



Program Participant Handbook

Art Academy

A Program of

Abilities First
3216. S. National Ave.
Springfield, MO. 65807

(417) 886-0404

Relay Missouri: (800) 735-2966

www.abilitiesfirst.net/art-inspired-academy/

Welcome to Abilities First Art Academy (AFAA)

We appreciate your interest and hope you find the following information helpful. It includes general information and procedures about AFAA's Community Services Program. If you have any questions, please call (417) 886-0404, extension 4.

AFAA's staff are:

Richard White, Director
Bobbi Bellamy, Assistant Director
Debbie Akers, Inclusive Arts Education Specialist
Spencer Tilley, Inclusive Arts Education Specialist
Emily Gannaway, Direct Support Professional
Susan Dains, Teaching Assistant
Hannah Young, Direct Support Professional

Our Mission

Turning Abilities into Opportunities

Our Vision

All people with developmental disabilities live the life they choose.

Our Core Values

One Team, One Mission
Accountable, Respectful Service
Transparent Stewardship
Hold the Rope

What is Art Academy?

AFAA offers creative arts classes for individuals of all abilities. Classes include art, vocational arts and entrepreneurship, music enrichment, theatre, movement, sign language and baking. All classes are designed to enhance individual skills through the arts. Areas of focus include self-confidence, motivation, communication, social skills, pre-vocational skills, and fine and gross motor development. Classes are offered for preschoolers through adults of all ages and are at various community sites throughout Greene and the surrounding counties. All program activities take place in community settings that meet HCBS requirements. AFAA instructors' pair positive behavioral training with advanced curricular expertise. Instructors and direct support professionals use observation, written plans (when available), and communication with individuals to establish goals and desirable outcomes within the scope of each class.

Schedule

AFAA class schedules vary depending on the area and focus. Schedules are created several months in advance, using a monthly/annual format. Schedules are available on the Abilities First and AFAA websites.

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Guidelines

For all AFAA classes we make the HCBS guidelines our guiding principles. Our goal is to make these a reality in our community. These rules state that services should meet these six standards:

- Integrated into the Community
- Individual Choice
- Individual Rights
- Autonomy
- Choice Regarding Services and Providers
- Person Centered Planning

Admission and Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment

ART ACADEMY classes are open to anyone. Classes are open to students ages 3 through adulthood, with classes arranged by age level. Please see the schedule for criteria for specific classes.

Prior to enrollment, each student (or parent/guardian) is registered in our enrollment system which tracks enrollment status and provides the students with updates about registration, class locations, dates, and times. Before starting a class, all students submit liability, consent and release forms outlining the agreed terms of participation. AFAA staff will communicate with individuals and their families as needed regarding any challenging behavioral issues, and we will work together as a team to address them. If a student struggles with behaviors of physical aggression, the AFAA team will request a meeting with the student's team to discuss the future of the student's participation. The AFAA team is trained to observe if behavior patterns present that can cause harm to someone's self or others in the AFAA project. It is the AFAA's main goal to keep all students safe and protected in our settings.

Personal Contact Information

Your account with AFAA details your personal contact information, including a reliable phone number and email address as well as emergency contact information. Please contact AFAA staff regarding any updates to your personal contact information.

Cost and Fees

The cost of classes varies depending on the number of class sessions, number of staff needed, and supplies included. AFAA students may use any of the following funding sources: private pay, AFAA scholarships, Department of Mental Health waiver, and Southwest Missouri Autism Project waiver. Students living in Christian County may be eligible for a grant from CC Links.

Discontinuing Classes

Students are free to enroll in or discontinue classes, to resume or discontinue participation in any Abilities First program. Abilities First will always respect student choices and provide as much information as possible to help students make an informed decision. If a student experiences challenges within a class, their AFAA

instructor may suggest a meeting with the student, their parent/guardian, and/or their Support Coordinator to discuss additional support. The AFAA at no time obliges itself to serve anyone.

Abilities First promotes inclusion for all and provides individualized services, however; if conditions prevent a student/s from reasonably participating in classes in the judgement of Abilities First, a decision may be made by Abilities First to discontinue classes for that student.

