become upset by minor changes
- Have obsessive interests

#### **Other Symptoms:**

- Hyperactivity (very active)
- Impulsivity (acting without thinking)
- Aggression, Meltdowns
- Causing self injury
- Unusual eating and sleeping habits
- Unusual mood or emotional reactions
- Lack of fear or more fear than expected

## **AUTISM FACTS**

### **What is Autism?**

- Autism is a bio-neurological developmental disability that generally appears before the age of 3
- Autism impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction, communication skills, and cognitive function. Individuals with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities
- Individuals with autism often suffer from numerous co-morbid medical conditions which may include: allergies, asthma, epilepsy, digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, feeding disorders, sensory integration dysfunction, sleeping disorders, and more
- Autism is diagnosed four times more often in boys than girls. Its prevalence is not affected by race, region, or socio-economic status. Since autism was first diagnosed in the U.S. the incidence has climbed to an alarming one in 68 children in the U.S.
- Autism itself does not affect life expectancy, however research has shown that the mortality risk among individuals with autism is twice as high as the general population, in large part due to drowning and other accidents.
- Currently there is no cure for autism, though with early intervention and treatment, the diverse symptoms related to autism can be greatly improved and in some cases completely overcome.

### **Autism Facts & Stats**

- Autism now affects 1 in 68 children
- Boys are four times more likely to have autism than girls
- About 40% of children with autism do not speak. About 25%–30% of children with autism have some words at 12 to 18 months of age and then lose them. Others might speak, but not until later in childhood
- Autism greatly varies from person to person (no two people with autism are alike)
- The rate of autism has steadily grown over the last twenty years
- Comorbid conditions often associated with autism include Fragile X, allergies, asthma, epilepsy, bowel disease, gastrointestinal/digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, PANDAS, feeding disorders, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, ADHD, Tourette Syndrome, OCD, sensory integration dysfunction, sleeping disorders, immune disorders, autoimmune disorders, and neuroinflammation.
- Autism is the fastest growing developmental disorder, yet most underfunded
- A 2008 Danish Study found that the mortality risk among those with autism was nearly twice that of the general population
- Children with autism do progress – early intervention is key
- Autism is treatable, not a hopeless condition

## **AUTISM THERAPIES**

**BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION:** Many professionals feel that early intervention is key in treating autism, and that behavior modification techniques are crucial in a child's early years. There are several types of behavior modification techniques, including:

- Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)
- Verbal Behavior (VB)
- Floortime
- TEACCH
- Son-Rise
- Relationship Development Intervention
- SCERTS

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY:** Occupational Therapy (OT) is a health service that is concerned with an individual's ability to participate in desired daily life tasks, or "occupations," which give one's life meaning. If a person's ability to perform these tasks which include caring for one's self or others, working, going to school, playing, and living independently is impacted by an illness, disease, and/or disability, OT can be important. OT is often paired with Sensory Integration.

**PHYSICAL THERAPY:** An individual with autism spectrum disorders may benefit from Physical Therapy if they have any of the following indicators: muscle stiffness or tightness; Delay in obtaining motor skills milestones; Poor balance and coordination; Difficulty in moving through the environment; Postural abnormalities; Muscle Weakness; Pain.

**SPEECH THERAPY:** Speech therapy services focus on enhancing or restoring limited or lost communicative skills or oral motor skills like swallowing. Since autism often affects speech and communication, many will need Speech Therapy to help facilitate language. Some individuals may do well with a Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and others may do well with augmentative communication devices.

**VISION THERAPY:** Vision therapy is based on the fact that vision is learned. The ability to see and correctly interpret what is seen does not appear automatically at birth. It develops over a lifetime and is shaped by the experiences a person has.

**MUSIC THERAPY:** Music Therapy is the use of music and its elements (such as; sound, rhythm, melody and harmony) by a qualified music therapist. It can be used with an individual or in a group setting.

**CANINE COMPANIONS:** Canine Companions for Independence is a non-profit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships. Options include:

- Blessings Unleashed
- Autism Service Dogs of America
- 4 Paws for Ability

## **Autism & Safety Facts**

Drowning is among the leading causes of death of individuals with autism.

