

**RUTGERS**

Graduate School of Applied  
and Professional Psychology

**Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services**  
102 Nichol Ave.  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

[rcaas.rutgers.edu](http://rcaas.rutgers.edu)  
p. 848-445-3973

# Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services Policies and Procedures Manual

We are pleased to present you with this handbook which contains information that we feel will be useful. We hope you will take the time to read the information. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call one of the RCAAS Behavior Analysts at 848-445-3973.

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## **RCAAS Mission Statement**

The Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services pushes the boundaries of what is possible in the field of adult autism services. The center follows a multi-faceted approach to addressing the current crisis facing many adults with ASD that are without quality support services within the state of NJ and beyond. This approach involves a shared commitment to:

1. Operating a model **SERVICE DELIVERY** program that demonstrates what adults with ASD can accomplish if given the resources and opportunities that they need to succeed within the contexts of community-based employment and recreation.
2. **TRAINING** the next generation of highly skilled practitioners interested in a career serving the needs of adults with ASD.
3. Conducting **RESEARCH** related to issues facing adults with ASD across the lifespan.

## **Program Overview**

The Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services (RCAAS) is a year-round program for adults with autism that operates as a department of the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP) at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. The center provides comprehensive support services for adults with Autism age 21 and beyond, to encourage community inclusion through meaningful vocational and recreational activities on Rutgers Campus.

The RCAAS is an approved provider in the “Supports Program” which is a fee-for-service Medicaid-reimbursement program administered by the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (NJ DDD). As a provider within the NJ DDD Supports Program the RCAAS is able to bill for a variety of support services that it provides to RCAAS program participants towards their achievement of meaningful outcomes in the areas of community-based employment, recreation, socialization, and independent living. The specific categories of services within the Supports Program that the RCAAS is approved to provide and the corresponding sections in the NJDDD Supports Program Manual with detailed information about each category is as follows:

Behavior Management: pages 85-86  
Community based Support: pages 94-96  
Community Inclusion: pages 97-99  
Career Planning: pages 88-91  
Day Habilitation: pages 100-113  
Natural Supports Training: pages 122-124  
Prevocational Training: pages 130-138  
Respite: pages 139-141  
Supportive Employment Group: pages 152-157  
Supportive Employment Individual: pages 152-157  
Transportation: pages 166-167

More information about the NJDDD Supports Program can be found in the program's policy manual which can be accessed online here:

<http://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/documents/sp-policymanual-may2018.pdf>

### **University-based Status**

As a Rutgers University program and unit of the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, the Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services is governed fully by the University Board of Governors. Program operations reflect university policies in areas such as personnel, civil rights, etc. and budgets and policies are submitted annually to appropriate officials.

### **Affiliations**

As a part of the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology's Applied and Academic Autism Services Initiative, RCAAS staff work closely with the GSAPP faculty, Dean's office staff, and staff from the **Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center (DDDC)**.

The RCAAS is also affiliated with **Autism New Jersey**, a non-profit organization that provides information, referrals, conferences, individual- and state-level advocacy, and more. In addition, the RCAAS is an affiliate of the **New Jersey Association for Applied Behavior Analysis (NJABA)**, and **Applied Behavior Analysis International (ABAI)**.

## **General Information**

The Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services is located on the Douglass Campus of Rutgers University at 102 Nichol Ave., New Brunswick, NJ 08901 Phone: 848-445-3973

1. Operating hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Professional staff are available 8:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., participants typically attend the program from 9:00a.m. to 3:00p.m.
2. The RCAAS is currently organized into two teams, each of which are overseen by a Behavior Analyst/Team Leader. The Executive Director oversees the two team leaders and all other clinical staff.
3. All full-time RCAAS staff hold current certification in behavior analysis at various levels (e.g., RBT, BCaBA, BCBA, BCBA-D)
4. All medical emergencies, accidents, or unusual incidents are documented in Incident Reports. All such incidents are reported to the participant's parents, their RCAAS Team Leader, the Executive Director, and if applicable, the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities.
5. If a program participant arrives at the program ill or becomes ill during the day, RCAAS staff will contact a supervisor. Parents will be contacted as necessary (see **Medical Procedures**).
6. Telephone calls are an important means of communication; however, direct-care staff need to focus their attention on supporting program participants throughout the day. Therefore, parents/support coordinators are requested to only call supervisory staff (i.e., Behavior Analysts, Executive Director) unless it is an emergency. Alternatively, parents/support coordinators may call the main number for the RCAAS (848-445-3973) to speak with administrative office staff who will put messages through to voice mail when clinical staff are unavailable to take calls unless it is an emergency.