Some examples in which class participation may be discontinued for a student include:

- Student becomes too ill to attend classes.
- Students move outside of the area.
- There is no funding source available for services.
- The student fails to attend registered classes.
- The student requires medications during class times and has no staff to administer them (AFAA does not administer any medications).
- The student needs a Behavior Support Plan, and the agency does not have proper staffing or resources necessary to implement the plan.
- The student (or parent/ guardian) chooses an alternative program.

Inclement Weather Policy

If Springfield Schools are closed due to inclement weather, AFAA classes will also be cancelled for the day. If Springfield Schools are in session but road conditions are questionable, the AFAA team will determine when to cancel classes. In case of cancellation, AFAA staff will notify students by email or phone call. You can also get information by calling the AFAA office at (417) 886-0404, ext. 4.

Illnesses and Injuries

If you have any of the following symptoms, please do not attend class: vomiting, diarrhea, rash, fever over 100-degrees, or lice. (In case of lice, you will need to treat your hair with a lice-killing shampoo or a doctor-recommended lice treatment. *You should not return to class until this is resolved and you have a doctor's note.*)

AFAA staff are trained in First Aid and CPR in the event of accidents or injuries. If there is an accident resulting in an injury while in class that requires more than first aid, staff will notify your emergency contact and call 911. Staff will complete an incident report and notify your parents/guardian if you have one.

If a seizure occurs, staff will notify the parent/guardian or emergency contact immediately. Staff will document any seizure activity. If the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes, staff will call 911 and request emergency assistance. If a student does not have a history of seizures, or if they stop breathing before 5 minutes, 911 will be called immediately.

Medication

AFAA staff do not monitor or manage any medications. If you need to take medications during an AFAA class, you need to be able to do this by yourself or have your staff person with you. All students are encouraged to take any required medications either before or after class.

Tobacco Use

For the safety of those in Abilities First programs, no one may smoke or use tobacco products (including smokeless tobacco) in or around any Abilities First building or event. This includes all AFAA classes, regardless of location. You will be asked to step outside and away from the building if you wish to smoke.

Weapons

Weapons of any kind are not allowed in any of our classes or activities in the community, even if you have permission from home or a permit. Please leave anything that could be seen as a weapon at home.

Clothing

You are welcome to wear whatever clothing you wish to class. However, you should wear clothes that you are comfortable wearing when using paint or other art mediums that may stain or damage fabric. If you are taking a theatre or movement class, you should wear comfortable clothing that you can freely move around in. Theater and movement classes request closed toe shoes be worn for safety.

Respect

AFAA classes emphasize positive and respectful interactions. This includes using positive language and gestures that are respectful of all students. Our philosophy is that everyone has a right to be treated in a respectful manner.

Emergencies

In the case of any emergency, remain calm and listen to your AFAA staff. Staff are aware of all exits and shelters in each class location.

Abuse and Neglect

All Abilities First staff members are mandated reporters trained in signs of abuse and required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect. If an AFAA staff suspects a student has been abused or neglected, it will be reported to their immediate supervisor, or either the Director or Support Coordination for The Next Step if you have a Support Coordinator.

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, call Missouri's toll-free hotline at 1-800-392-3738, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you are hearing or speech impaired, call Relay Missouri at 1-800-735-2466 (voice) or 1-800-735-2966 (text). [\[08\]](#)

Confidentiality and Privacy

Abilities First follows all HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) laws. We will keep you informed of your records and want to make sure you understand your legal privacy rights.

- You have a right to privacy. We will not share your personal information without your permission.
- You have a right to know your information. You may complete a “Request for Records” form to request access to your information at any time.
- No one except Abilities First staff will have access to your personal information unless you give us written permission to share it on an authorized Release of Information form. Abilities First will provide information as subpoenaed, legally requested, or authorized.

Protection of Individual Rights

All people have rights to a certain standard of life. With this comes your responsibility to do all you can to protect yourself and your peers from any kind of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The following is the BILL OF RIGHTS. This is only an extremely basic outline of everyone’s rights. If at any time, you feel that someone is violating your rights or the rights of someone else, it is necessary that you report this immediately to someone that you trust at Abilities First.

Every person we support has the right to...

