



Step By Step

Academy Testimonials

Zak's Story

“At my old school some of the kids were not nice and I did not like that... At my old school I would get in trouble and have to leave the room when my body was upset. I did not like when I would get in trouble. At Step by Step Academy (SBSA) I don't get kicked out of the room. Everyone is nice and I have lots of friends. My teachers are very nice. I am learning math, science, spelling, reading and social studies. I really like math and my teachers say I am great at it. I didn't like school before but now I am good at something. I like that my teachers are proud of the hard work that I do. When I grow up I want to be in the Army. I like helping people and I want to make a difference. My teachers here at SBSA have taught me that I am smart and I can do anything if I just work at it.”

Zak a 9 year old student at SBSA

Jada's Story

“SBSA (offers) a great opportunity for kids who have autism to learn at their own pace and think if you had autism would you want to go to public school and be left behind or would you want to go to SBSA and learn at your own pace. Also it gives peers (who come every summer) to have a chance to help kids with special needs. My brother Quentin has special needs and he learned a lot at SBSA like writing, communicating his want/needs, my brother used to hit me a lot before he came to SBSA and now he never hits me.”

Jada

Vic's Story

“Over 3 years ago my son Daniel was diagnosed with an Autism spectrum disorder “PDD-NOS”. The majority of his waking hours he exhibited abnormal behavior in response to normal daily activities. Daniel would have extreme tantrums lasting hours screaming, kicking , hitting himself, injuring others, displaying aggression and performing destructive acts. This was in response to typical daily activities like eating, dental hygiene, bathing and dressing. Basic daily living skills and academics were extremely challenging and consistently triggered negative behavioral responses. I contacted the county special needs department and enrolled him in a 12 hour per week program. Within one week, it became evident that they were not trained nor staffed appropriately to help my son. When I obtained a diagnosis from a leading psychiatrist in the area, there was hope that with a diagnosis the proper treatment plan could be put into place. I shared this diagnosis with the special needs director in an effort to develop a treatment plan with them. I will never forget the response “I don’t buy it, your son is just undisciplined”. This was devastating, I was in dire straits, ready to quit my job and sell my home to care for my son full time.

Fortunately, I found a special needs school where he receives 35 hours per week of ABA therapy. 3 years ago my son’s tantrums were measure in hours per day. Now they are measured in minutes per week. With this improvement he has been able to focus and learn and develop markedly. His academics and social skills continue to improve. The therapy has proven to be effective and continues to assist him in developing a solid foundation. He will require this level of assistance for several years. I am confident that with ongoing treatment, my son will be mainstreamed in the near future and in time become a productive self-supporting adult.”

Vic D.

Lenore's Story

“He no longer takes off running in public. He’s now able to feed himself with a spoon and fork. He went from non-verbal to speaking in sentences. He went from sitting in the corner, by himself, spinning bowls, to now being excited about playing with other kids. He never acknowledged his cousin, but now is excited to see her and plays with her.”

Lenore P.



Kevin & Kavita's Story

"We are the parents of an 11-year-old child diagnosed with moderate autism. Our son Sameer was diagnosed with autism at age 3 and, since his diagnosis, has required many hours of intensive, daily therapy, including ABA therapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy. Through it, we have learned many skills to deal with the severe behavioral difficulties that are caused by his autism. He has also made a lot of progress in his communication skills, both verbally and using an augmentative communication device. We have learned valuable strategies for dealing with behavioral problems, such as aggression towards himself and others. We have received assistance with basic self-help skills, such as toilet training. Sameer has even started to participate in some group activities this year. This is a major accomplishment, considering the severity of his autism. We simply could not have made the gains we have made these last few years without the one-on-one services we have had in place for him."

