Today’s piece was prepared by Dia Hazra, MD, based on a NY Times article [For Children with Autism, No More Being Hushed](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/14/nyregion/for-children-with-autism-no-more-being-hushed.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FChildren%20and%20Youth&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=8&pgtype=collection&_r=0)

This article describes the NYC public schools’ ASD Nest inclusive education model, implemented in 2003, to place ‘higher-functioning’ children in an educational environment to develop classroom and community skills via a ‘nest’ of “[structure, support, and services in order to succeed in inclusive settings](https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ856149)”. Teachers in the program receive specific training in early childhood special education relating to ASD, and there is a notable absence of ‘paraprofessionals’ in each classroom.

The article explains the different interventions implemented by the ASD Nest program. [Each classroom consists of “two certified teachers, four students with autism, and eight to 20 general education students](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25321640). The students diagnosed with ASD are also provided with social development intervention three times a week. To qualify, children undergo an initial evaluation before entering kindergarten to demonstrate their ability to function in a grade-level-appropriate classroom.

Principals of participating schools meet monthly with the NYU program director and a [DOE] program Nest program coordinator”. Evidence-based components include organization of the classroom environment, use of instructional strategies and visual aids, individualized learning, and integration of social development intervention.

The evidence-based methodology is not discussed in the original NYT article; the article relies mainly on anecdotal evidence and illustrative descriptions of the program. A more general audience would benefit from the inclusion of methodology and outcomes related to this program to better evaluate its efficacy in the education of students with ASD.

**RESOURCE ON AUTISM & EDUCATION:**

[National Autism Center at May Institute](http://www.nationalautismcenter.org/) *Disseminates evidence-based information about ADS treatment promoting best practices, based on the National Standards Project to establish a set of standards for effective, research-validated educational and behavioral interventions for children on the autism spectrum.*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!