

# **Inclusive Learning Environments**

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# SHINING STARS PRESCHOOL

RIO RANCHO PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Play is A  
Child's  
Work**

“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say, ‘it’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.’ Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.”

– Fred Rogers



## HISTORY OF SHINING STARS PRESCHOOL

- X Before SSP, preschool classrooms in elementaries
- X Site-based program founded in August 2005
- X “old” E. Stapleton Elementary campus
- X 100 students
- X 8 classrooms
- X Small Library with 100 books
- X 1 playground





## TODAY AT SHINING STARS PRESCHOOL

- X 29 Classrooms
- X 625 students and growing...
- X Social Communication Program
- X Vision Program
- X Phonological Cycling Programs
- X 7 outdoor learning spaces
- X Music, Art, Library, Computer Lab, STEaM Lab, Little Gym



# INTENSIVE COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAM (AUTISM/BEHAVIORAL DIFFERENCES) NEEDS FOR OUR NEW SCHOOL

- X Common Area for extended learning environment
- X Focus/Calmng Area/Observation Room
- X Storage for Supplies/ Materials
- X Calming Environment with neutral colors



# VISION PROGRAM NEEDS FOR OUR NEW SCHOOL

- X Safe Campus with easy transitions
- X Sufficient storage for equipment
- X Outside light source (window) 1 per wall
- X Focus on Lighting/ Indirect Lighting and Dark Room
- X Focus Room
- X Access to Campus and Playgrounds
- X Location near Community Area
- X Use of textures and sensory components



# PHONOLOGICAL CYCLING PROGRAMS NEEDS FOR THE NEW SCHOOL

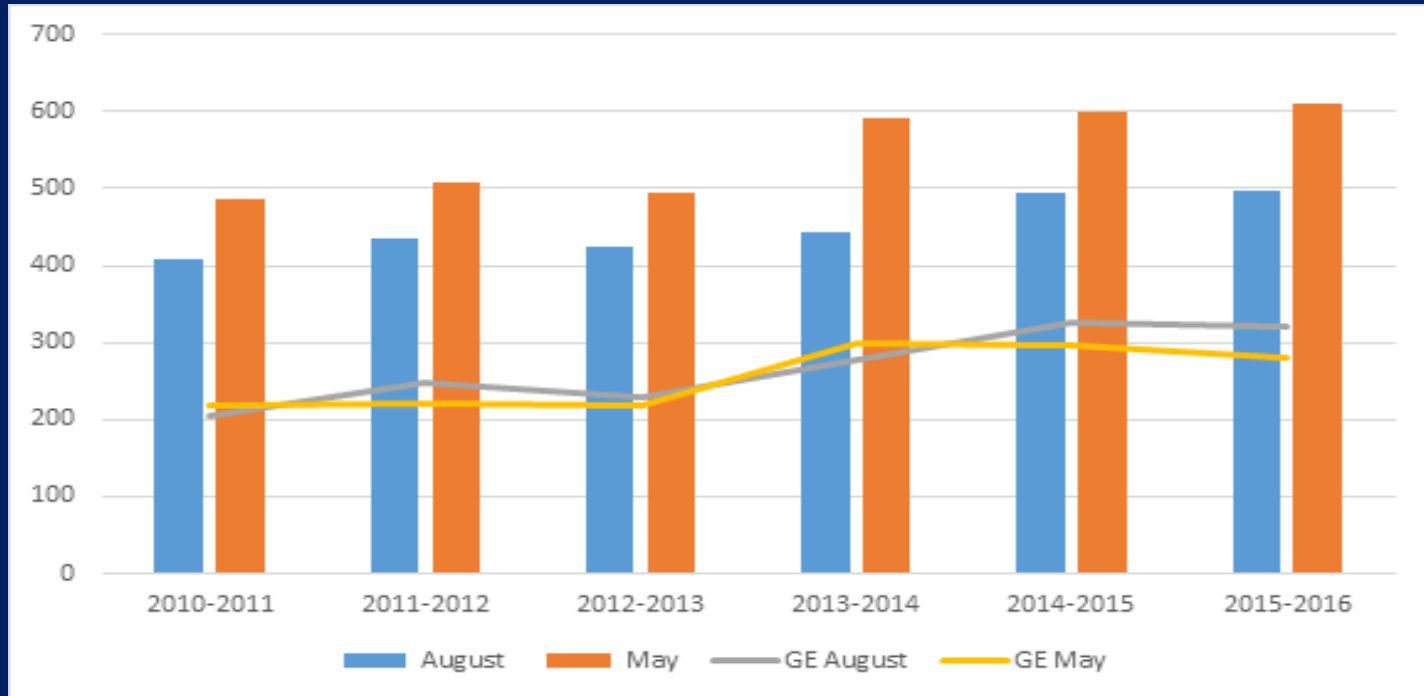
- X Connecting Classrooms with option for open space
- X Focus room for Intensive Speech Therapy
- X Operate on a 2-day a week schedule, location in the building