### **Overall Mortality**

- In 2008, Danish researchers found that the mortality risk among the autism population is twice as high as the general population
- In 2001, a California research team found elevated deaths in autism and attributed it to several causes, including seizures and accidents such as suffocation and drowning

### **Wandering/Elopement**

- Roughly half, or 48%, of children with an ASD attempt to elope from a safe environment, a rate nearly four times higher than their unaffected siblings
  - In 2009, 2010, and 2011, accidental drowning accounted for 91% total U.S. deaths reported in children with an ASD ages 14 and younger subsequent to wandering/elopement.
  - More than one third of ASD children who wander/elope are never or rarely able to communicate their name, address, or phone number
  - Two in three parents of elopers reported their missing children had a “close call” with a traffic injury
  - 32% of parents reported a “close call” with a possible drowning
  - Wandering was ranked among the most stressful ASD behaviors by 58% of parents of elopers
  - 62% of families of children who elope were prevented from attending/enjoying activities outside the home due to fear of wandering
  - 40% of parents had suffered sleep disruption due to fear of elopement
  - Children with ASD are eight times more likely to elope between the ages of 7 and 10 than their typically-developing siblings
  - Half of families with elopers report they had never received advice or guidance about elopement from a professional
  - Only 19% had received such support from a psychologist or mental health professional
  - Only 14% had received guidance from their pediatrician or another physician
- Source: Interactive Autism Network Research Report: Elopement and Wandering (2011)  
Source: National Autism Association, Lethal Outcomes in ASD Wandering (2012)

### **Restraint/Seclusion**

- It's estimated that over the last five years, more than 20 students, many with disabilities, have died due to seclusion and restraints being used in schools.
- A 2009 Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation reported that thousands of students have been physically injured and emotionally traumatized as the result of restraint and seclusion
- Currently there is no federal law that prohibits the use of restraints that restrict breathing, and locked seclusion, in public and private schools.
- Dangers include: Death by asphyxiation; Bodily injury; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; Heart, gastrointestinal and pulmonary complications; Decreased appetite and malnutrition; Dehydration; Urinary tract infections; Incontinence; Agitation; Depression/withdrawal; Loss

of dignity; Sleeping problems; Humiliation; Anxiety; Increased phobias; Increased aggression, including SIB (self-injurious behavior)

Source: United States Government Accountability Office, Selected Cases of Death and Abuse at Public and Private Schools and Treatment Center (2009)

### **Bullying**

- 65% of parents reported that their children with Asperger's syndrome had been victimized by peers in some way within the past year
- 47% reported that their children had been hit by peers or siblings
- 50% reported them to be scared by their peers
- 9% were attacked by a gang and hurt in the private parts
- 12% indicated their child had never been invited to a birthday party
- 6% were almost always picked last for teams
- 3% ate alone at lunch every day

Source: Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing (2009)

### **Sexual Abuse**

•According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 1 in 6 boys and 1 in 4 girls suffer from sexual abuse before the age of 18.

•Additionally, the U.S. Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey, the country's largest and most reliable crime study, reports that every two minutes a person is sexually victimized in the United States—and the numbers for individuals with disabilities are even higher.

•A study done in Nebraska of 55,000 children showed a child with any type of intellectual disability was four times more likely to be sexually abused than a child without disabilities (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000). While no specific numbers exist for individuals with autism, research suggests that this population is extremely vulnerable.

**MY FAVORITE BOOKS ON AUTISM**

41 Things to Know About Autism by Chantal Sicile-Kira

Autism Journey Guide by Talk About Curing Autism (TACA)

The Autism Sourcebook: Everything You Need to Know About Diagnosis, Treatment, Coping, and Healing--from a Mother Whose Child Recovered by Karen Siff Exkorn

Autism Spectrum Disorders: The Complete Guide to Understanding Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, and Other ASDs by Chantal Sicile-Kira

The Official Autism 101 Manual by Karen L. Simmons with contributions by Temple Grandin, Anthony Attwood, Darold A. Treffert, Bernard Rimland, Jed E. Baker, and more

