



Day Integrated Learning Center Case Study

Arts Possible Ohio 2020

Day Integrated Learning Center (Day ILC) provides a caring and creative environment for students to develop social, emotional, physical and intellectual skills and knowledge through the integration of arts, counseling and peer support strategies. Day ILC serves kindergarten through 8th grade students, including post-graduation life skills and education programming, of Stark County that have an IEP and have been referred by their local schools' director. Day ILC students are in need of different levels of mental health and behavioral support, with some students experiencing multiple barriers to education, such as being in foster care or having additional physical disabilities. As such, Day ILC's vision is to "be a facility and community that nurtures the unique qualities in each student to live a confident and healthy lifestyle by acknowledging supports and reflective decision-making." ¹

Arts Possible Ohio identified the school culture, environment and learning model of Day ILC as exemplar, particularly in regard to practices of student inclusion and the integration of arts and education. In 2020, Arts Possible Ohio partnered with Measurement Resources Company (MRC) to conduct a case study of Day ILC in order to examine and report Day ILC's learning model with other Arts Possible Ohio partnering schools. As part of this process, MRC interviewed the Day Integrated principal and two emotional behavior disorders (EBD) unit teachers (K-2nd grades and 5th-6th grades) in February 2020.

How Day ILC Integrates the Arts

Partnership with Arts Possible Ohio provides arts integrated learning through art/music whole-class instruction and individual studio time to students four days a week². During students' allotted unstructured time they can choose to do music or art. The art studio is also used as a positive incentive for students too. The resident artist is repeatedly referred to by staff as providing a "Zen" atmosphere and attitude from which both students and staff greatly benefit. Below are some examples of how Day ILC utilizes arts provided through Arts Possible Ohio:

- To increase students' access to the therapeutic benefits of the arts

"Kris's art class is skill building, a more whole-class teaching of particular skills, but in the afternoon it is an open studio for whatever the students want to be doing. Students come to Day to build coping skills and transitional skills. Kris has a very calming spirit, wherein kids can say to themselves 'I can do this!' Kris helps a lot in building relationships with students to gain their long-term commitment to the school and our systems here... We also use art studio time to transition kids from off the bus to academics. Art is high interest for the kids, but low demand in terms of 'getting it right'. This helps to prepare kids for the start of the [academic] day and end of the day waiting for their bus." - Principal

¹ Day Integrated Learning Center Student Handbook, 2019-2020

² Arts Possible Ohio funds 1 out of 4 days of the art/music teacher.

- To incentivize student “expected” behavior, with studio art or music lesson time being earned through positive behavior
- To cultivate students’ social-emotional health, utilizing art times to help students mentally transition through different parts of their day
- To teach students life skills, like “healthy play” or methods for coping with stress through doing art/music
- To assist students in meeting physical or cognitive goals set in IEPs through art activities designed around fine motor skills

Below are values and organizational areas in which Day ILC and Arts Possible Ohio align:

- Accessibility to the arts for children of all abilities
- Leveraging art to increase students’ social-emotional skills
- Utilizing art to meet students’ development or cognitive goals, like public speaking, sharing/identifying emotions or physical movements to mimic needed life skills
- Encouraging teacher collaboration to develop learning environments centered around diverse needs and abilities of students, prioritizing equity as well as meeting academic goals
- Utilizing art and recognizing the therapeutics of the arts to cultivate school cultures of support and partnership
- Leveraging students’ engagement with the arts to learn more about students as individuals

“The art philosophy [of Arts Possible Ohio] fits because it adds to learning skills to make healthy decisions... Kris shows kids how to play healthy, and to find interest in nature-oriented rather than technological activities... As kids get older we start looking at coping skills, if kids have unhealthy thoughts, a way to work with that is playing a guitar for hours on end, until they get to a healthy mind set. This also teaches kids that something like guitar is a healthy choice and a way to cope with whatever.” - Principal

Measured Impact of Arts Possible Ohio and Day ILC Partnership

Day ILC contribute their successes to their overall education practices and values, and the flexibility that comes from having their own facility to meet students’ needs and develop a loving environment. Central to Day ILC’s value system and education model is the integration of arts, specifically Arts Possible Ohio’s inclusive and therapeutic art education. Below are measured impacts of Arts Possible Ohio’s Adaptation, Integration and the Arts (AIA) residencies from previous MRC evaluations of Day ILC that staff contribute to the structural integration of the arts as part of Day ILC’s learning model:

