About the Program

POPULATION SERVED
The program provides specialized services to children ages 2–10 who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder or another developmental delay.

INITIAL EVALUATION
Children are seen by a team of specialists with expertise in behavioral interventions. Some children may benefit from highly intensive early intervention, while other children may require limited visits to our clinic or consultation between our staff and school personnel. Our goal is to identify behavioral-analytic and developmental procedures that will result in the most rapid acquisition of targeted skills.

TREATMENT
Children with autism may not acquire skills through daily interactions in their home or school. Our staff will develop a program of language, social, pre-academic, academic and daily living skills based on the needs of each child. Tasks are broken down into small, measurable units, and each skill is practiced repeatedly until the child masters it.

Some skills, such as attending and imitating, serve as building blocks for other more complex skills. Thus, children may begin working on more basic skills first.

Once skills are mastered, they are practiced periodically to make sure children maintain them. Skills are also practiced in different settings with different people to ensure that the skill transfers across a variety of environments and people.

PROBLEM BEHAVIOR
If a child displays problem behavior that is of concern to parents or school personnel, we will use assessment and treatment procedures to reduce the occurrence of problem behavior.

There are a variety of departments at the Munroe-Meyer Institute, including:

- Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Developmental Medicine
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Recreational Therapy
- Speech and Language Pathology
- Developmental Neuroscience
- Education & Child Development
- Genetic Medicine
- Human Genetics Laboratory
- Pediatric Feeding
- Psychology
The Munroe-Meyer Institute’s mission is to lead the world in transforming the lives of all individuals with disabilities and complex health care needs, their families and the community through outreach, engagement, premier educational programs, innovative research and extraordinary patient care.

Program Philosophy and Overview
The Early Intervention Program in the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders focuses on improving language, social, pre-academic, academic, and daily living skills (e.g., potty training) as well as replacing problem behavior. The program strives to improve the quality of life for children who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and their families by:

- Providing the most advanced and comprehensive treatment services.
- Developing and refining effective treatments through systematic clinical research and evaluations.
- Promoting the maintenance and transfer of skills across environments.

The Early Intervention program offers a continuum of services including evaluation, school consultation, clinic-based intervention and home-based program development. The amount of weekly, clinic-based hours depends on the child’s needs and scheduling availability (e.g., 1½ hours three days a week or 5 hours five days a week).

Caregivers and members of the behavioral team attend regularly-scheduled formal goal meetings to assess the child’s progress and develop new measurable goals. Primary therapists maintain ongoing contact with caregivers between goal periods to discuss the child’s progress and address questions.

What to Expect
During therapy, evidence-based strategies are used to train a variety of skills. Trained therapists conduct behavioral procedures based on applied behavior analysis and developmental principles. Programs take place across settings ranging from individualized seat work to naturalistic play interactions with adults and/or peers. Progress is monitored and reviewed daily by therapists and supervising psychologists. Data are used to guide program development and refine interventions.

PARENT TRAINING
Once an effective treatment is developed, care providers are trained on how to use it. Long-term success of the treatment depends on how accurately the program is carried out by parents, teachers, in-home aides and other caregivers. To facilitate accurate use of the treatment, caregiver training includes written and spoken instruction, modeling, role-play and feedback.

TREATMENT EFFICACY
Hundreds of research investigations published in peer-reviewed journals have documented the success of the treatment approach used at the Munroe-Meyer Institute. An emphasis is placed on treating and replacing the core symptoms of autism. It is our goal to regularly meet 80-100% of objectives. In almost all cases, the treatments developed are equally effective in the child’s natural environment at the time of completion of the program.

Referrals and Appointments
A physician, community health nurse, school therapist or other specialist may refer patients to the Munroe-Meyer Institute’s Early Intervention Program. Please fax 402-559-5004 or e-mail casd@unmc.edu referrals. They should include the child’s name, date of birth, reason for referral and contact information for caregivers and referral source.

Intake specialists are available at 402-559-3716 Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

For more information:
Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders
Munroe-Meyer Institute
985450 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-5450

WHERE WE ARE
444 S. 44th St., Omaha, Neb.
402-559-3716  |  Toll-free: 800-656-3937 ext. 9-3716
unmc.edu/mmi/departments/casd/casdresearch/casdieresearch

For more information: unmc.edu/mmi