Behavioral Intervention for Young Children With Autism: A Manual for Parents and Professionals by Catherine Maurice, Gina Green, Stephen C. Luce

Cutting-Edge Therapies for Autism: Fully Updated Edition by Ken Siri and Tony Lyons

The Verbal Behavior Approach: How to Teach Children with Autism and Related Disorders by Mary Lynch Barbera, RN, MSN, BCBA, and Tracy Rasmussen

A Work in Progress: Behavior Management Strategies and a Curriculum for Intensive Behavioral Treatment of Autism by Ron Leaf, John McEachin, Jaisom D. Harsh

Changing the Course of Autism: A Scientific Approach for Parents and Physicians by Bryan Jepson, MD

Special Diets for Special Kids, Two by Lisa Lewis

Helping Children with Autism Become More Social: 76 Ways to Use Narrative Play by Ann E. Densmore

A Picture's Worth: PECS and Other Visual Communication Strategies in Autism by Andy Bondy, Ph.D. & Lori Frost, M.S., CCC-SLP

Adolescents on the Autism Spectrum: A Parent's Guide to the Cognitive, Social, Physical, and Transition Needs of Teenagers with Autism Spectrum Disorders by Chantal Sicile-Kira

The Asperkids' (Secret) Book of Social Rules: A Handbook of Not-So-Obvious Guidelines for Tweens & Teens with Asperger Syndrome by Jennifer Cook O'Toole

The Aspie Girl's Guide to Being Safe with Men: The Unwritten Safety Rules No-one is Telling You by Debi Brown

The Boys' Guide to Growing Up: Choices and Changes during Puberty

by Terri Couwenhoven, M.S.

Developing College Skills in Students With Autism and Asperger's Syndrome  
by Sarita Freedman

A Full Life with Autism: From Learning to Forming Relationships to Achieving  
Independence by Chantal Sicile-Kira and Jeremy Sicile-Kira, foreword by Temple Grandin

Thinking in Pictures (Expanded, Tie-in Edition): My Life with Autism (Vintage)  
by Temple Grandin

Asperger's Syndrome Guide for Teens and Young Adults by Craig Kendall

Asperger's and Girls Featuring Tony Attwood and Temple Grandin, plus 7 more experts

Asperger's Syndrome Workplace Survival Guide: A Neurotypical's Secrets for Success  
by Barbara Bissonette

Asperkids: An Insiders's Guide to Loving, Understanding and Teaching Children with  
Asperger Syndrome by Jennifer Cook O'Toole

The Complete IEP Guide: How to Advocate for Your Special Ed Child by Lawrence M.  
Siegel, Attorney

The Asperkid's Launch Pad: Home Design to Empower Everyday Superheroes  
by Jennifer Cook O'Toole

The Autism Mom's Survival Guide (for Dad's too!)  
by Susan Senator

Siblings of Children with Autism: A Guide for Parents and Professionals  
by Sandra L. Harris and Beth A. Glasberg

Taking Care of Myself: A Hygiene, Puberty and Personal Curriculum for Young People with  
Autism by Mary Wrobel

The Autism Acceptance Book: Being a Friend to Someone With Autism by Ellen Sabin

## **Autism Supplement**

Commissioners Rules TAC §89.1055

(e) For students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), the strategies described in paragraphs (1)-(11) of this subsection shall be considered, based on peer-reviewed and/or research-based educational programming practices, and addressed in the IEP:

- 1) extended educational programming, including extended day and/or extended school year services, that considers the duration of programs/settings based on assessment of behavior, social skills, communication, academics, and self-help skills;
- 2) daily schedules reflecting minimal unstructured time and active engagement in learning activities, including lunch, snack, and recess, and providing flexibility within routines that are adaptable to individual skill levels and assist with schedule changes, such as field trips, substitute teachers, and pep rallies;
- 3) in-home and community-based training or viable alternatives that assist the student with acquisition of social/behavioral skills, including strategies that facilitate maintenance and generalization of such skills from home to school, school to home, home to community, and school to community;
- 4) positive behavior support strategies based on information, such as:
  - a. antecedent manipulation, replacement behaviors, reinforcement strategies, and data-based decisions; and
  - b. a Behavior Intervention Plan developed from a Functional Behavioral Assessment that uses current data related to target behaviors and addresses behavioral programming across home, school, and community-based settings;
- 5) beginning at any age, futures planning for integrated living, work, community, and educational environments that considers skills necessary to function in current and post-secondary environments;
- 6) parent/family training and support, provided by qualified personnel with experience in ASD, that:
  - a. provides a family with skills necessary for a child to succeed in the home/community setting;
  - b. includes information regarding resources such as parent support groups, workshops, videos, conferences, and materials designed to increase parent knowledge of specific teaching/management techniques related to the child's curriculum; and
  - c. facilitates parental carryover of in-home training and includes strategies for behavior management and developing structured home environments and/or communication training so that parents are active participants in promoting the continuity of interventions across all settings;
- 7) suitable staff-to-student ratio appropriate to identified activities and as needed to achieve social/behavioral progress based on the child's developmental and learning level (acquisition, fluency, maintenance, generalization) that encourages work towards individual independence as determined by:
  - a. adaptive behavior evaluation results;
  - b. behavioral accommodation needs across settings; and
  - c. transitions within the school day;
- 8) communication interventions, including language forms and functions that enhance effective communication across settings, such as augmentative, incidental, and naturalistic teaching;
- 9) social skills supports and strategies based on social skills assessment/curriculum and provided across settings, such as trained peer facilitators (e.g., circle of friends), video modeling, social stories, and role playing;
- 10) professional educator/staff support, such as training provided to personnel who work with the student to assure the correct implementation of techniques and strategies described in the IEP; and
- 11) teaching strategies based on peer reviewed and/or research-based practices for students with ASD, such as those associated with discrete-trial training, visual supports, applied behavior analysis, structured learning, augmentative communication, or social skills training.

**Private Schools in the Houston Metro Area:**

**Avondale House**

3737 O'Meara Drive  
Houston, Texas 77025  
713-993-9544

<http://www.avondalehouse.org/>

A not-for-profit agency that provides education services, a day habilitation program and residential services for individuals diagnosed on the autism spectrum. Ancillary Services Include: Occupational Therapy, Applied Behavior Analysis, Speech and Language Therapy, Medical Services, Therapeutic Recreational Services, Parent Group Meetings, Online Discussion Forums. Application required.

Note: Long waiting list.

**Briarwood School's Tuttle School**

Carole Wills, Head of School  
12207 Whittington Drive  
Houston, TX 77077  
281-493-1070

<http://www.briarwoodschool.org/index.html>

The Tuttle School is located on the Briarwood School campus and is for developmental delays and children with autism. The upper school does NOT enroll students with autism or Asperger's.

**Capstone Classical Academy**

Jean Pickering, Director  
19407 Park Row, Ste 140 & 170B  
Houston, TX 77084  
(Behind Houston Community College)  
Phone: 832-314-1400  
Fax: 281-492-7263

Email: [capstone1337@att.net](mailto:capstone1337@att.net)

<http://www.capstoneclassicalacademy.com/>

School Hours: Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m - 2:30 p.m. (Fridays are reserved for director approved programming.) Good for kids with ADHD, dyslexia or other learning disabilities (not for students with autism who need a more individualized approach). Though each is accepted on an individual basis, please know that their non-traditional, non-stress setting allows room for different learning styles.

Accredited by the National Association of Private Schools

**Central VAST Academy**

**(ADULT PROGRAM)**

Department Office  
1301 Alabama Street, Suite 101  
Houston, TX 77004  
713 718-6832

<http://vast.hccs.edu/>

VAST Academy provides post-secondary transition programs and comprehensive support services which lead to meaningful credentials, employment and independence for differently-abled individuals. Opportunities include vocational certificates, pre-college and freshman success “bridge” courses,

career readiness credentials, internships and employment assistance offered through an inclusive, relevant and affordable avenue.