- **More students demonstrate 21st Century Skills after the AIA residency.** At the beginning of the residency, teachers reported an average of 51 percent of students demonstrating 21st Century Skills. After the residency, teachers reported an average of 75 percent of students demonstrating 21st Century Skills.
- **Teachers see more frequent use of social-emotional skills in their students by the end of the residency.** At the beginning of the residency, teachers reported that, on average, students demonstrated social-emotional skills “some of the time,” (average 2.1 on a 5 point scale with 1 being “none of the time” and 4 being “all the time”). At the end of the residency, teachers reported students demonstrating social-emotional skills “some of the time” to “most of the time” (avg. 2.6).

- **All of the participating teachers see positive impacts on the students.** 100 percent of teachers reported feeling the residency increased students' self-confidence, art skills and appreciation of art, and helped students meet their academic learning goals.
- **All of the participating teachers see positive impacts on their own professional development.** 100 percent of teachers reported they "agree" or "strongly agree" that the residency increased their own skills in integrating new approaches to designing standards, integrating arts with other subjects, and communication arts concepts to students. They also reported enjoying collaborating with the teaching artist, wanting to participate in the residency again and that the residency had a positive effect on the school environment.

Day ILC Organizational Culture and Structures

Institutional cultures, like that of Day ILC, are created through overlapping beliefs/values, organizational structures and everyday practices. In this section of the report, Day ILC's organizational culture and overall learning model is presented to highlight values, structures and practices that emerged from interviews with Day ILC teachers and the principal.

Perceptions of Day Integrated Organizational Culture

Consistent Communication
Genuine Community
Loving Environment
Whole-Student Support

Day ILC Beliefs and Values

Staff often reference the school's mission and vision statements in describing the culture of Day ILC. Day ILC's mission and vision are as follows:

Mission: "Day ILC respects the individual needs, as well as the unique qualities of each child and fosters a caring and creative environment emphasizing the child's social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. Day ILC provides strategies through focused integration of the arts, counseling services and team building through peer support."

Vision: "To be a facility and community that nurtures the unique qualities in each student to live a confident and healthy lifestyle by acknowledging supports and reflective decision-making."

The following Day ILC values emerged as repeated themes from staff responses to interview questions. Staff agreed that the below values drive their organizational successes and their students' learning.

1. **A shared language and consistent communication between staff, and between staff and students.** Staff hold daily, small and whole team meetings to discuss student progress, needs and lesson plans. Staff explained "that it is important that all the staff are on the same page [with the language used to talk to students and behavior management] because we are working with students that struggle with communication from adults [when there are inconsistencies]."

"In our staff bathroom we stick post it notes of encouragement all over... A parent must have come in and used the bathroom, and left a note that said 'thank you for caring for my son, love A Parent.'"

-Teacher

2. **A genuine sense of community.** Staff explained that staff are “really genuine” in their love, care and concern for their staff peers and the students. As a result, students are able to mirror the sense of community they see their teachers and counselors practicing: “Students need people to trust and depend on. When we feel like a community as a [staff] team, that feeling and communication is passed down to the kids,” explains a teacher.
3. **The maintenance of a loving environment,** both in terms of how people interact and the physical learning spaces.
4. **A commitment to whole student support.** “Whole student” includes fostering students’ individuality, practicing Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) system, academic knowledge and life skills through providing a range of support staff, learning techniques and programming described in the report sections below. In addition, Day ILC is structured around meeting long-term developmental goals. Thus, success for a Day ILC student ranges from meeting IEP goals while remaining enrolled at Day ILC for their full education or, as a teacher explained, success can also mean “when students are able to be reintegrated into their general education schools. When we see our kids a few years down the road and they are successful at their local school, like a student who is now a wrestler for his high school, it is very rewarding when we get to see the long-term impact.”