- Accept or refuse services, know what services are being offered, by whom, and who is part of your Planning Team.
- Accept or refuse participation in research after being informed of its specific nature and requirements.
- Have the same legal rights and responsibilities as any other citizen unless otherwise limited by law, including access to visitor or access/referral to legal entities, physician, self-help support services, advocacy support services, private visits from a lawyer, doctor, or clergy at reasonable times.
- Be treated with respect and personal dignity as a human being with humane care and treatment, including having privacy when needed or requested.
- Have a safe and clean environment, which is free of unsanitary conditions, free of hazardous equipment or materials, and evaluated for safety regularly.
- Be free from abuse, neglect, or humiliation, including verbal, psychological, sexual, financial, or other forms of exploitation without fear of retaliation.
- Be free from any form of abuse to individual property or services, including the amount, frequency, and location of services, including action from staff or other individuals enrolled.
- Receive prompt evaluation, high-quality treatment, rehabilitation or habilitation services and support in which you and any significant person have participated and timely modifications to your plan, program, or service.
- Maintain culturally and ethnically sensitive interactions.
- Maintain religious freedom.
- Be evaluated and receive services in the Least Restrictive Environment and most integrated setting appropriate for your specific needs.
- Have your records kept confidential and privacy protected unless signed authorization is obtained.
- Have access to your records.

- Have due process with timely grievance procedures regarding care/treatment that is or fails to be furnished, or the lack of respect for property by anyone providing services or when any right is limited or is alleged to have taken place without fear of retaliation.
- Be advised of any required payment of services which may be expected from Medicare, First Steps, Medicaid, or other sources, and the extent payment may be required from you.
- Be advised orally and in writing of any changes to the charges as soon as possible and no later than 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks).
- Have access to rules and regulations from any state agency that provides oversight and supports or services.
- Have services, support, and personal records explained so that they are easily understood and in a timely manner to assist in decision making expectations.
- Have input and be part of any decisions related to concurrent services and the composition of the individual planning team.

Abilities First and AFAA will not discriminate in their services delivered due to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, creed, sexual orientation, military status, or disability.

If you believe any of your rights have been restricted or violated without your participation and approval, you may file a complaint by contacting the HIPAA Privacy Officer at the number listed in your handbook. An investigation of your complaint will be initiated immediately.

Addressing Concerns

You may talk to your AFAA staff about any problems or concerns you have regarding your services. They will work with you to determine a plan to resolve the concerns and may include your Support Coordinator if you have one.

If your concern continues past the initial meeting, follow the steps below to report an official grievance. Reporting a concern or a grievance will not result in any form of retaliation.

Abilities First Grievance Process

1. Talk with your AFAA Inclusive Art Education Specialist.
2. If your grievance involves the instructor, or if you prefer, contact the Assistant Director or Director.
3. If talking with the AFAA Inclusive Art Education Specialist does not help, talk with the Assistant Director or Director.
4. The AFAA Assistant Director or Director will meet you within five (5) business days and record your formal complaint.
5. If talking with the Assistant Director or Director does not help, then contact the Vice President of Programs who will help you plan an action.
6. At any point you may make a formal complaint by requesting for a Grievance Form from your Abilities First Inclusive Arts Education Specialist, Assistant Director, Director, or Vice President. The Grievance Form can be accessed at <https://abilitiesfirst.net> and the form can also be mailed to 3216 S. National Ave Springfield, Mo 65807.
7. You will be informed in writing of the result of your grievance.

8. If you wish to appeal the decision, families receiving First Steps services can contact the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Individuals receiving services from The Next Step can contact the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH).

If you believe any of your rights have been restricted or violated without your participation and approval, you may file a complaint by contacting the HIPAA Privacy Officer at the number listed below. An investigation of your complaint will be initiated immediately.

Abilities First HIPAA Privacy Officer

Sarah Tilley, Vice President of Compliance

(417) 886-0404 stilley@abilitiesfirst.net

Additionally, if you want to appeal your grievance further, you may contact without penalty or reprisal:

Springfield Regional Office: (417) 895-7400

The Department of Mental Health's Client Rights Monitor: (800) 364-9687 or by TTD: (573) 526-1201.

For those who private pay or do not receive services through the Department of Mental Health, rights violations should be reported to:

Missouri Protection and Advocacy

PO Box 3305

Springfield, MO. 65808

(417) 833-2925 or (888) 632-9551

Empower Abilities

1450 W. Cambridge

Springfield, MO. 65807

(417) 866-1188