Early intensive behavioral intervention can have profound and long-term effects on child development. The Theiss Early Autism Program provides intensive, evidence-based treatment in a preschool setting for children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The program serves children, ages 2 to 5, who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic of UPMC

Theiss Early Autism Program
Hill House Association
1835 Center Ave.
WPIC Autism Suite 200
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 412-281-1269

Referral Information
To discuss our services or to make a referral, call the Theiss Early Autism Program at 412-281-1269.

upmc.com/westernpsychiatric
**Services and Treatment**

The Theiss Early Autism Program (TEAP) uses applied behavior analysis throughout the day via small group settings and daily one-to-one intensive teaching sessions. Activities are individualized to meet each child’s needs and may include:

- Socialization activities
- Individualized treatment programs to address a child’s cognitive development, language development, self-care and adaptive behavior, and social-emotional development
- Discrete trial training, applied verbal behavior, natural environment teaching methodologies for individualizing and simplifying instruction to enhance a child’s learning
- Systematic re-evaluation to monitor a child’s developmental and behavioral needs and to measure progress
- Use of a verbal behavior milestones assessment placement program for the development of enhancing social competence by teaching social skills and helping a child to interact appropriately with peers
- Parent support and an education program that helps parents enhance their child’s development in targeted areas
- A referral system linking families to community services
- Meal time opportunities to target adaptive skills, food selectivity issues, and socialization during morning snack and lunch

TEAP currently functions as a Behavioral Health Rehabilitative Service (BHRS) Exception Program in Allegheny County. The basis of the program is applied behavioral analysis, which implements one-on-one and small group intensive and behavioral teaching strategies individualized to each child’s needs. We promote early behavioral intervention because it has been shown to have long-term effects on child development. Research on evidence-based interventions for autism and applied behavioral analysis affirms the value of beginning treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorder as early as possible. In addition, providing a center-based program to preschoolers allows for flexibility and meets the needs of families.

**Our Mission**

The mission of the Theiss Early Autism Program is to serve young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in a small, preschool-age group setting while providing an intense level of behavior support. The specific goal of the Theiss Early Autism Program is to intervene early in development, with the purpose of increasing skills and reducing the behaviors that are inhibiting the child’s ability to reach his or her fullest potential. In addition to intensive interventions individualized to each child’s needs, the Theiss Early Autism Program supports and educates families, empowering them to successfully manage the difficulties of raising a child with special needs.

**Diagnostic Assessment**

A psychiatrist or psychologist evaluates all children before beginning the program. A social worker collaborates with the family and evaluator during the initial assessment. This assessment includes evaluating symptoms and gathering psychosocial, educational, medical, developmental, and family histories.

**Staffing**

The Theiss Early Autism Program is comprised of a multidisciplinary treatment team that has extensive experience in the field of clinical programming for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Our team includes a consulting child psychiatrist, child psychologist, program manager, master’s level clinical supervisor (board-certified behavior analyst), a social worker, master’s level psychiatric specialist (board-certified behavior analyst) and bachelor level mental health workers. The team includes professionals who have substantial education and training in early childhood development, mental health treatments, applied behavior analysis, verbal behavior programs, discrete trial training, picture communication systems, and natural environment teaching.

**Eligibility**

The Theiss Early Autism Program is appropriate for children ages 2 to 5 who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The program, which treats up to seven children, is most effective for toddlers and preschoolers who can effectively learn in a small group setting. Our program staff will work with the family through the process of assessment, determining eligibility, and treatment planning.

**Location**

The program is located at the Hill House Association
1835 Center Ave.
WPIC Autism Suite 200
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**Hours**

The program runs for 12 months a year, five days a week.
8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**Referral Information**

To discuss our services or to make a referral, call the Theiss Early Autism Program at **412-281-1269**.