



# The Matthew Reardon CENTER FOR AUTISM

for the love of children

## **ADVANCE ACADEMY – Application Guidelines and Procedures**

At Advance Academy, we use a multi-therapeutic approach to education where speech, occupational, physical, and music therapies are part of every student's curriculum, with emphasis on academic and social skills development. Using Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) methodology, we have created a unique environment in which our small student-teaching team ratio allows intense and specialized instruction for every student, fostering the best possible outcome for each individual. **The school term at Advance Academy runs year-round, from August through July.** School hours are 9:00-3:00, Monday – Friday.

The Advance Academy application is comprehensive so that we can best assess MRCA's capacity to meet the needs of your child. Please submit the entire application at one time, acknowledging that the Physician Recommendation Form may be submitted separately by the physician and that the Teacher Questionnaires are to be submitted separately by the teacher. Please feel free to submit any additional assessment results, reports, etc., that you feel may be of value to our evaluation. Your completed application should be submitted along with a non-refundable application fee of \$50. **PARTIAL APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**

### **2024-2025 APPLICATION CHECKLIST – A complete application includes:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Application fee (\$50)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family Documentation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete Copy of Most Current IEP
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete Copy of Most Current BSP (*Behavioral Support Plan*) if applicable
- \_\_\_\_\_ Complete Copy of Most Recent Psychological Evaluation (3 years or fewer)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quality of Life Indicator Index
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physician Recommendation (may be submitted separately)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Current Immunization Record
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most recent ABA Treatment Plan, if applicable
- \_\_\_\_\_ Two (2) Teacher Questionnaires (to be submitted separately by teacher)

The completed application will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee only after all required documentation has been received, including the Physician's Recommendation and Teacher Questionnaires). The parent will be contacted after the application review and advised whether the student appears to qualify for admission and if Advance Academy is an appropriate placement for the student. If an applicant meets admission guidelines and an opening is available, an observation is scheduled to allow MRCA school personnel an opportunity to

observe the student in his or her current classroom setting. This can be dictated by time of year, as observations cannot generally be done during the summer months. This observation in many cases confirms whether the student and Advance Academy are an appropriate match for one another. An additional observation at Advance Academy will be required if the student continues to be eligible for admission.

Admission to Advance Academy does not occur on a first-come, first-serve basis. Admissions are determined based on a number of factors, including but not limited to the information provided in the application, student observation results, identified student support requirements, and MRCA staff's capacity to meet the student's support needs. Classroom composition is another consideration during the admissions process. Qualifying applicants who are not initially admitted are added to our 9-month waiting list.

**FEES AT A GLANCE** – Non-refundable Registration Deposit, \$100; 2024-2025 Annual Tuition, \$17,170; Supply Fee \$150. Advance Academy does not provide After School Care.

### **Wait List**

Things can change quickly in the academic and behavioral realms of students on the autism spectrum, and because openings are not routine, an application for a student who qualifies for admission is considered active for only **nine (9) months**. If an opening occurs within the nine-month time frame, the parent will be notified and any updates to the student's application can be made at that time. An additional observation may be required prior to offering the opening for parental consideration.

Students not admitted but who still want to attend Advance Academy must re-apply for admission in subsequent years.

Applications no longer considered active and/or older than nine months are disposed of by shredding.

### **Post-Application Communications**

After the Admissions Committee has reached a decision concerning your child's placement, you will be notified via phone and/or email. If placement at Advance Academy is offered, the invitation must be accepted or declined by the student's parent/legal guardian within two weeks of the date of notification. **Acceptance may be verbal or written but must be accompanied by a non-refundable \$100 placement deposit.** Your child's position in our student body is not guaranteed until the placement deposit is received. If an invitation for placement has not been accepted within two (2) weeks of offer, the placement opening may be released to another applicant. MRCA has no obligation to initiate further communication with the applicant or their family when the two-week period expires without notice to accept or decline by the applicant's parent/legal guardian.

**Tuition – Annual tuition for the 2024-2025 Academic Year is \$17,170.**

MRCA is a provider for the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship program. For information about GSNS, please visit the GA Dept. of Education web site, <http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/Special-Needs-Scholarship-Program.aspx> . To view your child's scholarship award, click on *Scholarship Calculator* on the right-hand side of the web page. Scholarship awards for the upcoming school term are viewable in July. Limited needs-based

assistance is available to families and may be applied for using the *2024-2025 Tuition Assistance Request* form. Tuition Assistance Request forms should be submitted by June 1 for consideration. MRCA's Board of Directors makes every effort to ensure that any child who will benefit from enrollment at Advance Academy is able to do so, regardless of a family's financial position.

