



Burrillville  
Central Falls  
Cumberland  
Foster-Glocester  
Glocester  
Johnston  
Lincoln  
No. Providence  
No. Smithfield  
Pawtucket  
Smithfield  
Woonsocket

# NRIC Specialized Alternative Program

## Student/Parent Handbook

2008-2009

# Table of Contents

---

<b>Program Description/Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preschool Program .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Elementary and Middle School Program .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Classroom Structure and Environment .....</b>	<b>4-6</b>
<b>Program Procedures .....</b>	<b>6-7</b>
• Attendance	
<b>Procedures Regarding Student Illness .....</b>	<b>7-8</b>
<b>School Transportation .....</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>Acknowledgment Signature Sheet .....</b>	<b>10</b>

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/OVERVIEW**

The Northern Rhode Island Collaborative (NRIC) is an extension of eleven (11) public school districts that provide educational opportunity when a student’s needs can no longer be met within his/her school district.

The NRIC provides a Specialized Alternative Program (SAP) that serves students ages three (3) through twenty-one (21). The profiles of these students may include, but, are not limited to language impaired, medically fragile, multiply disabled, autism spectrum disorder, a variety of syndromes, and cognitive disability. Currently there are eighteen (18) classrooms operating in the SAP program, providing services to approximately 100 students. These classrooms are located in various sites in the northern Rhode Island area. Some are in public school sites where the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative rents space, while others are in collaborative day school settings.

The SAP program is designed to provide a highly structured, language based educational and therapeutic environment that helps students gain the knowledge and skill necessary to be successful in lesser restrictive school, work and/or community settings. The unique needs of the students are addressed through individualized programming in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment. A team approach is utilized to develop a plan designed to promote a student's academic and behavioral growth. Additionally, home based programming, parent training, school-to-career transition, integrated preschool programs, preschool pals program, and general education integration opportunities are an intricate component. The NRIC team includes the classroom teacher and instructional assistants with the support services of a program coordinator, speech and language therapists, adapted physical educators, school social workers, school nurse teachers, occupational therapists, and physical therapists. In addition to the staff, the student's family, appropriate community agencies, and consultants are vital members of the team.

**PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

The Northern Rhode Island Collaborative offers preschool students an educational program of developmentally appropriate activities. Emphasis is placed on developing an appropriate communication system tailored to meet the individual learning style of each child. Play, which is seen as children’s work, is another focus. Through play, children develop an understanding of their peers, community, and the world around them. Children develop skills in the following areas: gross motor, fine motor, social/emotional, pre-academic, functional and behavioral. These skills are taught in a nurturing, highly structured, consistent environment. Included in the pre-school program is an opportunity for students to learn with age-appropriate peers without disabilities through the Kinder-Pals Program.



**ELEMENTARY PROGRAM**

The program for elementary aged students continues to focus on students' individual communication needs ensuring that each child will be an effective communicator in a variety of settings. As children move through the continuum of educational services, they are afforded the opportunity to build upon skills in the following areas: academic, fine and gross motor, social/emotional, behavioral and functional. Instruction is individualized based on students' unique learning style. Students practice skills learned in the classroom in a variety of local community settings. As available and appropriate, students are given the opportunity to learn with peers without disabilities.

**MIDDLE/SECONDARY PROGRAM**

As children grow into their middle/high school years, a greater emphasis is placed upon community access, vocational and functional life skills. Social/emotional, behavioral, academic and fine and gross motor skills continue to be developed. In order for students to have control over their lives, the program affords them many opportunities to make choices that are meaningful. In addition, the program strives to teach skills necessary for one to become a self-advocate. Several environments are used in the development of these skills to include: job sites and an actual apartment setting.

**CLASSROOM STRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

The SAP provides all students an opportunity to learn meaningful skills in natural settings across environments. Skills taught are linked to standards, curriculum, home, school, community and culture. The classroom structure considers the diverse learning styles of each student.

The classroom environment is highly structured by using the following proactive planning strategies:

**Physical Arrangement of the Classroom**

- clearly defined areas for specific activities
- clearly defined areas for special materials
- attractive: not over stimulating

## **Verbal/Visual Structure**

- expectations are specific and predictable
- clear cut rules and consequences
- pictures, photographs and written words to enhance expectations
- language input is clear, concise, and consistent
- individual daily schedules
- social stories
- work systems (picture sequence of tasks)

Texture and touch cues are used for students whose learning styles cannot respond to visual or verbal input.

## **Positive Behavioral Supports**

- functional behavior analysis
- sensory diet (e.g. weighted vest, swing, heavy work, brushing program)
- positive reinforcement systems
- break times
- a variety of individualized behavior interventions (e.g. sticker programs, earning of preferred activities)
- instructional physical guidance

## **Non-Violent Crisis Intervention**

- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention is a safe, non-harmful behavior management system designed to aid students in the management of disruptive and assaultive behavior during the most turbulent moments.

