



Educational Life Skills Program (ELS)

The Educational Life Skills Program (ELS) is a special education program serving students with mild and moderate cognitive impairments from grades nine through twelve. The curriculum in the ELS program is designed to develop functional academic skills and improve each student's independent living skills. Township High School District 211 provides ELS programs at Palatine High School and Hoffman Estates High School.

Although the level of curriculum has been adjusted to a lower, functional level, students in the ELS program must successfully complete a curriculum of required subject areas and elective courses consistent with the district's requirements for a standard diploma. Students earn credit toward graduation for each course they successfully complete in the ELS program. Each course taught in the ELS program is taught by a certified special education teacher with the assistance of one or more teacher's aides or paraprofessionals and typically have a capacity of twelve students.

Students enrolled in the ELS program participate in numerous courses designed to develop vocational skills and improve independent daily living skills. Students in the program have access to a continuum of vocational experiences and training sites providing varying levels of support. Vocational experiences begin in the student's home school and as the student develops various skills, the student will then be considered for opportunities at other district schools or actual job-sites in the local community. In addition, students in the ELS program participate in numerous community-based experiences allowing students the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge to an actual community setting.

Students whose behaviors prevent them or others from learning may require behavioral interventions. Every effort is made to provide supportive and non-restrictive interventions prior to using more restrictive interventions and techniques. A student may be considered for a behavioral intervention plan if the student's behavior presents a regular pattern of disruption, negative impact on the learning environment or need for support, supervision or removal.

In order for the services provided in the Educational Life Skills Program to be effective, the student's participation and determination are essential. The following behaviors increase the chances that a student will be successful:

Take part in understanding the IEP, particularly the goals and objectives.

Help the teacher to identify and understand academic strengths, weaknesses and areas that need assistance.

Be prepared for classes. Have the necessary books, pens, pencils, paper, notebooks and assignments at every class.

Go to every class every day and on time.

Ask the teacher for help, extra time, or other assistance when needed.

Inform the teacher if any academic subject or skill area is particularly difficult.

Use the learning strategies that are taught.

Communicate with teachers and teacher assistants.

Assume responsibility for his or her own academic performance and behavior.

The Educational Life Skills Program can be successful if the student exhibits the behaviors described above. While the program and its teachers provide a great deal of attention within a small environment designed to be encouraging, the ultimate responsibility belongs to the student.