



Hunterdon County
Educational Services Commission

THRIVE

Client Handbook

www.hunterdonesc.org

WELCOME TO THRIVE!

The HCESC Day Habilitation program is intended to assist you in identifying your individual needs and preferences and in setting goals that lead to achieving new levels of independence. The program offers opportunities to learn new skills and strengthen abilities in self-determination, relationship building, personal health and safety, creativity, physical activity, environmental awareness, and community involvement.

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Our Vision

The vision of **Thrive Day Habilitation** services is to provide an opportunity for individuals diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities to continue to grow by developing skills that lead to self-advocacy, improved communication skills, greater independence and community membership. We will empower our participants by offering person-centered planning and personal choice to define their objectives.

- Self-determination and the ability to make choices help to develop self-advocacy and personal responsibility.
- Healthy lifestyle and personal care activities foster the growth of independent living skills and enhance an individual's ability to experience and participate in community living situations.
- Lifelong learning activities maintain levels of functioning in reading and math and foster those skills needed for maximum independence in daily living.
- Problem-solving tasks provide an opportunity for personal growth and increased independence.
- Recreational and therapeutic activities to improve an individual's self-awareness and coping skills.
- Community activities develop social skills and the ability to identify an individual's preferences, interests, and goals.

Individual Rights

Participation in the **Thrive Day Habilitation** program demands that individuals be aware of their rights and learn to exercise them responsibly.

Thrive clients have the right:

- To be respected as a unique individual;
- To be provided with a program that is aligned with personal choice;
- To participate in an environment free from interruption, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, and fear;
- To participate in day habilitation activities on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, size, disability or sexual orientation;
- To be informed of all program rules; and
- To be guided by a discipline policy which is fairly and consistently implemented.

HCESC has a formal grievance policy in regard to Affirmative Action. This information is available to all registered participants of the **Thrive Day Habilitation** program.

Our complete harassment, intimidation, and bullying policy can be found on our website:

[\(http://www.hunterdonesc.org/hcesc/Educational%20Programs/Hoffmans%20Crossing%20OCampus/Anti-Bullying%20Information/\)](http://www.hunterdonesc.org/hcesc/Educational%20Programs/Hoffmans%20Crossing%20OCampus/Anti-Bullying%20Information/)).

Confidentiality

The Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission does not disclose personally identifiable information from participant records without prior written consent of the participant and/or parent/guardian. Employees or volunteers serving the District in any capacity are also obligated to follow this guideline regarding any and all client records. Staff Members are not allowed to discuss participant information or behavior inside or outside of the District with any other individual (employee, volunteer or parent) unless the individual is an employee who is directly responsible for the client and/or the client's parents, guardians and/or support coordinators. This policy is in accordance with New Jersey Administrative Code 10:41 and DDD Division Circular #30.

Attendance Policy

Clients must call **908-439-4280 x 4700** if they will be absent or late. They must provide advanced notice, when possible, about planned medical procedures, vacations, etc. Clients are expected to participate in the program for 90% of the schedule set forth in their service plan. Failure to do so may result in suspension or discharge.

The Thrive program calendar is available on our website:

<http://www.hunterdonesc.org/hcesc/Adult%20Programs/THRIVE%20DAY%20HABILITATION/>

Emergency Closing Policy

HCESC announces all program closings, delayed openings and early dismissals due to inclement weather or other unexpected circumstances via Remind (<https://www.remind.com/>), our website (www.hunterdonesc.org), and local radio stations.

When there is an unscheduled early dismissal, we will make every attempt to reach parents and guardians by phone. In the event of a National Emergency, we may not be able to reach parents and guardians with information regarding irregular dismissal times. For this reason, it is important to discuss a plan with your family or guardian for the unlikely event you would return home at an unusual time.

Transportation Information

HCESC staff is available to supervise individuals starting at 8:45 a.m. The **Thrive Day Habilitation** program begins at 9:00 am. Dismissal takes place at 3:00 pm and individuals are dismissed as transportation arrives. Individuals will be released to responsible parties listed on the intake and emergency contact form. Alternate arrangements must be submitted in writing and approved by the program director or designee.

