

This edition of Building Bright Futures is focused on how the Center For Learning (CFL) Renovation Project is going to enhance our abilities to continue providing a sophisticated Vision Program and our Behavior Support Programs. For more than 60 years, Aspire of WNY has provided supports to school-age children who are faced with significant challenges requiring personalized solutions and extensive staff commitment. The CFL renovation project is going to result in additional customized space for these critical service offerings.



A CFL student is learning to read and type Braille.

VISION PROGRAM

Today, the CFL provides a comprehensive Vision Services program for children from birth to 21 years of age. Vision Services at the CFL are provided by seven educators certified to teach the visually impaired. The vision staff regularly consults with a student's other teachers providing materials, technology, and adaptations to enhance the learning experience. In addition to completing functional vision evaluations and screenings, vision staff regularly consult with the ophthalmologist and attend a student's eye appointments to provide information on functional vision. In addition, eligible students are registered for Federal Quota Funding for the purchase of educational materials and supplies. Vision staff also serve as liaisons with the NYS Commission for the Blind to assist with services, as necessary.

Did you know that, in addition to providing vision services within Aspire of WNY's various educational locations, vision staff also provides home-based services for clients, services to other local agencies, school districts, and Early Intervention Program participants?

The newly renovated and expanded CFL campus will allow the Vision Services team to include

classrooms that are uniquely designed for students with visual impairments. This setting will include the use of a "dark room", allowing the instructors to teach in an environment with special lighting. Further, the environment will allow them to better utilize state-of-the-art techniques to maximize the educational opportunities with their visually impaired students. These classrooms will include magnification devices and technological adaptations, such as the use of Smartboards. Another technique is the use of special software, such as the latest versions of Adobe Acrobat® and MY Reader providing "Text-to-Speech" capabilities.

Expanded classroom sizes are allowing staff to setup the classroom in a manner which is optimal for students with vision impairments. Large open spaces, clearly defined work areas, and adequate storage space to eliminate clutter will be a key component in providing a comfortable, student-centered learning environment.

The Aspire of WNY Vision Program includes specialized instruction for students with Cortical Visual Impairments (CVI).

BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PROGRAM

In accordance with NYS guidelines, Aspire's CFL utilizes a system of Positive Behavior Supports in order to maximize student engagement and academic achievement. This includes:

- A multi-disciplinary, team-based approach including the family
- Intensive support across all domains incorporating multiple strategies for maximum student success
- CFL staff is regularly trained in the latest behavior support strategies and receive training specific to a student's Behavior Plan.
- The CFL staff includes a designated Behavioral Support Special Education Teacher providing guidance and support to all staff.

CFL Staff has extensive experience in successfully educating students with behavioral challenges.

Behavior issues resulting from a medical/physical condition or inability to effectively communicate their wants and needs requires an experienced, team-based approach. The CFL staff utilizes a multi-disciplinary team approach, including the development of a comprehensive plan to address student issues and needs. For students with pain management needs, staff consults with medical providers and service coordinators ensuring coordinated care for the student. Once a behavior plan is implemented, progress is regularly monitored against the intended outcomes allowing for timely adjustments or changes when necessary.



The new wing to include Special Therapy rooms, the Gym and Administrative offices is beginning to take shape



NEXT ISSUE: Includes an overview of the Center For Learning Life Skills Development Program.