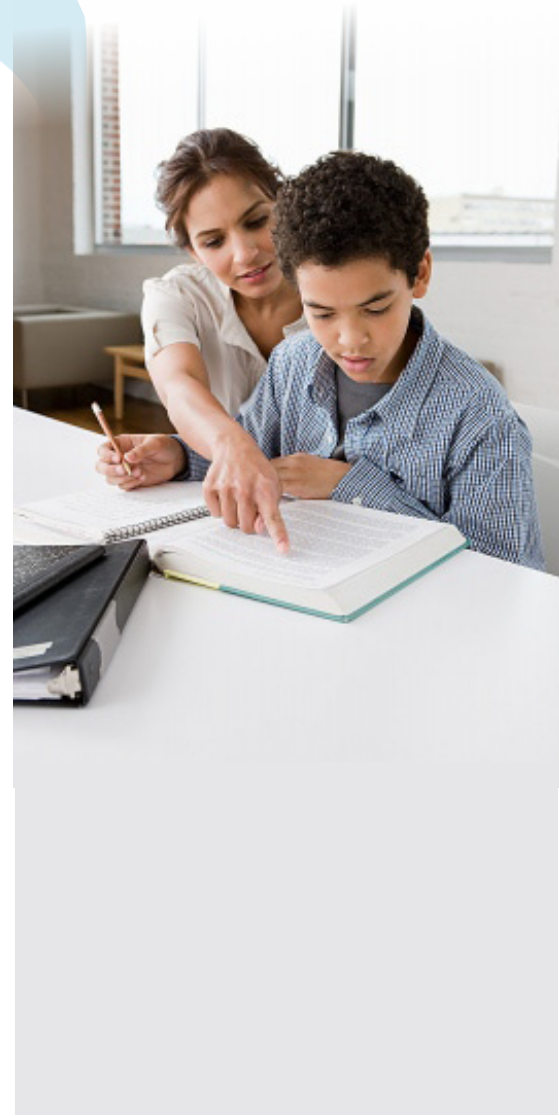
Kevin & Kavita

Marla's Story

"My son was born in November 1995. He was the perfect baby, which was a good because he has triplet siblings just 2 years older than he. His development lagged and finally after raising the concern at 18 months that Jacob wouldn't respond to his name but came running to the sound of juice being poured did the doctor finally listen.

On my son's 2nd birthday the pediatrician stated "I think he has autism." Devastating to say the least. The diagnosis was confirmed in June 1998. Our doctor recommended the book "Let Me Hear Your Voice" and able to us — — — — — SEO not able of — — — for education but had great school system that worked with us. Blossomed in home program advertised as ABA struggled for several had a treat aide who worked along with Jacob but left to pursue other employment at that time Jacob was 14 and no longer making progress and needed more — — — program latter suppressed. — — — — — distract found step by step after u had requested placement at — — — — — enrolled here in May 2010, we have been extremely pleased about the staff here/. Jacob is a — — — and can be very aggressive, they have with these — — — well and most supported. Jacob loves school, he comes home asking to go back."

Marla F.



Noriko's Story

My eleven years old son, Kai has very severe autism. He is practically nonverbal and exhibits extremely aggressive behaviors largely due to his inability to communicate. Finding the right school for him was turned out to be extremely difficult if not impossible. He first attended multiple disabilities classroom in the local school district. Because his behaviors worsened, he was transferred to a school run by the local County Board of Developmental Disabilities. There Kai had even further worsening, and at one time, the school nurse called me to look for a psychiatric hospital for my own son because they could not find such a hospital that would accept a nonverbal autistic child like my son. By that time, I was known locally as a resource person/advocate for autism services. During that year, our family almost collapsed, and we asked for residential placement. This placement was not materialized because there was no opening.

The next school year Kai attended autism classroom at a County Board run school in Washington County, even though this was out-of-county placement. There Kai showed a significant progress in skills and behaviors. However, he lost that placement because the classroom was full. After he lost the placement, Athens City Schools were unable to find a placement. Simply put, Kai's aggressions were too severe for any school. Kai stayed home for five months without school. I have talked to many people to start an autism classroom in Athens, but there was no avail.

In last January, Kai started attending Step by Step Academy in Worthington. They provide 1:1 intensive behavior therapy. This service is funded by Medicaid's Community Psychiatric Supports and Treatment (CPST). Because Kai has severe behavior issues, an additional staff is necessary. Kai receives services 25 hours / week. Athens City Schools cover the additional staff and transportation. During the last two months, Kai's improvement is tremendous. Kai now speaks more than twenty words verbally and some accompanied by signs. He even started echolalia, a common symptom of autism that the child repeats back what the conversation partner says. Although this is a symptom of autism, for a nonverbal child like Kai, it is an incredible progress! He now initiates verbal communication by himself, and his aggression had decreased to a minimum. None of them would have occurred without this intensive behavior treatment. Behavior support specialist at local county board of developmental disabilities is very impressed with Kai's progress."

Noriko

Melinda's Story

“My grandson enrolled at the Step by Step Academy in January 2008, after a tumultuous couple of years in public school where he had been expelled more than once for aggressive behavior towards teachers and other children. We struggled to find, even minimal, services for him the preceding school year and settled for 4 hours a day, 4 days a week from another provider when we missed getting one of the 10 opening at Step by Step Academy – SBSA in the fall of 2007. My grandson, now 14, was 11 when he first began at SBS and today, 3 years later, he is totally different child!

The loud, impulsive, aggressive, unpredictable child of 9, 10 and 11 who hit, scratched and head-butted in response to any limits; who removed and hid, or disposed of, any number of things in his environment (including smoke detectors and parts of heating units) is today a happy 14 year old who responds favorably to instruction; who has household chores to do (and likes doing them); who can now can be trusted to leave objects where they belong; who has learned to communicate through sign language; whose behavior, having been addressed with ABA based principles, is such that he is now able to learn academics and daily living skills as well as potential work skills.

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- **hit, scratched and head-butted in response to any limits**
- **who removed and hid, or disposed of, any number of things in his environment (including smoke detectors and parts of heating units) is today a happy 14 year old who responds favorably to instruction**
- **has household chores to do (and likes doing them)**
- **can now can be trusted to leave objects where they belong**
- **has learned to communicate through sign language**

My grandson's behavior, having been addressed with ABA based principles, is such that he is now able to learn academics and daily living skills as well as potential work skills. His behaviors are quite manageable now and I look forward to his continuing to achieve and reach his potential with the wonderful program and staff at Step by Step Academy.”

Melinda S.