HCESC will cancel transportation when the program is cancelled.

If an individual needs to cancel transportation, they should make every effort to notify the dispatcher at **908-638-5906** by 7 am.

Dress Code

Clients are expected to come to the day habilitation program with a clean personal appearance and with clothing appropriate for the day's activities. In addition, sunscreen and the appropriate footwear is expected for special outdoor projects.

Lunch/Snack

Clients are expected to bring their own lunch and snacks. A refrigerator and microwave are available. It is important that any dietary restrictions and/or food allergies are reported to the nurse and included on the admissions forms.

Health Services

A full time nurse is on-site at the **Thrive Day Habilitation** program. The nurse will administer medications and first aid, assist in all emergencies, and train staff. All staff is American Red Cross CPR/AED and First Aid certified. Designated staff is also certified by DDD to administer medications and will accompany clients to off-campus sites.

THRIVE Day Habilitation Admissions Procedures

Pre-Admission

Individuals should contact the program director at 908-439-4280 X 4700 to schedule an interview and intake. If requested, a tour of the campus can be arranged prior to completing the formal admissions procedures. Required documentation:

- Proof of DDD eligibility
- Medical history including list of medications
- Completed application forms

Criteria for Acceptance

- Individuals should be able to communicate basic needs, follow directions, and perform self-care functions with minimal or no assistance.
- Those classified through Tier E will be accepted as long as:
 - Additional staffing is available for specified behavioral interventions
 - The medical needs can be addressed by the HCESC nurse
- HCESC reserves the right to deny admission for medical or behavioral needs that exceed our program's ability to support.

Admission Timeline

The HCESC program is open to any individual who meets the Criteria for Acceptance regardless of whether or not they live in the catchment area.

- Proof of DDD eligibility, medical history and completed application forms must be submitted prior to scheduling a face to face interview with the program director.
- The individual, parent/guardian and support coordinator are expected to participate in the interview.
- In addition to determining an individual's personal goals and ability to communicate during the interview, the Individual Service Plan will be reviewed to ensure that the HCESC program is aligned.
- The school nurse will also review the individual's medical history as part of the interview process.

Subsequent to the interview the HCESC program director will contact the support coordinator to ascertain whether or not the individual is interested in pursuing admission. If so, HCESC will contact the individual and/or support coordinator within five (5) working days to deliver the admission decision.

The agency name, start date and service hours must be indicated on the Individual Service Plan in order to receive authorization from DDD to provide services to an individual. Once HCESC receives the approved **Individual Service Plan** and **Service Detail Report**, the individual will be contacted to set up transportation services (if within catchment area) and confirm start date.

Appeals Process

Appeals of the denial of acceptance into the Day Habilitation program should be submitted to the program director in written form by the individual, parent, or guardian. The program director will review the application packet and respond in writing within ten (10) business days.

If the matter is still contested, the individual, parent or guardian may submit a written request to the HCESC Board of Directors. The decision of the Board of Directors will be sent, in writing, within three (3) days of the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting and will be considered final.

Waiting List

The HCESC Day Habilitation program reserves the right to develop and maintain a waiting list for enrollment. The waiting list will be organized by date requested. Individuals will be informed at the intake process if a waiting list has been implemented, and their status on the list. The HCESC program director will reach out to the individual, parent or guardian and/or the support coordinator to advise on a change in status as quickly as possible.

Individuals, families or support coordinators may request a waiting list update at any time by contacting the program director.

Code of Conduct

HCESC policies and procedures ensure that the physical and mental health, safety and welfare of all individuals will be protected, and an orderly environment, conducive to personal growth and happiness will be maintained. Respect for self, staff, visitors and peers is expected. Respect for the buildings and grounds and for the property of others is also expected, along with a willingness to cooperate. Any disruption of the **Thrive Day Habilitation** environment necessitates that an individual will be subject to the consequences of their misbehavior in accordance with the code of conduct.