VAST Academy will be:

- A post-secondary, “affordable” program of choice, for “differently abled” individuals seeking workforce certificates and academic advancement, leading to professional careers, employment and independence.
- Known for its innovative and “cutting-edge” programs, certificates and technology.
- An integral part of the economic and educational life of the community through its collaborative partnerships.
- A technical resource model, sharing best practices with community colleges and institutions seeking to develop similar model programs.

### **Focus Initiative & Focus Academy (2 locations)**

Jacquelyn Mulkey, Executive Director

- 4781 South Main Street, Stafford, Texas 77477 (Southwest Houston/Sugar Land area) Phone: 281-240-0663

- 2408 Timberloch, Suite D1, The Woodlands, TX 77380 (Spring/Woodlands area)

<http://www.asdfocus.com/>

They are a small private school, they enroll students pre-school through high school/college prep.

They use a comprehensive approach to education, giving their students the tools needed for success in the classroom. Students appropriate for the Junior Academy include socially quirky kids with verbal language skills and basic classroom behavior skills. They also have daytime social groups available for home-school students to teach social & advanced life skills.

### **Harmony Science Academy of West Houston**

22400 Grand Corner Drive (@the intersection of FM 1093 and Grand Parkway/Texas Hwy 99)

Katy, TX 77494

832-437-3926

[hsawh@harmonytx.org](mailto:hsawh@harmonytx.org)

At this academy science, math, and computer technology is the emphasis. All Harmony schools teaches states' TEKS curriculum with lesson plans and activities designed/adopted by Harmony curriculum specialists. Also, all Harmony schools provide rigorous instructions in core academic areas with special emphasis on STEM Subjects (Science Technology, Engineering, and Math). State Testing: Being a public school, Harmony participates in all state testing. Special Services: ESL, GT and special education services are provided to qualifying children. Admission is based on lottery. There is no sibling policy. Students who register don't go through lottery every year. Students who do not make it through the lottery will be placed on the waiting list and called if vacancies come up later on. Grade Span: 2011/2012 K-8, will be K-9 2012/2013, and will add one grade level each year until K-12 is achieved. Harmony Public Schools are operated by the Cosmos Foundation Inc., a non-profit organization, established in Houston, Texas.

### **Launch Academy**

5801 New Territory Blvd. (located inside Parkway United Methodist Church)

Sugar Land, TX 7749

Richard Kelly, Director of Admissions

832-457-2560

<http://www.launchacademy.info/>

<http://www.launchsugarland.com/>

### **Junior High School through Young Adult Programs**

Launch Academy seeks to respond to a need in our educational system to put people ahead of policies. We seek to do this in very specific ways. Launch Academy's unique educational model intentionally places students with learning abilities and disabilities into shared lecture classes. Students thrive in Launch Academy's classrooms where individualization promotes unlimited growth. Launch has a College Bridge Program and is partnered with Houston Baptist University so that students attend HBU regular classes two days a week and receive outside support at Launch three days per week. They are also provided with study skills, tutoring, rock band, work internships, and an opportunity for apartment independent supported living. Launch provides traditional school year programs as well as two four week summer sessions with additional enrichment.

### **Memorial Private High School**

Harry Camp, Head of School

14333 Fern Drive

Houston, TX 77079, 281-759-2288

<http://www.memorialprivateschool.com/>

Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools. MPHS is a faith-based High School (8th-12th) serving Houston's Memorial and surrounding area since 2005. The MET (Memorial Education and Tutoring) is an afternoon and evening tutoring division of MPHS. The School is designed for students that would do well in a school that:

- has a small teacher-student ratio
- manages the flexibility required for effective private education
- emphasizes the importance of faith
- can offer an economically viable choice
- strives to teach self-responsibility and self-initiative
- accepts students who excel and want to accelerate their high school program

### **Monarch School/The Monarch Institute for Neurological Differences**

2815 Rosefield Road

Houston, TX 77080

713-479-0800

<http://www.monarchschool.org/>

Provides a therapeutic educational day school for children with neurological differences including Attention Deficit Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Asperger's, Tourette Syndrome, and Learning Disabilities

- Pre-K - 12th grades
- Summer Program: for Monarch students and from the community
- Diagnostic Clinic for children and adults with neurological differences

- Summer programming

### **Parish School**

11001 Hammerly Road  
Houston, Texas 77043  
713-467-4696

<http://www.parishschool.org/Home.html>

Provides a total education experience for children who have communication and learning differences, but average to above average learning potential

- Ages 18 months - 5th grade
- Summer Camp programs for Parish students and the community

The Carruth Center: provides specialized support services for children and their families from Parish School and the general community, including evaluations, therapy services, Developmental Building Blocks, occupational and speech therapy. Has summer programming.