# SSP ENROLLMENT TRENDS 2010 TO PRESENT



# GROWTH TRENDS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

2009–2010

89 Children Evaluated

83

Qualified for  
Special  
Education

51

Transitioned  
from 0–3

15

Transferred  
to RRPS

2015–2016

110 Children Evaluated

101

78

11





# GOALS FOR OUR STUDENTS

## SCHOOL-READY

### Independence

Toileting  
Maneuvering  
Feeding  
Playing

### Foundational Skills

Exploring  
Observing  
Early Literacy & Math

### Social Skills

Turn-taking  
Sharing  
Empathy  
Engaging Others

# THE FACES OF SHINING STARS PRESCHOOL





# EMPOWERING FAMILIES

## Support

Special Education Parent  
Support Group

School Social Worker

Community Resources

Navigating Special Education

## Giving Back

Giving Tree

Holiday Dinners

Little Free Library

## Family Resources

Parenting Classes

24/7 Dad

Explora with parents

## Family and Community Engagement

Literacy Nights

Informances

Open House

## Adult Education

GED classes

Bilingual classes

Computer Literacy

## Transition Planning

Getting Ready for Kindergarten

PreK to Kindergarten

Communications with all 10  
RRPS elementary schools



# INTEGRATED LEARNING

## Music

Self-expression through:

Movement

Song

Instruments

## STeAM Lab

Discovery

Exploration

The Senses

Experiments

## Library/Storytime

Reading enjoyment

Book care

Roles of Author and

Illustrator

## Computer Lab

Mouse and keyboard skills

Headphones

Educational Programs/Resources

Click and drag

## Art

Creativity

Self-expression

Variety of media

Colorful, tactile

## Little Gym

Growth

Motor planning

Regulation

Taking Turns

# **Learning Environment Response**



# About SSPS

- Inclusion 60-40 Ratio
- Speech
- Preschool/PreK
- Phonological Cycling
  - Speech Therapy
  - Pre-Literacy Intervention
- Autism
- Vision

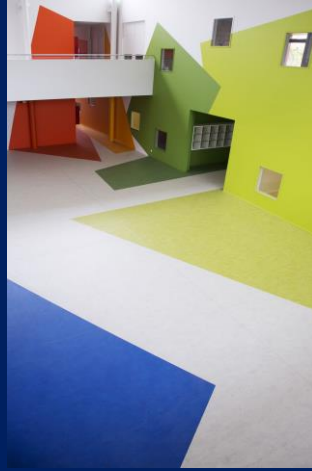




# School Approach

- Home Scale, Front Porch
- Weather Protection
- Hand to Hand Exchange
- Parent Interface and Access to Resources is Key
- Child Height Check in
- Child Play Area in Reception
- Children Arriving by Bus: Wagons, Walkers, Strollers, Etc





# Classrooms

- Wayfinding with Color
- All Classroom Details encourage Independence

Reading/ Displays

Quiet Areas (Cubes and Caves)

