

Understanding the Service Model of the Children's Unit for Treatment and Evaluation at the Institute for Child Development



The **Children's Unit for Treatment and Evaluation (CUTE)**, est.1975, is one of the ICD's many service programs. CUTE is a New York State Approved Special Education Program for preschoolers (ages 3-5) and elementary age students (ages 5 -11) who are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other related disorders. Students participate in our programs when a school district determines that we are needed to help a student progress in learning. All Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals and related services (i.e., speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, family training, adaptive physical education) are provided at our facility during the student's school day.

Our goal is to help our students build the skills they need to return to their school district's programs as soon as possible, with most students attending our program for about two years. Our model is considered an **immersive model**, which means that children receive focused skill instruction on all areas of need specified in the IEP throughout the school day (5.5 hours each day, 5 days per week). This means our entire team is trained to teach the same goals, which allows a child to get **27.5 hours per week of focused therapeutic educational support**. This model makes it unnecessary for students to also receive high frequencies of related services (speech, OT, PT). Our licensed related service providers are an integral part of the interdisciplinary team and consult with classroom teams as a starting point for services. This means that expert consultation is built into what we do and is accessible to all students enrolled in our programs.

Our Vision

Transforming the lives of children diagnosed with ASD, their families, and their communities through compassionate partnerships and high-quality, person-centered, evidence-based practice.

General Skill Area	Our Starting Model	Higher Need Services Menu *Must be delay greater than -2.0 SD in listed general skill area	Highest Need Services Menu *Must be delay of greater than -3.0 SD or more in listed general skill area
Social Skills	5.5 hours per day by classroom staff		
Communication	5.5 hours per day by classroom staff	Speech therapy - 4x30 Individual & 4x30 Group per month	Speech therapy - 8x30 Individual per month
Fine Motor	3-5 hours per day by classroom staff	Occupational therapy - 2x30 Individual per month	Occupational therapy - 4x30 Individual per month
Gross Motor	Adaptive physical education 3-5 hrs per week	Physical therapy - 4x30 Individual per month	Physical therapy - 8x30 Individual per month
Adaptive/Self-Care	5.5 hours per day by classroom staff		
Academic/Cognitive	5.5 hours per day by classroom staff		

**This reflects our starting point for service recommendations. Once we work with a student, if there is increased need we inform the parents and committee to discuss whether service alteration seems warranted.*

When children transition from our program, we make sure that we recommend the level of support that will be needed in the **next** placement. All needs are considered based on the educational environment. Therefore, different levels of speech, OT, and PT may be recommended at discharge to best support the student's transitional success.

Service Recommendations at CUTE

Students who attend the CUTE program are receiving one of the most comprehensive service menus available in the local area. This means that our basic program level of intensity that serves as a student’s Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) as per their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is already support-dense.

Since our basic program is so comprehensive, the need for additional support from related service providers (i.e., providers of direct speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy services) will be lower compared to other program sites in the community. The recommendations our team makes for students when they are enrolled in CUTE is reflective of a student’s need in our comprehensive setting. One of the most important components of the services we provide in our immersive model is that our licensed expert related service providers help to design and implement classroom service activities as part of what we do. This means that before a child is authorized for additional related services on an IEP, they are already receiving support from expert professionals in those fields as part of our program model.

Minimum service intensity is reflected in the table below so families and community partners can better understand our service model and the actual hours of specialist time in each category that are part of our program model before any additional related services are considered or added.

Minimum Service Hours by Specialist Staff Per Child- CUTE Basic Program Model					
DOMAIN	Special Education Teacher, Teacher Assistants, and Aides*	Speech-Language Pathologists	Occupational Therapists	Adaptive Physical Education Teacher	TOTAL HOURS of SPECIALIST TIME PER WEEK
Social Skills	27.5 hrs per week	2.5 hrs per week	2.5 hrs per week	3 hrs per week	35.5
Communication	27.5 hrs per week	2.5 hrs per week			30
Fine Motor	27.5 hrs per week		2.5 hrs per week		30
Gross Motor	15 hrs per week			3 hrs per week	18
Adaptive/Self-Care	27.5 hrs per week		2.5 hrs per week		30
Academic/Cognitive	27.5 hrs per week				27.5

*The hours the special education classroom team spends with the children reflects their combined hours focusing on all skills across the school day. Students practice goals in all of the above areas as rotated into their school day. One 30-minute block might address all of the above domains at once. NOTE: Above hours for SP, OT, and APE overlap with the classroom team hours to fit within our 27.5 hr/week school program

The above table shows that each child who attends CUTE starts with related service provider support at the program level at the equivalent of 5 hrs or more per week of SLP, OT, and Adaptive PE expert time. This time includes both direct classroom instruction time of groups and indirect consultation and planning time with the teams. That outline works out to roughly 5x30 direct services and 5x30 indirect services from each profession weekly. This program level intensity is why our team recommends fewer additional related service hours/sessions be added to an IEP. For example, a child coming to our program who is recommended to receive speech therapy or occupational therapy in addition to our basic model is actually receiving far more services than listed on the IEP.

EXAMPLE: Speech on IEP- 4x30/monthly individual and 4x30/monthly group (Direct service) + Program Model = Speech therapy 13x30 per month direct services and 5x30 indirect services (~4.5 RS units per week)

When children transition from our program, we make sure that we recommend the level of support that will be needed in the next placement. All needs are considered based on the educational environment. Therefore, different levels of speech, OT, and PT may be recommended at discharge to best support the student’s transitional success. Fewer mandates in our service setting does not mean a child will have fewer services when they are discharged.