



# Hope

NEWSLETTER



*Keeping you updated on the news and celebrations of Catholic Charities*

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## Applied Behavioral Analysis: Helping Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

**E**vangelina Mata says her son Emilio is like a different child now. At age 2-1/2, her son began to display behaviors – “little red flags here and there” – he would rarely speak and had tantrums to express himself. So, after a trip to his doctor, they were referred to a pediatrician who is certified to diagnose Autism Spectrum Disorder.

From there, the Chelan family was referred to Catholic Charities in Wenatchee to enroll in the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Day Program, a structured, intensive, therapeutic 12-week program designed to teach a variety of skills to pre-kindergarten children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The classroom serves 4-5 children at a time, with each child receiving a one-on-one behavioral therapist. Treatment also includes speech therapy, depending on the child’s needs. The goal of the day program is to teach school readiness skills.

Evangelina and her husband are pleased with Emilio’s progress.

“Before, he was almost completely non-verbal, and now he’ll say a couple of words and put them together and try to make sentences,” she said. “He can ask for what he wants instead of just screaming or whining for objects he needs. He can articulate. He’s overcome many frustrations because we can understand him better.”

There is also a requirement of one hour of individual parental training per week while their child is in the program. Parent training topics include increasing communication with their child; reducing problem behaviors at home; and learning to keep their child on track and moving forward.

“The training has helped us to learn how to work with him on his behavior – trying to get rid of the negativity and the meltdowns he has – which are much less often now. We also work on non-communication skills to understand what he needs,” she explained.

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## Autism | *continued from front page*

Jennifer Card, a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), who runs the Wenatchee program, recognizes the importance of education for the parents.

“My goal is for them to get to more parent training after they leave the program. There’s a definite need for that. I enjoy doing parent trainings, because these families are lost. They don’t know how to manage the behavior, and this is a good support for them to realize ‘hey I’m not alone.’ They often don’t realize how many others are dealing with this. Parents who have kids with autism often feel like they are doing things wrong, and it’s challenging – I acknowledge that through the parent training, and I think that’s the strength of the model here at Catholic Charities.”

Jennifer, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, understands better than most, because her own son, who is now 19, has autism.

“Because of my son’s diagnosis, I started learning about ABA and looked into how to get credentialed, which propelled me here to do this work,” she said. “There’s such a great need. These kids and families just struggle so much. I’m amazed myself at the progress that’s made in our program, and I’m not just saying that because I run the program. I can really see the progress, and it’s extraordinary.”

Evangelina agrees. “It’s a wonderful program. It has helped my son a lot. They work on the specific needs of each child and I have seen Emilio come such a long way, it’s tremendous. He’s almost like a different kid. Now I can have a conversation with him and he can tell me if he likes or doesn’t like something. I now respect his opinions about what he needs and what’s hard for him, instead of trying to push him. We work with him and help him get comfortable. I’ve learned a lot of patience working with him and trying different things to help him through the new situations and transitions he needs to make.”



*Norman on his last day in class. Back row from left: Wenatchee staff members Mayra Hurtado, Vivinet Acevedo, Andreina Gomez. Front Row: Andrea Villines, Jennifer Card, Norman and Krista Nugent.*

Another family who is grateful for their time with ABA in Wenatchee is the Greens. They have recently moved from Wenatchee to California to place their son, Norman, 2-1/2, into more services, but wrote the team to let them know how well he is doing. Norman’s mother was extra diligent in getting her son in the Wenatchee program once he was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

“Thank you forever and forever for all that you’ve done and been for our family,” she wrote. “We owe you more than we can ever repay.”

Catholic Charities offers ABA services in Wenatchee and Yakima (at Children’s Village), and both currently have a waiting list.

# Early Learning

## Child Care Aware

Child Care Aware of Central Washington offers coaching to licensed child care providers (through Early Achievers and Infant-Toddler Coaching) to improve the quality of their early learning environments, curriculum, and materials to ensure children are given a healthy start and are ready for success in kindergarten. This service reaches Yakima,

Kittitas, Chelan, Douglas, Adams, Grant, Okanogan and Ferry counties.

## ECEAP

The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) provides a comprehensive pre-kindergarten program that integrates education, family support, and health services. The program serves 60 low-income children and families, and fosters development of the whole child.