### **Admission to the RCAAS**

Applications for admission to the RCAAS are only accepted **once a year** via our website ([rcaas.rutgers.edu](http://rcaas.rutgers.edu)) during our open application process. The open application process occurs in the spring each year around March. There is no "waiting list" for admission to the RCAAS. Any individual that has previously submitted an application to the RCAAS, who was not selected for admission, must re-apply during a subsequent open application process to ensure further consideration for admission to the program.

The RCAAS serves adults age 21 and beyond that meet the following criteria:

1. The individual has a diagnosis of autism.
2. The individual is approved to participate in the NJ DDD Supports Program (i.e., they have a budget provided by Medicaid for support services), or can demonstrate that they have access to an alternate source of funding for support services.
3. The individual has a desire and the capacity for community-based employment.

The RCAAS is committed to serving individuals with a wide range of support needs. Current RCAAS program participants include individuals assigned to each of the five budget tiers (A-E) within the NJ DDD fee-for-service system. For example, the RCAAS serves some adults with autism who are unable to communicate through vocal speech, require significant support in the completion of most skills of daily living, and/or have a history of challenging behavior; the RCAAS also serves some adults with ASD who possess degrees from four-year universities, have driver's licenses, and are largely independent in terms of self-care.

The RCAAS reviews every application that is received during the admissions process. The application review process involves several stages of evaluation to assess the degree to which an individual applicant is a good fit with the strategic admission goals that have been identified for a particular year by the RCAAS administration in concert with the RCAAS Advisory Board.

### **Program Tours**

RCAAS program participants spend approximately 97% of program hours engaged in community-based employment and recreational settings throughout the Rutgers University campus. Consequently, program tours are not always practical, and having a group of people observe our program participants within their inclusive work and/or recreational settings can be disruptive and quite stigmatizing. The RCAAS can accommodate requests for meetings with parents of prospective applicants at the program's headquarters building which is located on the Douglass Campus of Rutgers University.

## **Policy on Research**

The RCAAS exists to advance knowledge and understanding surrounding issues faced by adults with autism throughout the state of NJ and beyond. Towards this end, RCAAS faculty and staff have a strong commitment to conducting and disseminating groundbreaking research related to the identification of evidenced-based practices for helping adults on the spectrum realize their goals. Individuals interested in applying for admission to the RCAAS should note that, if they are selected for admission, it is likely that they will be asked to collaborate with Rutgers faculty and staff in participating in research.

The core curriculum of the Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services is informed by the science of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). An ABA model of service delivery provides a framework that allows for the design of learning and work environments that recognize and support individual competencies, encourage skill development, minimize the need for problem behavior, and respect an individual's right to make choices and have control over their life to the extent that this is possible. The use of ABA teaching methods relies heavily on the implementation of precise instructional techniques. We continuously collect and analyze data to track each participant's progress and to make decisions regarding his or her instructional program. We are committed to ensuring that your son or daughter is receiving the maximum benefit from the time they spend at the RCAAS.

As a program that uses the principles of ABA and relies on direct observation and data for decision-making, the RCAAS clinical staff, as well as GSAPP Clinical Faculty, regularly observe each participant's instructional sessions across center-based and community-based environments, and conduct instructional/behavioral assessments over the course of each year to ensure a high quality of instruction. None of these activities interfere with or alter your son or daughter's instructional program in any way.

Occasionally, video recordings are used to minimize disruption to the instructional environment and to allow for more extensive collection of data. These observations and data reviews are conducted to ensure that maximal instructional opportunities are provided. Whenever we identify practices that could be improved, we share the information with RCAAS direct-support staff.

In addition to the ongoing clinical use of the data gained by observation and assessments, we also sometimes use these data to document the effectiveness of our instructional technology. It is central to the mission of the RCAAS to share information about the impact of our strategies with the professional ABA community and the autism community.

The instructional strategies used at the RCAAS have empirical evidence for their success. Consistent with that goal, the staff of the RCAAS seeks to identify new state-of-the-art instructional strategies. These new strategies are often learned/inspired through attendance at professional conferences and the review of current research. It is our goal at the center to continually update our methods and utilize the most effective technology available. In some cases, there may be more than one method or procedural variation of a method for teaching skills to our learners. In an attempt to find the best instructional strategies for each program participant, our staff may wish to compare teaching methods. This is often done on a case-by-case basis as part of our instructional practices. Sometimes, we are interested in making broader comparisons of instructional methods across a number of program participants.

Evaluations of teaching methods may sometimes require that program participants are engaged in specialized teaching or assessment sessions conducted by RCAAS faculty/staff outside of the typical instructional environment in assessment space or workspace with minimal distractions. This alternate setting will be a location regularly used by staff/participants for assessments and/or work sessions that require less distracting environments. In these cases, sessions are coordinated with clinical staff to be minimally disruptive to daily schedules. The information being evaluated in these sessions is directly relevant to the participants' learning and will be shared with parents and staff through the typical channels of communication (e.g., email, phone, communication logs).