Light/Sensory Tables

Circle Area with LCD Panel

Block/ Manipulatives

Art Areas/Drying

Classroom Theme/Topic Area

Couch/ Kid Chairs





# Collaborative Group Areas

## ■ MAXIMIZE MULTI-AGE COLLABORATION:

- Art and Sensory Areas
- Readings and Story Time
- Group Meal and Snack Time
- Supervised Indoor Large Motor
- Builds Independence Skills







# STeAM

- **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART AND MATHEMATICS**

- A holistic way of thinking about how educators and parents should be helping students integrate knowledge across all disciplines in a connected way
- Hands on, Investigative
- Explorative Freedom
- Builder Principles
- Accessible to All Skill Levels



# The signs of Autism..



# Autism

*A Serious Developmental Disorder that Impairs the Ability to Communicate and Interact.*

- Difficulty with Communication
- Difficulty with Social Interactions
- Obsessive Interests
- Repetitive Behaviors

*Early recognition, as well as behavioral, educational, and family therapies may reduce symptoms and support development and learning.*



# Designing for Autism

- **SCALE:**
  - Lower scale; not institutional
  - Focus area for calming
  - Sensory caves, nooks and crannies
- **COLOR & TEXTURE:**
  - Neutral tones vs Colorful
  - Natural surfaces (comfort to the touch)





# Designing for Autism

## ■ ACOUSTICS:

- Quiet Infrastructure: lighting and HVAC
- Acoustic Surfaces: carpet, rubber or cork, soft seating

## ■ LIGHTING:

- Variable by Control
- Homelike; Not too Cool/Warm
- Moderated Natural Light



# Vision

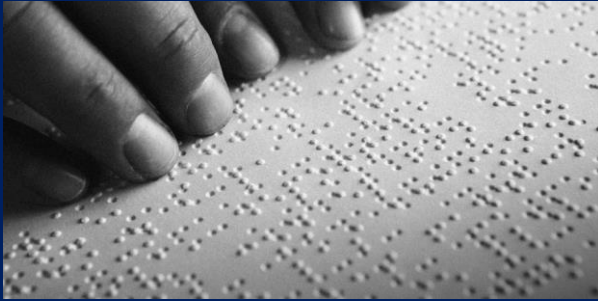
*Blind/Vision Impaired children require full-time intensive services in a specialized learning environment:*

- **Low Vision Children:**

When using buildings, rely entirely on the ability to see

- **Blind Children:**

When using buildings, rely entirely on other senses i.e., touch, hearing, smell and touch.





# Vision

## ■ LIGHTING:

- Avoid Glare from Shiny Surfaces
- Light placement to avoid shadows; which cause optical illusions
- Avoid fluctuations between light and dark
- Task Lighting
- Dimming Capabilities
- Diffuse Natural Light from High Sources

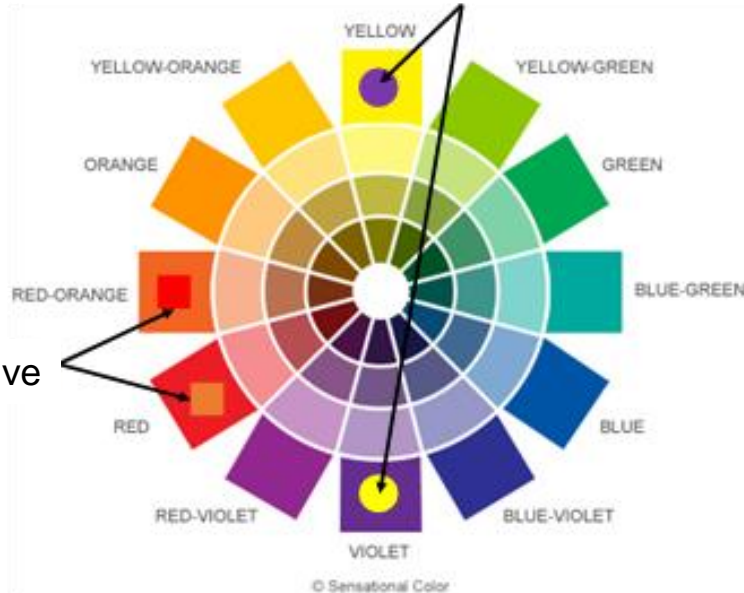


# Vision

## ■ COLOR:

- Colors should contrast at about 70%
- Colors too close in hue are indistinguishable
- Limit Color Schemes; Keep it Simple