### **River Oaks Academy**

Dr. Luis Valdes, Director  
10600 Richmond Avenue  
Houston, TX 77042  
713-783-7200

<http://www.riveroaksacademy.com/>

If your child struggles in school academically or socially, River Oaks Academy may be the school for you. ROA provides individualized education for children with a wide range of special needs in a private school environment. Small student teacher ratios and specialized programming for those with learning differences, learning disabilities, unique learning styles, social skills needs, ADHD, autism and behavioral and emotional issues are provided. Accredited by both the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and Texas Education Agency (TEA). Grades K-12.

### **School for Young Children at the University of St. Thomas**

810 Sul Ross Street  
Houston, TX 77006  
713-520-8310

No website

School for Young Children is a program for children with language and learning disabilities. Currently, it serves children between the ages of 5 1/2 - 12. Pushes academics. •Grades 1-5

- Private school
- Nonsectarian, special education, coed
- 6 hours per day

### **Spectrum of Hope, LLC**

Kimberly Wallace, Founder  
14110 Cypress Creek Boulevard  
Cypress, TX 77429  
281-894-1423

<http://www.spectrumofhope.com/>

Email: [kkw625@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kkw625@sbcglobal.net)

Spectrum of Hope, LLC has expanded our program offerings to include Hope Academy. Hope Academy was piloted in our Hope Extended program in May 2011 and has been a tremendous success for our children and staff. It is the “next” step for children preparing to enter into a typical classroom and focuses on academics as well as social skills and functional communication in a larger ratio. The program focuses on: Group Instruction, Language Arts, Math, Social Skills, Physical Education, Science, History, Role Play, Functional Communication .Certified Elementary School Teachers and Board Certified Behavior Analysts direct and supervise the classrooms in conjunction with a highly trained staff. Group instruction topics have been selected and modified so as to apply to all the children participating, while still taking their individual skills and abilities into consideration. Academic curriculums are based on the TEKS and curriculums such as Math-U-See, Headsprout, and Handwriting Without Tears assist in developing goals for the children. The larger ratios require children to initiate and maintain interactions without continual therapist prompting and guidance. In addition to teaching the children to attend and respond to one lead teacher in increasing ratio sizes and less restrictive environments, they will also be working on learning classroom readiness skills seen in typical classrooms. These skills include raising their hands appropriately, waiting their turns, being the teacher's helper, working independently, staying on task, group testing, responding to and learning from their peers. Finally, all children participating in the program will continue to receive intensive therapy on their individual goals during pullout sessions with one of the shadowing therapists every day. Please contact Nicole Stiefler, BCABA, at 281-894-1423 for more information.

### **The Arbor School**

1635 Blalock

Houston TX 77080

713-827-8830

<http://www.arbor.org/index.php>

Many of the Arbor children have a primary diagnosis of Down syndrome or cerebral palsy, plus additional medical disabilities such as heart defects, vision and hearing problems. Other children at The Arbor have a diagnosis of autism, language delays or central nervous system or genetic disorders, as well as physical mobility challenges that confine them to wheelchairs. Currently, there is a capital campaign to build a new barrier-free designed school. The purchase of 5.3 acres in Houston, is the site of their future home. The property lies east of Beltway 8, north of Hempstead, south of Hwy 290, and west of Gessner Road.

### **The Branch School**

Emily Smith, Head of School

1424 Sherwood Forest Street

Houston, TX 77043-3802

713-465-0288

<http://www.thebranchschool.org/>

Preschool – 8th. The Branch School, a private school in West Houston. They provide students with a strong academic program, partnered with a curriculum that encourages critical thinking and the development of problem-solving skills. This thinking curriculum allows students to apply the skills that they are learning to solve problems and express their ideas creatively in projects and presentations.