### **A. Preventative Techniques**

Preventative Techniques are non-verbal, visual, positive behavior supports, sensory diets, and verbal interventions which help prevent physical acting out behavior and de-escalate verbal and/or vocal acting out.

### **B. Instructional Physical Guidance**

A teaching technique that involves physical contact between the adult/supervisory person and the child. This enables the child to learn or model the physical movement necessary for the development of the desired competency. Example: Physical guidance in instruction and practice in self-management techniques.

### **C. Therapeutic Physical Intervention**

Therapeutic Physical Intervention is the bodily holding of a student with no more force than is necessary to limit the student's movement. It is utilized to the minimum extent and duration necessary for the student to regain responsible self-control. Staff employ therapeutic physical intervention only after less restrictive means of prevention have failed and in such a way as to allow the student the greatest possible comfort, and to avoid physical injury and mental distress. The Therapeutic Physical Intervention process includes the following:

#### **1. Precipitating Incidents**

Emergency situations justifying the use of Non-Violent Physical Crisis Intervention are limited to substantial risk or actual occurrence of serious self-destructive behavior and/or aggression toward others. In either case, substantial risk shall be interpreted to include only the serious imminent threat of bodily harm, given the real ability to enact such harm.

2. **Post Therapeutic Physical Intervention Counseling**

Although the Therapeutic Physical Intervention allows the student to regain control, it does not address the problem which led to the Non-Violent Physical Crisis Intervention. It is essential that the staff who are involved in the Therapeutic Physical Intervention remain with the student in a reassuring, supportive posture, in order to bring the problem to a temporary resolution. It is often necessary to rebuild the student's self-image, address his/her wounded dignity and remove the negative feelings toward the staff members which may have developed during the Therapeutic Physical Intervention. This process may require more time than the actual physical intervention as it is the most significant part of the experience, in that it allows the student an opportunity to learn positive alternative behaviors.

3. **Therapeutic Physical Intervention Documentation**

The SAP program shall maintain appropriate documentation of all physical interventions, including the lesser restrictive means attempted. This documentation shall include:

- a. The nature of the therapeutic physical intervention.
- b. The reason for the therapeutic physical intervention.
- c. The types of less restrictive alternatives which were tried.
- d. The time and place the therapeutic physical intervention was administered.
- e. The duration of the therapeutic physical intervention.
- f. The name of the staff member who initiated the intervention and the names of any other staff members who participated.
- g. The nature and extent of any injuries to the student or staff involved in the Therapeutic Physical Intervention.

The program coordinator and Assistant Director shall be informed of each Therapeutic Physical Intervention. If a student requires the repeated or prolonged use of Therapeutic Physical Intervention, the Program Coordinator will initiate a review process including all relevant team members, staff, parents/guardians, LEA Special Education Director, etc., to review the program's ability to meet the needs of the student.



In order for students to benefit from the Specialized Alternative Program it is expected that they will attend school on a daily basis and actively participate in the educational activities. The following sections outline family responsibilities.

**Attendance:**

- Students are required to be present in school at the designated starting time daily.
- Parents/guardians must call the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative school when their child is absent or tardy. An absence or tardiness is excused only if a parent/guardian contacts the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative staff.
- The staff reserves the right to request a physician's note for absences of five (5) or more days.
  
- A student suspended from the bus, who does not attend school, is considered unexcused.
- School districts will receive monthly attendance reports on each of their students.
- A truancy petition will be filed by the public school district for continued unexcused

- absences as per their district policy.
- Students will be reviewed by the Clinical Team for excessive absence.
- Parents must call the bus company if the child is being transported by parent in the morning or afternoon.

## PROCEDURES REGARDING STUDENT ILLNESS

One of the most difficult issues we face is caring for a child who becomes ill at school. If your child should become ill while at school, we **must** ask that you pick him/her up immediately even though we recognize that it is difficult for parents to miss work or make alternative arrangements. The following criteria are used to determine if a child needs to be sent home:

- **Temperature** - If a child has a temperature exceeding 100 degrees F he/she will be sent home. Children who are sent home with a temperature may not return to school the following day. Children need to be fever free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. This criteria may be different for students whose temperature is non-illness related.
- **Vomiting** - A child who is vomiting will be sent home, unless related to a documented feeding problem. The child **must** stay home until the vomiting has stopped for at least 24 hours and the child is able to ingest a normal diet. Stomach viruses are very contagious and can spread through the school very easily.
- **Diarrhea** - A child who has more than one watery bowel movement (unless a typically chronic problem) will be sent home. Children may return to school once the diarrhea is under control for at least 24 hours and activity level and appetite are back to normal.

