



Dear Parents & Caregivers:

Welcome to Garfield Park Academy! We are glad you are here.

Today's visit is important.

We know that your child may not have been successful in other schools, and that looking for the right school for your child is difficult.

We also know that the search for the right school often takes time, and parents typically visit more than one school. *That is a good idea!*

Our school was founded by a dedicated educator who saw the untapped potential in students. She is also a mom, and knows what parents go through.

You may be wondering...

Can this school manage my child's behaviors?

Will this school challenge my child academically?

Will the teachers and staff understand and value my child?

Can they support our family too?

To help you find the right program for your child, we created this guide. It can help you as you look at schools to compare them, and to help you structure your school search.

If you have any questions about what you see – or don't see - please ask. We are happy to answer your questions so that you can make the RIGHT placement decision, wherever that might be for your child.

Thank you for your visit. We hope to see you again soon.

*Dr. Steven Morse, Superintendent
Kerrie Kaufman, Director*

If you wonder...

Will my child be happy here?

Look for...

- You were greeted with a smile and felt welcomed.
- Staff know students by name.
- The hallways reflect a positive and upbeat feeling.
- Students and staff seem happy to be here.

Will my child be safe here?

Look for...

- There is adequate safe parking for parents and guests.
- The school building is locked for security.
- Access to the building is monitored and kept safe through the use of a fob entry system.
- There are school wide anti-bullying policies and practices.

Will my child get the academics he/she needs here?

Look for...

- Students have access to Chromebooks, Smartboards, iPads, computers and other 21st Century instructional technology.
- The school offers an array of academic curriculums – not just one – for students to learn reading, math, and core subjects.
- The school teaches reading to ALL students by using structured, multi-sensory language programs such as Wilson Reading® or other approaches based on Orton-Gillingham.
- Students have access to a certified reading specialist.
- Students have modern science labs for hands-on learning.
- Teachers are trained in a range of instructional strategies.
- Class sizes are very small, and students can get 1:1 learning when it is needed.
- Instruction is individualized.
- The school uses a recognized and proven curriculum that is aligned with the Common Core – including virtual learning, through programs such as Get Epic, ABCya.com, BrainPOP, Everyday Math, DreamBox, Splash Math, Wilson Reading System®, Foundations®, National Geographic, Discovery Channel ONLINE, APEX Online (a digital curriculum designed to actively engage students in learning), STEM activities, and experiments.

Will my child get the clinical services he/she needs, when they are needed?

Look for...

- The school offers 1:1 counseling.
- The school provides group counseling daily.
- Students can get counseling every day, if needed.
- There is a full time social worker residing in every classroom.
- My child will have immediate access to a counselor or social worker whenever needed.
- The school offers a multitude of alternative therapies, such as Art Therapy, Lego®-based therapy, Play Therapy, and Sand Tray therapy.
- The school offers innovative therapies, such as biofeedback and Equine Assisted Therapy® provided by credentialed professionals.
- The school offers a wide array of wraparound supports in the community.
- There is a full time school nurse and complimentary Registered Nurses, as appropriate.
- The school offers psychiatric interventions and evaluations with licensed psychiatrists and clinical social workers.
- All staff are trained and credentialed to serve students with emotional disabilities in an evidence-based program.
- There is a schoolwide system of positive behavioral supports in place.
- There is immediate support for a student in crisis.
- The school has a track record of success working with students who have social, emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges.
- The school can provide help if my child is unwilling or unable to attend school.

Will my child learn to manage his/her emotions and behaviors?

Look for...

- The school teaches mindfulness and stress management.
- The school teaches anger management.
- There is a social skills curriculum that is taught, just like other important subjects.
- Students get disability education to learn about conditions that might affect them, such as depression, anxiety, ADHD, and bipolar disorder.

Will my child be ready for adult life, jobs, college, and independence?

Look for...

- The school offers support options for college-bound students, including support on a college campus.
- The school offers work-study programs, community-based job placement, and internships for hands-on, real life learning.
- The school provides instruction in interview skills and filling out job applications.
- The school teaches independent living skills like banking, cooking, and self-care.
- The school has a range of approved vocational programs such as cosmetology, automotive technology, carpentry, culinary, retail trades, and horticulture that can prepare students for jobs after graduation.

Will my family be supported too, and viewed as equal team members?

Look for...

- The school offers family counseling.
- The school offers workshops and training for parents.
- The school offers social and family events.
- There is home/school coordination.
- The school offers childcare and transportation to make it easier for parents to take part in parent support.

Will my child get the related services he/she needs?

Look for...

- The school offers speech therapy.
- The school offers occupational therapy.
- The school offers individual counseling.
- The school offers group counseling daily.
- The school offers nursing services.
- The school offers art therapy.
- The school offers a certified reading specialist.

Will my child have the chance to explore interests and abilities?

Look for...

- The school offers clubs and sports teams.
- Students can take part in talent shows, student council and other student-centered activities.
- Students can create new clubs based on interests.
- The school has a gym, sports fields and enough outdoor play areas.

Does the school have a comprehensive, integrated teaching philosophy that is embedded in everything they do?

Look for...

- The school uses an evidence-based social skills instruction program such as the Teaching Family Model.
- The school has a system of schoolwide positive behavioral supports.
- The school has a mission that I believe in.
- The approach to behavior, social and emotional learning is using a nationally-recognized, evidence-based program.

Is this school accredited, and/or affiliated with professional organizations?

Look for...

- The school is state approved by the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE).
- The school is a member of ASAH.
- The school is accredited by Middle States Association.
- The school is accredited for vocational training by the DOE and industry organizations such as the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF).
- The school is accredited by the Teaching Family Association.



Garfield Park Academy is a New Jersey state approved, not-for-profit school that provides effective, evidence-based special education services for students in grades K-12 who have a history of learning, social, emotional and behavioral challenges. Garfield Park Academy is accredited by the Middle States Association and accredited by the Teaching Family Association. For more information, please contact Garfield Park Academy or visit our website.



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