



# PEP Early Childhood Centers

## Building Skills That Will Last a Lifetime

*The PEP professionals are truly experts in serving young children with challenging behaviors. They are continually trained in best practices, enabling them to provide quality early childhood special education and mental health services. Our working relationship with PEP has been a cooperative partnership—one that supports and respects the district, the parents, and the children. As a result, we can tell countless success stories of children who transition from the PEP PCD services successfully back into the district's classrooms.*

*—Robert Clampitt, Ph.D.  
Director of Pupil Services  
Mayfield City Schools*

*Having the trained parents on staff to work with other families is a major component of the program. They are able to say, "Yes, I was in your position at one time. Things did get better. This is what I did. This is what you can do."*

*— Delaney's Mom*

For more than thirty years, Positive Education Program (PEP) has been **providing Special Education Center-Based Services through its Early Childhood Centers (ECC)**. Utilizing a strength-based model of care, PEP professionals provide integrated educational and mental health services. In collaboration with families and school districts, PEP helps children develop skills necessary for success in school and in life.

Working from the belief that a parent is a child's first and best teacher, PEP seeks to build skills in both parents and children. Parents are taught skills that enable them to help both themselves and their young child, and children develop new competencies that prepare them for a life of personal growth and success.

PEP's ECC Special Education Center-Based Services are designed to serve young children with significant behavior challenges. Many have additional difficulties including communication delays, cognitive delays and/or autism. The combination of these issues can cause disruptions in the family and may lead to the child's eventual school failure. Yet, it is encouraging to know that all evidence suggests that learning to manage these issues early in a child's life can be extremely beneficial, and can help avoid more intensive interventions later in life.

Referrals for these services are made by the school district in partnership with the family. In addition to center-based services, PEP provides Parent Involvement and Itinerant Services. Within Cuyahoga County PEP provides a continuum of early childhood services including: Early Childhood Mental Health services for children birth to three and Day Care Plus.

**PEP ECC Special Education  
Center-Based Services are provided at:**

**ECC – East**  
1340 Professor Road  
South Euclid, Ohio 44124  
Phone: 440-573-2024  
Fax: 440-573-2033

[www.pepcleve.org](http://www.pepcleve.org)

**positive education program**

## Daily Program

Research indicates that children are more likely to succeed in school if they have the necessary social skills to positively interact with their teachers and peers. Yet, for young children with significant behavior challenges, developing these critical skills is extremely difficult. Therefore, all programming is designed to help children develop their ability to listen and follow rules, to play and share with others, and to develop coping strategies to manage strong feelings. Through PEP's supportive approach, children gain a sense of self-confidence and a desire for learning that will assist them in school and in life. Lesson plans are aligned with Ohio Department of Education's Early Learning Content Standards and are carefully monitored through the Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System (AEPS).

The staff to child ratio is very high, with approximately one trained staff member to every two children. In each classroom group there is a team of three professionals: one credentialed pre-school special education teacher; a mental health service provider; and an aide. Each family is assigned a case manager who serves as the liaison between the center, the family, the school district and other community services. Additionally, consultation services are provided by a speech language pathologist, an occupational therapist, a psychiatrist, and a nurse. Half day and full day options are available.

*We had been asked to leave three different pre-schools. I was at the end of my rope. His teacher was frustrated and he was disruptive in the class. And then I found the ECC! Being with other parents helped me realize I wasn't alone. I learned how to become my son's advocate. And I learned that I could not blame his ADHD diagnosis for all of his behaviors. He was able to leave the ECC and now is in a regular first grade classroom. I am so proud of him!*

—Spenser's Mom

## Services to Young Children with Autism

In its service to young children with autism, PEP's approach is highly individualized. PEP doesn't expect the child to fit into the program. The program is built around the needs of each child, employing methodologies that are likely to have the greatest impact for that child. PEP places a strong emphasis on language development, communication skills, social skills, coping strategies and interaction with non-autistic peers. Programming incorporates elements of Floor Time, TEACCH and behavioral approaches, among others. The environment is rich in visual cues, including social stories and picture schedules.

*When we started at PEP ECC, we had just learned that our son was autistic. There was no eye contact, little speech and he couldn't sit still for even five seconds. He would try something just once, and if he wasn't successful, we were in for an intense tantrum. Today he is a completely different child. He brings his schoolwork home, recognizing that he may not get it right the first time. But he knows if he keeps trying, he will. We learned patience and now have our control back. Most importantly, we have hope again.*

—Jack's Dad

## Support to Families

Believing that support for the adults in a child's environment will positively influence the child's ongoing development, PEP staff teaches parents skills that enable them to help both themselves and their children. What makes PEP unique is the fact that some of its staff members are graduates of the program and know firsthand the challenges of supporting a child with special needs. The strong partnership that develops between families and PEP staff supports the full integration of what happens in the center and home, ensuring important consistency in a child's life.

*We needed to understand what made her strike out the way she did and then help her to deal with it, so we called it family school because we all had a lot of learning to do.*

—Theresa's Mom