Tuition may be Paid-in-Full at the beginning of the year (3% discount), or over the course of the year as determined at the time of initial invoicing. A parent must furnish the appropriate credit card or ACH information by which tuition can be charged monthly unless alternate arrangements have been made. Tuition is due the first day of each month, beginning September 1. If a tuition payment is declined, *the parent has until the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month to call the school* and make alternate payment arrangements, or the student may not be permitted to attend classes until payment of fees is current.

**FINANCIAL OBLIGATION IF A STUDENT WITHDRAWS DURING THE SCHOOL TERM:**

NOTE: ***There will be no waiver of tuition or fees, and there is no refund or abdication of responsibility to pay full tuition balance in the event of voluntary withdrawal.*** Should extenuating circumstances occur that would require a long-term absence or involuntary withdrawal of a student (medical treatment, transfer of parent, "Ineligible by Exclusion", etc.), these circumstances will be reviewed by the President/CEO for the appropriate disposition.

**Georgia Special Needs Scholarship - ([GSNS/SB10](#))**

If a student's voucher under the GSNS program fails to cover the entire amount of the annual tuition, the parent or guardian is responsible for any outstanding balance. Should a parent voluntarily withdraw the student leaving an outstanding balance against the tuition, *the parent assumes responsibility for the entire tuition balance since GSNS will not pay for a student who is no longer enrolled.*

**Georgia Tax Credit Scholarship – ([Apogee123.org](#))**

MRCA participates in the GA Tax Credit Scholarship program. Needs-based tuition assistance may be applied for by completing and submitting MRCA's Tuition Assistance Request form.

**Admission and Eligibility Criteria**

1. The child is between the ages of 5 and 21 as of September 1 during the Academic Year applied for.
2. The applicant child must be toilet trained and will independently communicate his/her toileting needs.
3. The child's primary diagnosis is Autism Spectrum Disorder, or a related developmental disorder which responds well to Applied Behavior Analysis methodology. A physician recommendation form is required to document the diagnosis and any other relevant health information.

### **Admission and Eligibility Criteria (continued)**

4. The child shows delays affecting at least two of the following areas (*in addition to communication/speech and language*): Behavior, Communication, Socialization, Fine/Gross Motor, and/or Academic.
5. Based on the Physician's Recommendation Form, the child must demonstrate the ability to learn and be at risk for academic, social, behavioral, and communicative regression without a year-round structured individualized educational program.
6. The Matthew Reardon Center for Autism's Advance Academy admits children of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.
7. The Admissions Committee will require a classroom observation. All parties involved must agree that said observation will take place under normal classroom conditions. Additionally, the applicant will be required to spend several hours in one of our classrooms so that staff may have an opportunity to work directly with the student. These visits typically last between 1 ½ - 3 hours.
8. Enrolled students whose assessment indicates the need for 1:1 ABA-support *in the classroom* are required to receive those services from MRCA's BCBA and staff. 1:1 ABA-support fees are not included in the tuition fee. Parents are responsible for all ABA-support fees which must be paid through the student's insurance reimbursement or through private payment by the parents. As with all behavioral health providers, private payments must be paid prior to services being rendered.
9. Students who attend Advance Academy must continue to meet eligibility criteria throughout the period of their enrollment. This includes school attendance requirements, family participation and volunteer commitments outlined in the Parent/Student Handbook.

### **Admission and Continued Enrollment *EXCLUSION* Criteria**

1. Documented evidence that the student is at risk for physically injuring himself or others and/or is at risk for engaging in destructive behaviors that require frequent intervention by multiple staff members.
2. Documented evidence that the student's physical/medical condition prohibits reasonable school attendance, or his/her medical condition requires professional medical care during the school day.
3. Determination that a student requires a 1:1 ABA support person in the classroom throughout the school day and parent withholds consent to receive and finance the required 1:1 ABA-support using MRCA's BCBA and staff.
4. Determination that a student requires a dedicated support person throughout the school day.
5. Temporary or permanent exclusion: Multiple visits to mental health professionals for *high risk* of injuring self or others.

**Admission and Continued Enrollment EXCLUSION Criteria (continued)**

6. The student is not toilet-trained and/or has frequent toileting accidents during the school day.
7. The student does not demonstrate measurable progress in cognitive, behavioral, communication, or social-emotional domains over a 12-month period of enrollment.
8. **Immunization Exemption** - If the student has been exempted from immunization for medical or religious reasons in accordance with the Georgia Rules of the Department of Public Health, Chapter 511-2-2-.05, Georgia Immunization Certificate (Form 3231) indicating a medical exemption from one or more vaccines must be submitted and updated annually. *Letters from a child's physician will not be accepted in place of Form 3231.* A **Religious Exemption requires a** signed, notarized Affidavit of Religious Exemption.

***IN THE EVENT OF AN OUTBREAK OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES, STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL OR RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND SCHOOL.***