



ACADEMIC, CAREER, AND ESSENTIAL SKILLS (ACES) PROGRAMS

ACES Programs are special education classes that support students who are classified with Intellectual Disability (ID) or Multiple Disabilities (MD) and who participate in New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). ACES Programs provide an opportunity to learn academic, work, and independent living skills in a District 1-32 school. Eligible students often have the following characteristics:

ACES STUDENT PROFILE

- **Classification:** Students must be eligible for educational disability classifications of Intellectual Disability (ID) or Multiple Disabilities (MD) and be eligible to participate in alternate assessment, including New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA).
- **Cognition/Intelligence:** Students present with mild to moderate intellectual disability.
- **Achievement:** Academic abilities and skills are significantly below grade level. Students may need additional support when working independently or in groups. Assistive technology devices may be used to support learning and interaction.
- **Behavior:** Students may have mild to moderate behavior challenges, but no aggressive or self-injurious behaviors. Behavior challenges may interfere with learning and social opportunities. The student's ability to carry out functional life skills such as grooming, dressing, eating, keeping safe, and socializing (known as adaptive behaviors) will be well below age expected levels. To assess independence and daily living skills, a student's IEP Team uses an adaptive behavior test. Students with low adaptive behavior scores are often considered for the ACES program.
- **Independent Living Skills:** ACES Programs use the school and local communities to support students in learning daily living skills such as building relationships with peers and adults, grocery shopping, learning how to use a bank, etc.

ACES PROGRAM FEATURES

- **Class Structure:** Students in the ACES program attend a District 1-32 school in a smaller class. The number of students in ACES special classes increase as students move from elementary school and middle school to high school. In Kindergarten through eighth grade, most ACES Programs have up to 12 students in a special class, one special education teacher, and a classroom paraprofessional (12:1+1). In high school (grades 9-12), ACES Programs have up to 15 students and one special education teacher (15:1). The program emphasizes inclusive opportunities for students to join the school community and engage with peers who do not have IEPs.
- **Staff:** Teachers and support staff are trained in specialized instructional strategies and assessments that support students in learning and applying work and independent living skills at home, in school, and in the community.
- **Curriculum and Instruction:** ACES Program classes follow the New York State Learning Standards. Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and essential skill building are a part of the program.

ACES APPLICATION PROCESS

Here are the steps for determining if your child is eligible:

- 1. Application:** If you think the ACES Program may be right for your child, work with your child's IEP Team to complete and submit an application at any time during the school year. All assessments must be completed within one year of the application in order for admissions to move forward.
 - Families and schools may contact the Central ACES Team at any time during the year to submit an inquiry or ask a question by emailing ACESprograms@schools.nyc.gov.
 - For children entering kindergarten in September, families or schools should contact the Central ACES Team as soon as possible.
- 2. Acknowledgment by Central ACES Team:** If you e-mail the Central ACES Team, you will receive an e-mail to let you know your application has been received. If you fax or mail a letter to the Central ACES Team, you will receive a letter to confirm receipt.
 - If you submit an application for your child, the Central ACES Team will notify your child's IEP Team to let them know that you are interested in ACES.
 - If your child's IEP Team submits an application for your child, you will also receive notification to let you know that the Central ACES Team has received the inquiry.
- 3. Initial Review Eligibility for ACES:** The Central ACES Team reviews each student's special education record to determine assessments are up-to-date and provide enough information about your child's academic ability and social, language, behavior, and adaptive skills. In addition, the record is reviewed to make sure students meet the criteria for ID or MD educational disability classifications.
 - **Up-to-Date Assessments** - If updated or additional tests are needed, your child's IEP Team will be asked to conduct any needed tests. You will receive a letter from the DOE asking for your consent to conduct additional tests.
 - **Additional Information** - Families may also submit additional evaluations for review by the Central ACES Team.
- 4. Eligibility Determination:** Based on the information from the evaluations, observations, and any additional information from the teachers, service providers, and the student's IEP Team, which includes the student's parent(s), the Central ACES Team will determine if your child is eligible for the ACES Program. Eligible students' IEPs are written with guidance from the Central ACES Team.
- 5. School Placement:** If your child is eligible for an ACES Program, you will receive a Prior Written Notice (PWN) and School Location Letter (SLL) providing an identified school with an available seat in the ACES Program. The ACES Program may be in a school other than your local district school. If the school is not near your home, your child can receive transportation to the school.
- 6. Visiting and Admission:** The School Location Letter (SLL) will contain the name of the contact person and the school's address. Please call the school to make an appointment for a visit. After visiting the school, contact the IEP Team to inform them whether you are accepting or declining the offer.

- 7. Registering at New School:** After accepting the ACES placement offer, please take the School Location Letter along with a copy of your child's birth certificate, and two proofs of your address to register your child at the new school.