## Parents As Teachers

The Parents as Teachers program provides home visits which focus on parent education, developmental activities, and family support—from prenatal to age four. This program fosters strong, loving relationships



# Growing Hope: Child & Family Development Center Opens in Yakima

**W**hen Carroll Children's Center opened in Yakima in 1989, the goal was to provide quality child care with an early learning emphasis. Back then, there were few child care centers that incorporated educational components into their curriculum.

Knowing the value of learning and development in the first five years of life was the impetus for Catholic Charities to grow early learning programs over the years, incorporating early mental health intervention as well as adding therapeutic classrooms and the extended day Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP).

As services grew, it became obvious that physical expansion was needed. Catholic Charities' Board of Trustees approved a plan to construct a new building adjacent to Carroll Children's Center that brings the early learning program's diverse classrooms and the much-needed expansion of infant and toddler classrooms together under one roof.

On September 1, the **Growing Hope: Childhood Education Center** became a reality as staff moved into the building.

The new building features a training room to provide professional development opportunities for child care providers. The observation rooms allow parents and professionals a training opportunity in viewing classrooms. Together, 72 staff and eight classrooms are now under one roof. Opening this building provides additional space at Carroll Children's Center for expansion for toddler and preschool classrooms, and will add a classroom for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder for Applied Behavioral Analysis services. The classrooms at Growing Hope

offer optimal environments for infants through preschool children in which to learn. The playgrounds are built with developmental centers to also facilitate learning and gross motor development for children.

Although Catholic Charities services are available for all children and families in the community, we maintain a special emphasis on low-income children and families and children with challenging behaviors and developmental delays – true to our mission to serve those most in need.



*The new Growing Hope Child & Family Development Center on the Catholic Charities' Yakima campus opened in September.*

between parents and their children; provides opportunities to connect with other parents; and prepares children for kindergarten.

## **Therapeutic Classrooms**

Catholic Charities offers early learning and child care options for children who otherwise may not have access or may not be successful in a typical child care or preschool setting. Our staff are trained and supported to provide nurturing and responsive care with an emphasis on social-emotional learning to help children prepare for their next

learning environment. Parents may work with a therapist or home visitor to support change and positive behavior in the home.

## **Child Care Nutrition**

The Child Care Nutrition Program promotes healthy eating habits and good nutrition by monitoring and reimbursing licensed family home child care providers who serve nutritious snacks and meals according to USDA guidelines. Currently nutrition services are provided in these counties throughout Washington state:

Yakima, Kittitas, Benton, Franklin, Klickitat, Clark, Skamania, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Adams, Cowlitz, Columbia, Spokane, & Walla Walla.

## **Carroll Children's Center**

Carroll Children's Center (CCC) is a licensed, Quality of Excellence-rated child care and early education center providing developmental classrooms year-round for children age 1 month to 5 years. Child care and education go hand-in-hand, and CCC is dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing, educational environment.



**Catholic Charities**

SERVING CENTRAL WASHINGTON

**Catholic Charities – Yakima**

5301 Tieton Drive, Suite C  
**509.965.7100**

**Catholic Charities Housing Services**

5301 Tieton Drive, Suite G  
**509.853.2800**

**Catholic Charities – Tri-Cities**

2139 Van Giesen  
**509.946.4645**

**Catholic Charities – Wenatchee**

145 South Worthen Street  
**509.662.6761**

**St. Vincent Centers and Food Bank – Union Gap**

2629 Main Street  
**509.457.5111**

**St. Vincent Centers – Kennewick**

120 North Morain Street  
**509.783.7020**



## Our Mission

*Motivated by Christ's love,  
we bring hope to life,  
especially for those most in  
need.*

Would you like to join our mailing list  
and stay informed? Email  
[jdeccio@catholiccharitiescw.org](mailto:jdeccio@catholiccharitiescw.org)

*Visit Us at Our New Website!*  
**[www.catholiccharitiescw.org](http://www.catholiccharitiescw.org)**

## Vision

We envision communities where people are treated with dignity and respect, their basic needs are met, and they are empowered to enhance the quality of their own lives.

## Values

- We affirm our faith in God who calls us to serve.
- We celebrate the uniqueness and dignity of people.
- We nurture children and strengthen families.
- We provide quality services to those in need.
- We serve people of all faiths.