Effective Contrast

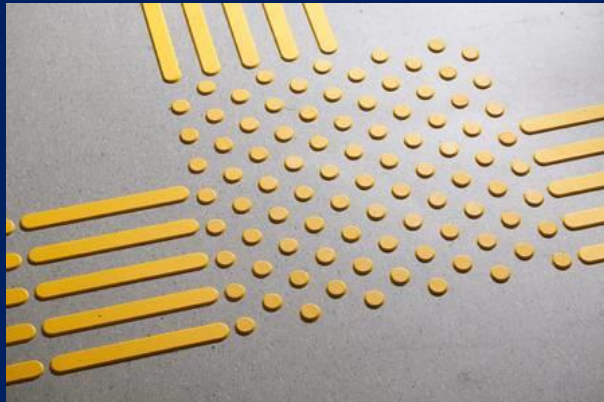
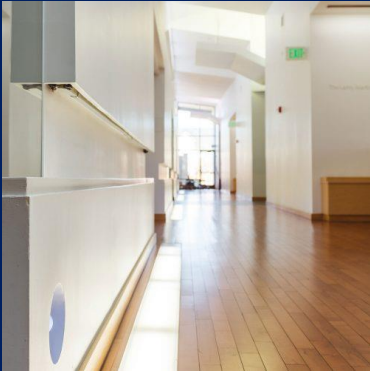


Not Effective

# Vision

## ■ TEXTURE:

- Use Textures that are easily identifiable
- Detectable warning surfaces underfoot to identify hazards
- Countable textures for location
- Hand rails with ridges; signaling changes
- Tactile signs with Braille – child height



# Little Gym

- INDOOR PHYSICAL THERAPY/  
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
  - Gross Motor Activity
  - Fine Motor Skills
  - Large equipment: mats, climbing, ball pit, trampoline, balance beams, swings
  - Neutral Tones; Contrast w Equip
  - Dramatic Play Areas







# Outdoor Learning

## ■ PLAY IS THE WORK OF CHILDREN

- Thematic: Quiet, Noisy, Sensory, Gross Motor, Construction, Music
- Wet, Messy Projects; Water Play
- Team Gardens; Planting
- Transitional Porches



# Outdoor Learning

- GARDENS ARE FOR LEARNING
  - Gazebo/ Contemplation
  - Extension of the Classroom
  - Cooperation; Rules of the Road
  - Creativity; Exploration







# WELLNESS

- **WHOLE CHILD APPROACH**
  - Many fragile children with daily health and monitoring needs
  - Areas for parent consultation
  - Additional Nursing Staff
  - Small child sized equipment
  - Nutritional Programs/Needs

# Community

- **TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY AREA**

- Parent Meetings and Events
- Community Kitchen
- Kids Cooking
- Community Gatherings





# Community

- MULTI-GENERATIONAL, MULT-USE
  - Reading Tree
  - Grandparents Time
  - Pet Sharing
  - Support Animals



# Parents



- **FAMILY/PARENT ACTIVITIES**
  - Cooking with Kids
  - Parent Education/ Training
  - 24/7 Dad
  - Parent Support Group
  - School Events
  - After School

# THE DIFFERENCE THAT WE MAKE



A child walks.



First words spoken.



That smile...when they  
did it themselves!



Celebration of  
independence.

**Let's Share Ideas**

# Thanks for Sharing

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