HCESC takes a very proactive approach to behavior management imbedded with conscious discipline methodology. Whenever possible, proactive procedures are used to inhibit behavior problems from occurring. These procedures include, but are not limited to, individualized approaches to learning new skills, choices, empathy, encouragement, clear expectations, a focus on social skills reinforcement, and positive reinforcement. When these proactive procedures are not enough, individualized behavior plans are developed with a team approach. Calming areas are utilized to assist individuals, when necessary, in regaining control and returning to an activity as soon as possible.

A greater chance of success is afforded when various management systems are in place as a strategy that works for one may not prove effective for another. Therefore, the staff utilizes several different approaches to behavior management. All of the approaches incorporate positive reinforcement. Systems used include, but are not limited to: behavior modification; contracting; problem solving; calming areas; and crisis intervention. The style used will be based on the specific situation and the individual involved. In addition, the staff at HCESC has been trained in The Crisis Prevention Institute's crisis prevention/crisis management techniques. This CPI Crisis Prevention Program includes proactive behavioral interventions and de-escalation techniques to help avert a crisis and to use safe interventions when a student presents a danger to himself and others.

Suspension, Termination, or Denial of Services

The goal of the HCESC staff is to assist individuals in developing positive, successful, and goal oriented behaviors that can be integrated in daily living situations. However, the following circumstances may result in suspension of the **Thrive Day Habilitation** program to an individual:

- Disruptive or dangerous behavior toward self or others
- Possession of weapons or items that can be used as weapons
- Intentional destruction of buildings and grounds or theft of HCESC property

A suspension is a temporary discontinuation of service to an individual. The individual and his/her advocates (parent/guardian, support coordinator) will be included in the decision making process and suspensions will occur for 3, 5 or 10 days based on the severity of the behavior and the outcome of the interdisciplinary team meeting. Meetings will be scheduled within 24 hours of the documented incident.

Process for Making Determination:

Depending on the type of infraction, a number of steps will be followed to ensure the safe participation of an individual as well as the safety of peers and staff.

- Individuals may be removed from participation in an activity and staff will initiate or update a behavior plan for disturbances which disrupt an activity, carelessness in following staff directions, or instances of fighting where no dangerous instruments are involved and no person is injured.
- A parent/guardian will be contacted, staff will initiate or update a behavior plan, and a possible suspension for up to 10 days will occur for intentional destruction of buildings and/or grounds.
- A parent/guardian will be contacted, staff will initiate or update a behavior and suspension of computer privileges will occur for violations of the computer use policy.
- A parent/guardian will be contacted, an interdisciplinary team conference will be held within 24 hours of infraction, and a possible suspension for up to 10 days and

possible referral to local law enforcement will occur for theft of program or personal property.

- A parent/guardian will be contacted, an interdisciplinary team conference will be held within 24 hours of infraction, suspension for up to 10 days or termination of services, and possible referral to local law enforcement will occur for violent acts against a staff member, possession of a dangerous weapon, or fighting between participants where harm is caused.
- A parent/guardian will be contacted, an interdisciplinary team conference may be held, a suspension from bus services for up to 10 days or termination from transportation services will occur in instances of failure to comply with bus safety rules or multiple infractions of bus safety rules.

An interdisciplinary team consisting of the individual, a parent/guardian/caregiver, the HCESC program director, and the support coordinator or DDD case manager will meet and attempt to resolve any matters that could lead to the issuance of a suspension, termination or denial of services. At the conclusion of the meeting an action plan will be written and signed by all parties. If the action plan is not effective, the HCESC reserves the right to suspend or terminate the individual from the program

Return to Services

Individuals returning to services after a suspension will participate in a meeting with the interdisciplinary team to ensure that he/she understands the code of conduct. A behavior plan will be instituted to provide maximum support for reintegration and success in the program.

Appeals Process

Appeals in regard to suspension of service must be in written form and submitted to the program director. The program director will review the appeal and respond in writing to the appellant within seven (7) business days. If the matter has not been resolved or is still contested, the appellant may submit a written request to the Board of Directors/ Representative Assembly. The decision of the Board of Directors will be sent, in writing, to the appellant within seven (7) business days of receipt. This decision will be considered final.