

Do you want to play?
Kimberly Stauffer

Social skills seem to come naturally for most people, but those with autism often find it difficult to develop relationships or relate to others. At The Learning Lane, a day center dedicated to teaching children with autism, behavior therapists work with young students to acquire skills necessary to initiate conversations, recognize and respond to emotions and learn to share.

Ree Knauer, a social therapist, helps her students understand the necessity of greetings, playing together and sharing attention and toys, which plays a big part in getting along well with others. “If you don’t have social skills then you can’t make friends”, Ree said.

The school uses principles of Applied Behavior Analysis to teach children functional behaviors. The Social Skills program will help children develop basic social skills through lessons, games, and activities in group or one-on-one settings. While each child enrolls with different social issues, Ree helps them see outside their own world, whether it is using a mirror to understand emotions like sadness, happiness, anger or crying, or simply gaining self-awareness of their existence. “Social skills are really important for success in the future,” Ree said.

Behavior therapists Kris Alexander and Ashley Voth both work with children one-on-one and in pairs to concentrate on particular skills, such as social behaviors, language development or pre-academics. “The personalized sessions focus on the individual child’s goal,” Kris said, “and progress according to their needs.” Ashley works with children on fine motor skills, language, handwriting and pretend play. The intensive classes build on and further develop what students learn in others classrooms. One-on-one teaches them skills while working in pairs teaches them to share and learn they cannot always have a teacher’s undivided attention.

After enrolling at The Learning Lane, Ree said, students can visit a playground with their parents, understand when to smile in social situations and even learn the simple gesture, “Do you want to play?”

Our Social Skills program is open to the community. You can check our web site for further information.

We are looking forward to “Chili’s Night” as our September fundraiser. It will be September 30th at 6671 Woodlands Parkway and if you bring a flyer (available on the web) Chili’s will give us 10% of the amount spent.

For more information about The Learning Lane at 25232 Grogan’s Park Dr., Visit www.thelearninglane.com or call 281-465-3519.