



The Darnell School

A Program of Advocates





Helping Children Realize Their Full Potential

The Darnell School for Educational and Behavioral Services is a 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 offer a fully approved special education program, certified by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 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.

The Darnell School is a program of Advocates, a nonprofit organization. Advocates provides comprehensive services for people facing developmental, mental health, or other life challenges.





Our Team 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 Team

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

Leading each classroom is a head teacher who is licensed to teach by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Additional staff members include a licensed practical nurse, speech language pathology assistant, job developer, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, and paraprofessional assistants.

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

Consultants include a medical doctor, registered nurse, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and 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 social and vocational opportunities."

— PARENT OF A DARNELL SCHOOL STUDENT

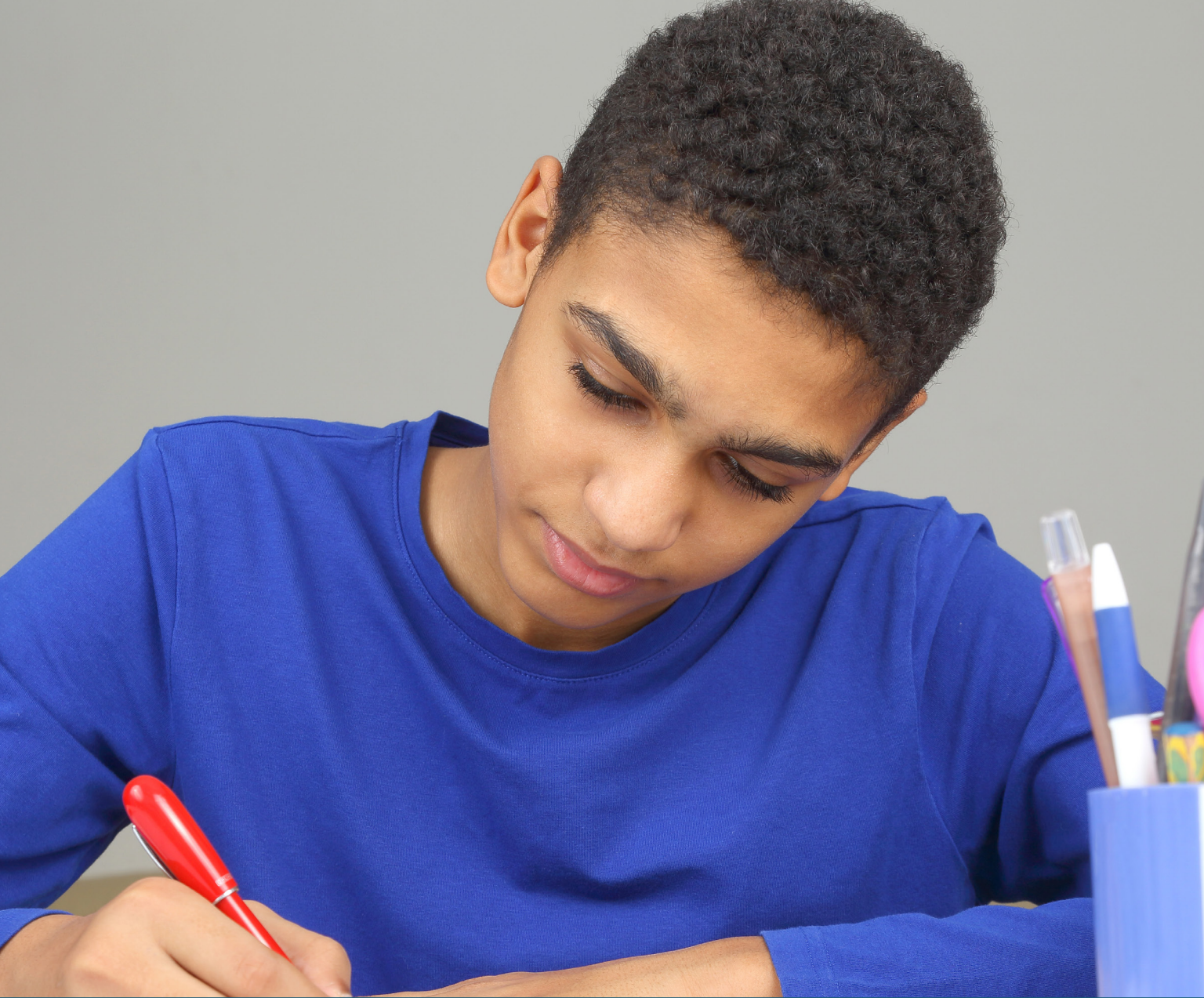
Environment

The Darnell School provides a place to learn that is bright, comfortable, and fully accessible. Spacious classrooms are arranged to serve up to six 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.



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

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 Behavior 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, The Darnell School's teachers use daily data collection and frequent data analysis to continually reassess students' progress and, if necessary, modify teaching strategies to ensure each student is learning and making continuous progress.



Experts in Applied Behavior Analysis

At The Darnell School, 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 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 is helping tremendously, and it's our hope he will continue to be employed on his 22nd 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 approach the age of 22, 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, and 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

The Darnell School 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 vary, 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.

Visit Us

We operate 221 days per year, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. 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 us.

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