The criteria for exclusion when a child is infected with a contagious illness will vary according to each illness. The most commonly occurring illnesses for which we must exclude children are listed below. It is important that you alert the school if your child should become ill with any contagious illness or infection. It will help us to keep the school a healthy environment for everyone.

- **Conjunctivitis** - Conjunctivitis is an infection of the eye characterized by a yellow discharge, redness and tearing. Often eyes will be crusted over in the morning when the child wakes up. A child may not attend school with eye drainage. A pediatrician needs to be consulted and if an antibiotic is prescribed, the child must be treated for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Impetigo** - Impetigo is a bacterial skin infection characterized by crusted sores which usually appear first in the area of the face or at any opening in the skin. Children who develop impetigo need to be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school and have a physician's note.
- **Chickenpox** - Once a child has been exposed to chickenpox, the incubation period is anywhere from 10 days to 21 days. Once a child has broken out with the rash associated with the chickenpox, he/she may not attend school until all of the pox have scabbed over—at least five to

seven days.

- **Ear Infections** - Ear infections are extremely common for some children. Although ear infections in and of themselves are not contagious, they are often accompanied by colds that are. Children who are being treated for ear infections may return to school as soon as they are able to participate fully in the school's activities.
- **Strep Throat** - Strep throat is often indicated by a sore throat and sometimes accompanied with an elevated temperature. This condition requires antibiotics. Children **must** be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Lice** - If a child is found to be infested, he/she will be sent home and require treatment with medicated shampoo. Instructions will be given by the school nurse to assist you with this process. After being treated, the child may return to school with a parent/guardian and will be checked by the school nurse. If the child is nit free, he/she may return to class. If you discover your child has head lice, please contact the school. The school nurse will then check his/her class. We cannot eliminate the lice, but with everyone's cooperation, we hope to control it.
- **Antibiotics** - Any child started on antibiotic therapy for any type of contagious infection must be on the antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Rash** - If a child develops any rash of unknown origin, the child must be checked by the nurse. If the nurse deems it necessary that the child be seen by a doctor, then the child must have a note from the doctor stating that he/she may return to school.
- **Ring Worm** - Ring worm is a fungal skin infection which is typically characterized by a circular, red, raised, itchy rash. The child must be seen by a physician for treatment, and a doctor's note is required to return to school.

## SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

The responsibility of transporting students to and from each school every school day requires the cooperation of the parents/guardians of the students being transported. A complete understanding of the student's vested interest in school transportation is very helpful in aiding the school administrator to maintain a successful transportation program.

### **I. RESPONSIBILITY OF STUDENTS:**

Students serviced by the school transportation system should be informed of their responsibilities.

### **II. RULES GOVERNING TRANSPORTATION ON SCHOOL BUSES:**

- A. Students being transported are under the authority of the driver and bus monitor.
- B. A time schedule shall be posted and it shall be followed.
  
- C. Students shall be on time both in the morning and evening.
- D. Students shall keep their hands, arms or heads within the vehicle.
- E. Students shall sit in available seats.
- F. Students shall remain seated during the entire bus run.

- G. Students must use the seat belts at all times.
- H. Students shall converse in normal tones; loud or vulgar language is prohibited.
- I. Students shall be courteous to the driver, to fellow students and passers by.
- J. Students shall refrain from damaging the vehicle and shall keep it clean.
- K. Students who refuse to promptly obey the directions of the driver or refuse to obey rules and regulations shall be subject to alternative arrangements by the school districts
- L. Students shall enter and exit vehicles at their designated stops.

**III. RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS:**

- A. Cooperate with the school authorities and bus drivers in promoting efficient services.
  - 1. The purpose of school transportation is to provide safe, comfortable and economical transportation for those attending the Collaborative programs.
  - 2. Students shall be picked up and returned to their designated bus stops only.
  - 3. In cases where parents/guardians wish to take students home from school, arrangements should be made before the vehicle makes its afternoon run. In no case should parents/guardians stop the vehicle along the highway at an un-designated stop for the purpose of removing the child.
- B. Make suggestions, in writing, to the transportation company and school for the improvement of school transportation.
- C. Insure the cooperation of children with the authorities responsible for transportation. Parents/Guardians should understand that students riding on school transportation vehicles must obey all regulations governing school transportation or shall be subject to alternative arrangement by the school district.
- D. Bus complaints regarding routine, discipline and other matters, should be referred to the appropriate school district director of special education.
- E. To listen to appropriate radio stations to determine when school is canceled.

*We hope this handbook provides some clear, concise guidelines as you begin your partnership with the staff at the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative.*

*We look forward to all of us working together and anticipate that this will be a significant and productive experience.*

***Welcome to the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative.***

*The Northern Rhode Island Collaborative does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, or disability, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.*

## SIGNATURE SHEET

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Specialized Alternative Program Handbook and that I have read the material within it. I am aware of and fully understand the program's rules and procedures.

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_

Date