

# THE DARNELL SCHOOL

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MAKING THE DIFFERENCE







# HELPING CHILDREN REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

The Darnell School for Educational and Behavioral Services is a nonprofit, year-round, 766 approved private school for students ages 9 to 22 with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, developmental disability, and/or behavioral challenges.

In operation since 2006, we are fully licensed as a special education program through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. This ensures our students have access to the same learning strands as students in public schools.

At The Darnell School, the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) form the foundation of our program. We have an exceptional team of skilled educators and clinicians with documented experience in ABA.

JAN BOLTON, M.Ed., BCBA, LABA

*The Darnell School Educational Administrator*



**OUR STAFF IS READY TO HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED**

*The Darnell School staff have provided my son with top quality services. He is happy and making tremendous progress. Staff are amazing and trained to a level that meets my son's needs.*

— PARENT OF A DARNELL SCHOOL STUDENT

## OUR STAFF

The staff at The Darnell School has significant training and experience in using Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) strategies to increase skills and decrease maladaptive behaviors.

Leading each classroom is a Head Teacher who has attained a Master's Degree and is licensed to teach by the Massachusetts DESE.

Additional staff members include an LPN, a Speech Therapy Assistant, Board Certified Behavior Analysts and paraprofessional assistants.

They work with students on a 1:1 or 1:2 ratio, providing individualized instruction in a highly structured learning environment.

Consultant staff include an RN, a Speech and Language Pathologist, an Occupational Therapist, a Physical Therapist, and a Doctoral level Behavior Analyst. In addition to academics, occupational, physical and speech therapies are seamlessly integrated into the school day through this consultation model.



**WE TEACH SKILLS WHERE THEY ARE USED**

*Some schools we looked at are in remote places. We love The Darnell School because it is in the midst of a small, manageable downtown district where our child benefits from local social and vocational opportunities.*

— PARENT OF A DARNELL SCHOOL STUDENT

## ENVIRONMENT

The Darnell School provides a place to learn that is bright, comfortable and fully accessible. Spacious classrooms are arranged to serve up to 6 students, and include both group and individualized teaching areas.

Understanding that students with significant needs often require assistance to learn independent living skills, the school includes areas specially designed to facilitate teaching these skills. We have a fully equipped kitchen with laundry, and a shower with changing facilities.

The downtown area of Hudson serves as an extension of our campus. A regular school day might consist of going to a store, public library, restaurant, or recreation area so students can learn and practice community skills.

In addition, students take their gym class at the local Boys and Girls Club which offers a variety of physical education activities.



**ASSESSMENT: THE FOUNDATION OF INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION**



*The Darnell School provides the most thorough assessment that I have seen, and they actually apply what they learn about my child on a daily basis.*

— PARENT OF A DARNELL SCHOOL STUDENT

## ASSESSMENT

The individualized programming at The Darnell School starts with an assessment of a student's skills, abilities and needs at the outset of instruction. We use this information to create an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and a Behavioral Support Plan, with clearly stated benchmarks and objectives.

As students reach these benchmarks and master the stated objectives, we introduce new skills for them to learn. We help children attain long-range

quality of life outcomes by altering environmental triggers, reinforcing appropriate behavior and teaching new and/or alternative skills.

In keeping with our foundation in ABA, HMEA's teachers use daily data collection and frequent data analysis to continually re-assess the student's progress and, if necessary, modify teaching strategies to ensure the student is learning and making continual progress.



**EXPERTS IN APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS**

*At HMEA, we use the tools and strategies of ABA – positive reinforcement, discrete trial training, incidental teaching, task analysis, and shaping – to tailor services to each child’s individual needs.*

## CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Every student has an IEP which outlines the goals and objectives the student needs to achieve for improved functioning. Instructional strategies and curricula for students are drawn from students’ IEPs using evidence-based practices that are best suited to their unique learning profiles.

Within the daily schedule, students are provided instruction that helps them acquire new skills, build fluency with existing skills and practice skills with a variety of materials and in a variety of settings to ensure generalization

and reduce the occurrence of maladaptive behavior.

We strive to ensure that each student is exposed to a challenging curriculum that promotes the student’s independence and skill development.

Typical curriculum domains include:

- Academics including language, literacy, and math
- Independent living skills
- Communication and social skills
- Appropriate behavior
- Community and safety skills
- Recreation and leisure skills
- Self-management skills
- Vocational skills



**STUDENTS LEARN SKILLS FOR LIFE**

*Words can never express my gratitude for all of the support you have given and continue to give our son. Transition to adulthood is a scary thing, his job with FSE is helping tremendously and it's our hope he will continue to be employed on his 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday.*

— PARENT OF A DARNELL SCHOOL STUDENT

## TRANSITIONING TO WORK AND INDEPENDENCE

Once students reach middle-school age, we begin teaching them the vocational, career development and self-management skills they will need to make the transition to adulthood.

We start with a comprehensive vocational assessment which serves as a road map for identifying specific activities that promote career exploration for each student. Following this, community-based internships are developed that allow students to explore their interests at local businesses.

Our relationships with area businesses and organizations enable us to offer students a wide range of vocational experiences. Darnell students have worked in office settings, cafes, animal shelters, farms, retail stores and more.

As students near school separation, vocational sites and community-based training can move to the student's home community, creating a seamless transition into adulthood.



**YOU AND YOUR CHILD MATTER TO US**

*My daughter certainly would not have come this far without you on her side. Thank you for not only seeing her potential and capabilities but also for nurturing her so that she can shine. Thank you for teaching her, for helping me guide and raise her, for the support, structure and balance of each person that has impacted her. Darnell is a very special place.*

— PARENT OF A DARNELL SCHOOL STUDENT

## PARTNERSHIP

HMEA works in partnership with families on every aspect of their child's growth and education. We value the unique perspective that parents have of their children.

It is important to us that a student's learning extends beyond the school day into the child's home. Understanding that every family's situation and needs varies, we make every effort to find the most appropriate ways to support a student's education at home.

In addition to our daily communication with parents, The Darnell School also offers each family weekly in-home training sessions. The purpose of these sessions is to give our teaching staff the opportunity to observe the student in their home setting.

Based on our observations, we are able to offer the family practical strategies and training for addressing some of the challenges they face.



# COME VISIT THE DARNELL SCHOOL

We are located in downtown Hudson, Massachusetts.

We operate 221 days per year, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Visiting will give you the opportunity to see and feel the wonderful sense of community that is shared at The Darnell School.

To set up an appointment to visit, please contact:

Jan Bolton, M.Ed., BCBA, LABA  
Educational Administrator

15 South Street  
Hudson, MA 01749

Phone: 508.298.1639 Fax: 508.520.6003  
jbolton@hmea.org

*A Program of HMEA*

**WWW.DARNELLSCHOOL.ORG**

*All quotes are unsolicited; photos are used with permission of parent/guardian.*