**The Caroline School (Easter Seals - Greater Houston)**

Melissa Larson, Program Director

4500 Bissonnet, 3rd Floor

Bellaire TX 77401

713-838-9050, ext. 362

<http://www.eastersealshouston.org/Children/the-caroline-school-a-day-program.html>

The Caroline School, a day program for children with special needs was founded by Elizabeth DeLuca in the spring of 2002. Elizabeth is the mother of four girls. Her youngest daughter, Caroline, has multiple disabilities including severe mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and epilepsy. Through her daughter's disability, Elizabeth became acutely aware of the need for quality education for children with severe to profound developmental delays. This unique school was created for those who prefer a smaller, more custom learning environment for their children.

**The Gateway Academy**

3721 Dacoma Street

Houston, Texas 77092

713-659-7900

<http://thegatewayacademy.org/>

Serves 7th—12th graders who have learning differences that impact social, academic, and critical thinking skills. Their students typically have learning disabilities such as Dyslexia, Language Delays, Asperger Syndrome, ADHD and Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities. Our Middle School and High School programs provide an education that will enable your child to meet Texas Graduation requirements.

**The Harris School**

6210 Rookin

Houston, TX 77074

713-526-2046

<http://theharrisschool.com/>

The Harris School offers a specialized curriculum for children in preschool through grade 8 who are typically average to above average intellectually, have needs that are not being met in a traditional school setting, and are not functioning at their full potential due to underlying social or emotional difficulties. This includes children who are experiencing anxiety or depression, have suffered trauma, or those diagnosed with ADHD, PDD, SID, ODD, Bipolar Disorder, Tourette Syndrome or Asperger's Disorder. The Harris School focuses on the emotional world of the child and its impact on their behaviors.

**The Joy School**

One Chelsea Blvd.

Houston, TX 77006

713-523-0660

<http://www.thejoyschool.org/index.htm>

The Joy School is committed to helping children with learning differences reach their academic, social, and creative potential by providing an environment that is safe, supportive and innovative such

that they can learn successfully. The Joy School strives to provide a safe, supportive environment that provides a traditional curriculum, while adapting to the remedial needs of each individual student. They also focus on each student's future placement, with most students returning to mainstream environments within four years. Pre-K through eighth grade. Has summer programming.

### **The New School in the Heights**

403 Heights Blvd.  
Houston, TX 77007  
713-802-1256

<http://www.thenewmiddleschool.com/index.cfm>

The New School in The Heights provides an alternative educational experience for children with good or superior intelligence whose social-emotional delays interfere with success in school and life. The school serves students in grades K-9.

### **The Tenney School**

Michael Tenney  
3500 South Gessner (housed in the same building as Step to Progress)  
Houston, Texas 77063  
(713) 783-6990

<http://www.tenneyschool.com/>

The students at the Tenney School get loads of individual attention. Each works with a private instructor in each of the core subjects: English, science, history, and math. Our overall 2-to-1 student teacher ratio ensures students always have access to staff available and willing to help them achieve the next level of academic success. Instruction is tailored in each one-to-one course to place each student in their best position for success. Though we specify four different levels of curriculum (Honors, Standard, Modified, and English Language Learner), one-to-one instructors' factor in each student's learning strengths, weaknesses, capabilities, and needs when working with students. A new facility will open in 2013. The plan is for the school to begin the 2013 - 2014 school year in the new facility. School is known to enroll students with Asperger's, ADHD with learning differences.

### **The Westview School**

Donna Marshall, Director  
1900 Kersten Drive  
Houston, Texas 77043  
713-973-1900

<http://www.westviewschool.org/>

The Westview School is a private, non-profit school for children with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder from ages 2 to 15 years old. Westview's challenging, well-rounded curriculum includes a full range of academic programs with additional focus on social communication and social skills. Westview also offers opportunities to pursue the arts, extra-curricular activities and real-world experiences, and is home to The Stewart Center, a full-service psychology clinic serving the greater Houston area.

