

*These first two pages are a brief of the attached.*

BEHAVIOR DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING CENTER (Autism Program)

Camarillo State Hospital and Developmental Center provides a world renown Autism Program. The program was designed with the intent of helping clients to return to the community. This may be where their family resides or it may be in a community residential placement center.

Treatment programs <sup>for autistic clients</sup> are designed to develop social, classroom, and vocational skills which will enable <sup>them</sup> ~~the residents~~ to lead as active and productive a life as possible.

This program was designed to be a temporary step in preparation for a more normalized living situation.

The program accepts autistic male and female clients of all developmental levels. Entry age is 14 years and older. Special emphasis in the area of program services <sup>which</sup> are 1) School Programs <sup>that</sup> ~~are~~ are designed to teach preacademic, academic, vocational, and self-help skills. 2) Speech and Language Programs conducted by licensed speech/language pathologists who identify and work to correct communication problems. These <sup>communication problems</sup> are addressed through a) introducing or developing a communication system for nonverbal clients through sign language, b) pointing to pictures, gesturing, etc. (Also, c) expanding vocabularies and improving the pronunciation of speaking clients, and d) developing the understanding for spoken language <sup>are utilized in the effort</sup> to improve the clients ability to communicate.

Another program utilized with autistic clients is the Pre-Vocational Activity Center. This provides a comprehensive training program utilizing a vocational environment to teach and/or improve work habits and skills that are applicable for community living. Clients are in school or Day Training Activity Centers for a minimum of five hours per day.

Two 'teaching homes' on the grounds of the hospital serve as transitional facilities for preparing certain residents for community placement. They are located in the area that also houses employees and volunteers as well as clinical and research interns. This area appears as any residential community would and employees, interns and volunteers pay to live there.

"Autism" is the name Dr. Leo Kanner (1943) gave to the behavioral syndrome that affects approximately 4 in 10,000 people from birth or shortly thereafter. Typically, autistic children exhibit such behavioral characteristics as motor or verbal patterns that are random and seemingly non-purposeful, social isolation and the lack for desire of interpersonal communication, speech and language deficts, and <sup>they</sup> are often thought to be blind or deaf because the autistic child's reaction to sensory and perceptual stimuli is often abnormal, unpredictable and indescernible.

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