A teacher explains that “we [staff] know why we are here, and what we are doing, and what our goal is. We advocate for each other, stand up for each other; staff for staff, staff for students, students for students. For example, I have a student in the foster system and has moved to several homes this year in different districts, but because Day staff, including myself, CommQuest counselor and the principal, we were able to advocate to each of this kids’ districts so that he can stay at Day to at least have a consistent school.” - Teacher

“Day culture is loving, about empathy. We do what we have to do to make kids feel and believe that they are worth it...Everything about it is positive, from the building to how people talk... We are more proactive than reactive.” - Teacher

Day ILC Organizational Structure

Day Integrated is part of Stark County Education Center but is an entire school in and of itself. Every student is in need of some type of special assistance, and every classroom and staff member are professionally trained to serve those needs. The principal explained that therapeutic support is “embedded in every aspect of the school”, from how classrooms are designed, to arts integration, to student choice in learning, to non-punitive approaches to behavior. Students come to Day ILC for no less than the remainder of the school year, as the school’s learning model is “built around long-term growth, not quick fixes.”

Classrooms are organized as units, each with:

1. No more than ten students.
2. A teacher that is both a licensed intervention specialist and certified to instruct all core academics.
3. Paraprofessional staff to assist with students' varying behavioral and emotional needs.

Classrooms have one or more paraprofessional staff for the entire year, and as often as possible, the same teachers and paraprofessionals work together year after year. In assigning paraprofessionals to classrooms, Day Integrated tries to have a male and female staff (i.e. teacher or paraprofessional) in each room.

In total, Day ILC's 2020 classrooms include:

- Two units for students on the autistic spectrum
- Four units for students with emotional behavior disorders (EBD)
- Two post-high school, transitional learning center units for EBD students transitioning out of school and into work, etc.
- Two primary units for students with other or multiple disabilities, including being in foster care.

Additional integrated staff and programs to support the "whole-student" include:

- Partnership with Arts Possible Ohio
- Partnership with CommQuest to support student mental health, providing two counselors at school who facilitate group and individual counseling, crisis management and de-escalation services as needed.
- Resource specialist is on-site, who acts as a family liaison. She reaches out to families and helps them get home needs met (i.e. children's beds, payment of utility bills, clothes, diapers, Christmas gifts/food, etc.). In school, she also organizes events like a community service project, visiting speakers and field trips.
- Behavioral support specialist on-site that supports students in terms of crisis intervention and tracking/supporting behavioral intervention plans. She also supports teachers through collecting and monitoring students' behavioral data; providing guidance on inclusive classroom designs based on students' needs; sharing teaching techniques that support positive student behavior. The behavioral support specialist is critical in that each year the student body changes, as do their needs.

"We have the flexibility to be as creative as possible [because we are our own building and school] to design daily plans to make students successful no matter their needs or goals... There is no bell schedule, for example... We treat [teaching] more like parenting." - Teacher

"I have paraprofessionals, we are a really good team! We communicate and meet all the time. We plan days together; we talk about each student's progress... In fact, I don't even think the kids know who the teacher is and who the paraprofessional is." - Teacher

"Both my paraprofessionals are males, which is helpful in relating to my students that are young boys. I talk with the paraprofessionals every day after school to talk about what worked, things that didn't go well, what behaviors in the class are being challenged, and how we can adjust the classroom to help... We also talk about expectations for future lesson plans, planning academic stations and our roles at each station. We talk throughout the day too, there is a lot of open communication and comfort with each other. The students also know the adults are a united front, we follow and enforce the same rules." -Teacher

- Gym class instruction is provided one day a week to students.

“We benefit by being a separate facility, not based inside general education setting, so our entire staff is understanding of the students, meet the kids where they are at because we are a smaller school. I build a relationship with students before they even get to my grade... our classrooms have no more than ten students, which is small enough to co-teach with other classrooms and collaborate. Being our own building also means we have more flexible schedules and space. We can do lessons how we want and when we want as long as we meet ODE standards.” - Teacher

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) System

In 2018-2019, Day Integrated adopted a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) system. According to Day ILC’s handbook, the goal of PBIS is to: “create and apply universal language for understanding; provide opportunities to learn in a positive environment; and create structure for unstructured times and environments.” See the “Shared Language” section below for more details on how Day ILC applies PBIS.