Data that are collected, analyzed and shared for the purpose of teaching, training, conference presentation, and/or publication are always presented with no identifying information, or the identification of particular program participants is disguised. For any research project that requires a change or disruption to your son or daughter's regular activities or that involves data collection in any other way than described above, a specific description and letter requesting your informed consent will be sent to you according to the guidelines set forth by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Please call Robert LaRue, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Clinical Professor, Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at 848-932-4500 if you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the research policy at the RCAAS.



## **Video and Photos of RCAAS Program Participants**

The ability to share the work that we are doing at the RCAAS is crucial to the mission of our organization. A consent form requesting permission to record video and take photographs of RCAAS program participants will be provided to participants/caregivers upon admission to the program. With participant/caregiver approval, photos and videos may be used for research, training students and staff, in presentations at conferences, marketing/fundraising materials for the center (e.g., printed materials and posted on various social media platforms), and by journalists/reporters looking to feature the RCAAS in a variety of media outlets. The identity of RCAAS program participants will never be publicly disseminated without explicit consent from the individual and/or their caregiver that it is appropriate to share this information for a particular purpose.

## **RCAAS Policy on Scheduling Observations of Program Participants**

Parents/Support Coordinators/Other Professionals visiting the RCAAS program to conduct an observation of a program participant must schedule the visit and receive confirmation from the participant's Behavior Analyst no less than one week prior to the observation unless an unusual circumstance warrants more immediate access. The participant's Behavior Analyst must be present during the observation in order to answer any questions that arise and also to ensure the least amount of disruption to the participant's workday. This amount of notice and RCAAS staff involvement is required due to the variety of settings/facilities that our participants work in, some requiring special access which must be sought from unit administration prior to the visit. For each family, a maximum of two observations per month can be accommodated to allow for staff availability. Observations will be one-hour in length and will include discussion/explanation from a staff member.

## **Communication & Meeting with RCAAS Staff**

RCAAS staff are committed to forming collaborative relationships with Parents/Caregivers/Support Coordinators of RCAAS participants to ensure that the individuals we serve are well supported across settings. The RCAAS does not utilize a single standard system for regular communication between program staff and participant families, support coordinators, etc. Instead, RCAAS staff work with the other members of a program participant's support network in order to devise a system that is most preferred and effective for them.

For example, a communication system could consist of a physical “program book” providing written session notes/communication logs that can be transported from home to program each day, email and/or phone updates from a participant’s Behavior Analyst provided at regular intervals, or some parents prefer to be contacted only in the event that there is some aspect of their participant’s programming that needs to be discussed.

RCAAS staff closely monitor the progress of all program participants towards meeting the goals outlined in their Individual Support Plan (ISP) on a continuous basis. The RCAAS does not utilize a single standard system for reporting program participant progress to parents/caregivers/support coordinators etc. (i.e., quarterly progress reports, annual meetings, etc.). RCAAS staff work with the other members of a program participant’s support network to devise a progress reporting system that is most preferred and effective for them. Parents/Caregivers of RCAAS participants who are interested in receiving regular progress reports or in having regular meetings to discuss their participants’ progress are welcome to do so by scheduling these meetings with the RCAAS Behavior Analyst assigned to oversee the participant’s programming.

Whenever possible, RCAAS staff should be present during any formal meeting that directly pertains to support services that are being provided by the RCAAS. In particular, RCAAS staff should always be included in meetings pertaining to the development of the ISP document for any RCAAS program participant.

Programmatic questions and concerns should be directed to the RCAAS Behavior Analyst assigned to oversee a particular participant’s case. Behavior analysts can be reached by phone, email and in person by scheduling an appointment.

### **RCAAS Participant Employment & Other Benefits**

All RCAAS participants are encouraged to pursue community-based employment for a competitive wage. RCAAS staff can provide general advice and referrals to resources related to how employment income may affect other sources of income/benefits. However, individual participants, parents and/or guardians are ultimately responsible for understanding how employment income could potentially offset other benefits (i.e., Social Security), and for the proper and accurate reporting of any employment income to the appropriate benefit agencies.

## **RCAAS Participant Attendance**

Participants attending the Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services do so according to the RCAAS calendar. The calendar is prepared in advance and sent to parents, caregivers, group homes, etc. and posted on the RCAAS website. If a participant will not be attending program on a given day, the parent/guardian or group home staff must call/text the Behavior Analyst overseeing the participant's case by 8:15 a.m. to advise them that the participant will not be in.

In the event of an illness that is deemed to be contagious, it is advisable that the parent(s)/guardian provide this information so that RCAAS staff can alert other participants' families and clinical staff. In the event that a participant will be late, the parent(s)/guardian or group home staff should notify the RCAAS as soon as possible and make sure that appropriate transportation is arranged.