## **Support Groups:**

### **ASPIE of Houston**

Kathy Stallings

PO Box 17496

Sugar Land, TX 77496

281-404-9976

<http://www.aspieinfo.com/>

ASPIE Adults and ASPIE Teens meet the second Thursday of each month, at 7:00 pm at Sugar Land Baptist Church, 16755 Southwest Fwy, Sugar Land, TX 77479, room 302.

### **Blessed Be Hope for Three, Inc.**

Matt Jackson, Executive Director

Darla Farmer, Founder

11104 W. Airport Blvd., Ste. 150,

281-245-0640

Stafford 77477

Email: [darla@hopeforthree.org](mailto:darla@hopeforthree.org)

<http://hopeforthree.org/>

### **Easter Seals - Greater Houston**

Elise Hough, CEO

4500 Bissonnet, Suite 340

Bellaire TX 77401

713-838-9050, ext 332

<http://www.eastersealshouston.org/>

Parents Plus is a parent/guardian networking group.

Teen Night Out every Friday evening 6-9 at St. Peters UMC – Katy!

### **Focus on Friends** - Katy, Texas and surrounding areas

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/496504537094822/>

### **Houston Autism Disability Network (HADN)**

Michelle Guppy

P.O. Box 2796

Cypress, Texas 77410

832-341-3394

<http://www.hadn.org/>

They are a network of parents, caregivers, educators, professionals, clinicians, physicians, and therapists, etc. We all come together for monthly meetings or special events and conferences for the purpose of sharing information, networking, and above all, support. [MichelleMGuppy@yahoo.com](mailto:MichelleMGuppy@yahoo.com).

### **Houston Autism Meetup Group**

meet families and friends of children with autism, Asperger's syndrome, or PDD-NOS to talk and share strategies, treatments, etc. Also arrange playdates, fun activities and "Parent Only" events.  
<http://www.autismhouston.com>

### **Katy Autism Support**

[KatyAutismSupport@yahoogroups.com](mailto:KatyAutismSupport@yahoogroups.com)  
[www.katyautismsupport.org](http://www.katyautismsupport.org)

To subscribe to Yahoo online discussion listserve, go to: [KatyAutismSupport-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:KatyAutismSupport-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

They are a support group for caregivers of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders in Katy, Texas. They discuss the many issues involved in raising and educating a child with an autism spectrum disorder. This group is open to parents, educators in Katy ISD, and professionals who work with children on the autism spectrum. KAS believes that it is only through working together in partnership with one another that they can best serve their children. Monthly group meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at St. Peters United Methodist Church @20775 Kingsland Blvd., Katy, TX 77450. Meetings are from 7:00 – 9:00 pm in Asbury Hall (near the sanctuary). Childcare is available for the meetings. Meeting topic and details are posted to the group before every meeting.

**Super Stars of Katy** is for teens and young adults with Asperger's and HFA. This group was started in the Katy area for teens and young adults with Asperger's to be able to get together and enjoy friendship and acceptance. There are a lot of opportunities to have fun in Katy and the surrounding areas. Members are welcome to make suggestions about activities that they will enjoy.

<http://www.meetup.com/katyaspies/>

### **Texas Autism Advocacy**

Michelle Guppy, Facilitator/Moderator

[Texas-Autism-Advocacy@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Texas-Autism-Advocacy@yahoogroups.com) & its affiliated websites: [www.texasautismadvocacy.org](http://www.texasautismadvocacy.org) & <http://www.hadn.org/>. This list is for people wanting to share information or get information about interventions for autism and related disabilities in Texas. Professionals, parents, and students are welcome; as well as disability /advocacy related organizations. The list may be used for: Networking to find services for a child; Discussion of various intervention strategies: educational, medical, therapeutical, and others relating to the needs of a child with autism; Announcement of upcoming conferences or meetings, new books available, etc. Posting contact information and sample letters to Texas legislatures and information on policies that affect our children; Posting of Action Alerts and professional business services related to disabilities and how parents can benefit or join the cause. This list's goal is to connect all the groups in Texas together through the internet to provide a valuable resource base to help children and adults with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.