“We have mindfulness Thursday where we focus on what is in our control and what is not in our control. The students [and teachers] can apply this outside the art class.” – Art/Music Teacher

THE EXPERTISE OF THE ART/MUSIC TEACHER CONTRIBUTES TO THE WEEKLY PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS. SHE PROVIDES IDEAS FOR THEMES, STRATEGIES, HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES ETC.

Each day teachers complete a “Positive Behavior Tracker” for each student, for every day. On the tracker, teachers answer three questions every half hour of the day (8 a.m. - 2 p.m.), based on definitions provided in Table 1:

- Is the student being safe? Yes/No
- Is the student being respectful? Yes/No
- Is the student being responsible? Yes/No

“All our staff are extremely caring people in general. The PBIS system works so well at Day because of the kind of staff we have... we are a real community.” - Teacher

For each “yes” a student is provided a “safety mark” (or point). Percentages of success are calculated each day. Key to this system is that it is incentive based and points are not taken away, but rather earned. Teachers use these percentages for:

- Daily, in-class incentives
- On a weekly incentives program, students can select something from the school’s store. The store is divided into tiers, based on PBIS percentage ranges.
- Nine-week percentages are reported to parents and used in school assemblies where awards are presented to students based on their PBIS performances.
- Setting and tracking IEP related behavioral goals.

THE ART/MUSIC TEACHER OFFERS INCENTIVES FOR STUDENTS TO EARN POINTS. INCENTIVES INCLUDE HAVING LUNCH IN THE ART STUDIO OR HAVING TIME TO DO ADDITIONAL ART/MUSIC ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST TO THE KIDS.

"I add other incentives for my students too, things they are working for too... Like I set a goal for everyone that had a 90 percent or higher for the entire 9 weeks could go on a field trip to the museum and out to lunch, and all the students did it because they had something to work towards!... The different incentive programs allows me to tell my kids that 'You are allowed to have a bad day, and it won't ruin everything.'... I also have a token economy in my classroom based on their PBIS scores... my kids always have a reason to keep on, or get back on, track." - Teacher

Day ILC Practices

While Day ILC students require a variation of learning approaches, teachers keep a classroom schedule that provides students with much needed structure and predictability.

"I never have the same day twice, in the best way possible! Even though every day brings something different, we keep a strict schedule because my kids thrive with routine. They know that schedules for each day of the week are the same." - Teacher

Morning routines:

Due to students being bused from around the county, students arrive at different times between 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Therefore, in the morning, up until around 9 a.m., starts with small tasks, assignments, or breakfast that are each designed to be an easy transition into the start of the day. These activities provide a much-needed routine for students while they wait for everyone to arrive but are also relaxing enough that they help students to transition from getting off the bus to getting in a school frame of mind. Furthermore, this period gives time for morning medications to take affect before getting into any core academic or behavioral lessons. Mornings also include a "PBIS activity" (see description in the "Shared Language" section below).

THE ART/MUSIC TEACHER GREETES STUDENTS AS THEY COME OFF THE BUS. SOME STUDENTS SPEND TIME IN THE STUDIO BEFORE CLASS TO HELP THEIR TRANSITION. OTHER STUDENTS SAY HI OR TALK TO THE ART/MUSIC TEACHER AS PART OF THEIR MORNING ROUTINE.

"My kids know that when they come in the morning, they get a morning task that supports their IEP goals. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays it is some type of writing and language arts assignment, and the other days are math or reading comprehension. Then we have breakfast and some down time to talk or do whatever until around 9 a.m." - Teacher

Academic learning routines:

Each day has morning and afternoon core academic lessons. The days also include 20-30 minutes of free time before lunch to go outside, play in the gym or in the classroom, wherein the activity is the choice of each student. After lunch is the second academic session. Depending on the day of the week, students also attend art, music and physical education classes.

THE ART/MUSIC TEACHER OPENS THE ART STUDIO ON MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY AND FRIDAY BEFORE LUNCH AND AFTER SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS WHO WANT TO DO ADDITIONAL ART OR MUSIC ACTIVITIES. ADDITIONALLY, THE STUDIO IS OPEN THREE DAYS A WEEK FOR THERAPEUTIC AND CREATIVE PLAY.

"My academic [lessons] are structured into stations, so kids do lessons based on where they are at with that subject. The stations are 'I do', 'we do' and 'you do'... For example, this week in 'I do', I teach mean, medium, mode and range. I show them what that looks like, give direct instruction, and do practice problems on the board. Then in the 'we do' station, I give them a problem and they help me solve it on a white board. Then with 'you do', the kids practice at a hands-on station, like working by themselves or with peers using flash cards... Paraprofessionals oversee stations to help with conflict or off-task behavioral support... And then sometimes there are whole group instruction, like with science experiments or language arts book reading unit we do together." - Teacher

Shared Language

Day ILC's PBIS provides a basis for students and staff to apply a shared language that is used consistently, kindergarten through 12th grade. Table 1 shows how PBIS is integrated into each part of the students' day. This PBIS model was constructed by Day ILC's behavioral specialists, who also trained all staff in how to implement the system. The language shown in Table 1 is actively used by students and staff, with students learning the language, and what it means, through daily, interactive PBIS lessons. In fact, every Monday, staff and the principal meet to discuss what aspects of behavior the student body needs help on that week. From this, a PBIS activity is planned for each day of the week.

"Collaboration with the teachers is what is important. Teachers are very open minded about working with me, excited to collaborate – Art/Music Teacher

"Success is when a student that is really struggling to control behavior, we can see their coping skills develop. They can say "I wasn't safe because of... I wasn't responsible because of..." to identify their behavior. When you see kids using our language to take ownership of their behaviors, ask for help or ask for a need before their behavior goes offtrack, that is success... and seeing kids repeating the language to each other, or helping each other cope, that is success." - Teacher

Each morning the principal makes an over-the-speaker announcement, sharing the PBIS topic for the whole school that day. Then, the activity is tailored to each age group by teachers.

"Students know 'be safe, responsible, respectful.' If you go up to any kid and ask 'What does it mean to be the Three?', they will tell you!" - Teacher

"For a while Day struggled with having the same set of rules for k-12, but since PBIS, we have been able to use that language and tools to be more united as a staff. Students know the same rules will be the same each year, and classrooms all have the same rules... PBIS also holds students accountable for choices. With our students it helps that PBIS is very matter-of-fact, you either did it or not. It takes away potential room for arguments over behavior with students, and it doesn't allow students to argue that other teachers allow different things." - Teacher

Table 1: Day ILC's PBIS Guide to Strategies for Success

Behavioral Pillars of Day Integrated Learning Environment		
Strategies for Success in Class		
Respectfulness	Responsibility	Safety
Kind words, expected language, whole body listening	Follow my schedule	All my body parts to myself, expected body movements, stay in assigned area
Strategies for Success in Public Areas		
Respectfulness	Responsibility	Safety
Whole body listening, expected language	Follow rules for other places, follow my schedule	All my body parts to myself, expected body movements, stay in assigned area
Strategies for Success in Restrooms		
Respectfulness	Responsibility	Safety
One person at a time, wait quietly at assigned area, expected language	Flush, wash hands, place trash in can	Body fluids in toilet, all my body parts to myself, expected body movements
Strategies for Success in Vehicles		
Respectfulness	Responsibility	Safety
Quiet voice, kind words, whole body listening, expected language	Stay seated, clean up	All my body parts to myself, expected body movements, wear my seatbelt
Strategies for Success in Hallways		
Respectfulness	Responsibility	Safety
Whole body listening, expected language	Follow my schedule	Walk, all my body parts to myself, expected body movements, stay in assigned area

Conclusion

Day ILC's efforts to integrate arts programming, with the help of Arts Possible Ohio, results in measurable, positive impacts on students' social-emotional and academic learning. Day ILC's unique organizational culture and learning model facilitate these results. Specifically, positive outcomes are achieved because of Day ILC's consistent communication between staff and between staff and students; building a genuine sense of community among staff and students; and creating a loving environment, both in terms of physical spaces and attitudes that are inclusive of students of all abilities and emotional needs. Day ILC provides whole student support through counseling, positive behavior incentive systems and peer support strategies; and the integration of arts education throughout school days and learning activities.