## **Transportation**

The RCAAS seeks to develop an individualized transportation plan for all program participants using a variety of transportation methods, however the general availability of transportation services provided by RCAAS staff between a program participant's residence and the RCAAS will depend on a number of factors including the distance between an individual's residence and the RCAAS, the availability of public transportation, and the support needs of the individual. Ideally, the mode of transportation that is identified for a particular participant is one that allows the individual to be as independent as possible within an inclusive community-based environment while in transit. Whenever available, program participants will access the RCAAS via public transportation with the ongoing support of RCAAS clinical staff as needed.

## **RCAAS Program Participant Suspension/Discharge**

In accordance with the Supports Program Policies & Procedures Manual (Section 17.7.5.12) the Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services shall develop, maintain and implement suspension & discharge policies for participants that attend the program. The RCAAS maintains sole authority and responsibility for establishing and implementing these policies as outlined below.

### **Policy**

Suspension or discharge from the Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services will be evaluated on an individual case by case basis by the RCAAS administration.

## Suspension

If it is determined that the Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services can no longer meet the needs of the participant, and/or if the participant, or the parent/guardian violates the RCAAS's policies that impede the implementation of the participant's Individualized Support Plan (ISP), the participant will be suspended from the program.

- Reason for the suspension will be explained in detail and presented in writing
  - Potential reasons for suspension:
    - Failure to submit required paperwork (i.e., annual physical exam).
    - Excessive absenteeism
    - Failure to comply with the RCAAS policies & procedures or failure to follow the guidelines set forth in the RCAAS Parent handbook
    - And any other reasons that the RCAAS administration deems appropriate
  - Process for making the determination for the suspension:
    - The RCAAS administration will determine that the reasons for suspension are reasonable
    - Warning process
      - Parent/guardians & support coordinators will be contacted and informed that a suspension is pending
    - Determining length of the suspension
      - The length of the suspension will be determined by the RCAAS administration
        - Suspensions may last for 3-5 days
        - Suspensions could be indefinite until a mutually agreed upon condition is met (e.g., return to program after a hospitalization can only occur once written clearance from the physician is obtained)
    - Notification of the suspension:
      - Formal written notification will be sent to:
        - The individual and/or their parent/ guardian
        - The Support Coordinator
        - NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)
- Return to program – a participant can return to the RCAAS on the date indicated in the suspension letter or if the conditions of the suspension have been met

- Appeal process
  - After receiving the reasons for making the determination, the parent/guardian will have the right to appeal the decision of the Behavior Analyst overseeing the participant's programming by requesting an appeal hearing with the Executive Director of the RCAAS.

## **Discharge**

If it is determined that the Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services can no longer meet the needs of the participant, and/or if the participant or the parent/guardian violates the RCAAS' policies in a way that impedes the implementation of the participant's Individualized Support Plan (ISP), the participant will be discharged from the program.

- Reason for the discharge will be explained in detail and presented in writing
  - Potential reasons for discharge:
    - Exhibits excessive absenteeism
    - Failure to comply with RCAAS policies
    - Multiple suspensions for the same reason
    - The participant's support network has determined that the services provided by the RCAAS no longer meets the individual's needs
    - The participant has a medical condition that undermines the individual's ability to attend the RCAAS or one that requires highly specialized medical support that the RCAAS does not provide.
    - And any other reasons that the RCAAS administration deems appropriate
- A minimum of thirty (30) days written notice will be given to the participant's parent/guardian & Support Coordinator prior to discharge.
  - Immediate discharge shall be allowed only when the following occurs
    - The participant is no longer part of the Supports Program (SP)
      - The participant is not eligible to receive DDD services/funding
- Process for making the determination for discharge:
  - The RCAAS administration will determine that the reasons for discharge are reasonable
  - Warning process
    - Parent/guardians & support coordinators will be contacted and informed that discharge is being considered
  - Notification of the discharge:
    - To the individual or their parent/ guardian
    - Support Coordinator
    - NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

- Appeal process
  - After receiving the reasons for making the determination, the parent/guardian will have the right to appeal the decision of the RCAAS Behavior Analyst assigned to their case by requesting an appeal hearing with the Executive Director of the RCAAS.

### **RCAAS Staff**

Members of the RCAAS staff include administrators, Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), Behavior Technicians (RBTs), Job Coaches, and administrative office personnel. All members of the RCAAS clinical staff are required to pursue ongoing continuing education related to the field of adult autism services and are also encouraged to pursue board certification in behavior analysis (BCBA).

### **Minimum Requirements for all RCAAS Staff**

1. Minimum of 18 years of age
2. Central Registry check is required upon hire for all employees
3. Valid driver's license and abstract (not to exceed 5 points) if driving is required

In accordance with NJ State law, applicants must undergo and authorize the University and the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities to conduct fingerprint, criminal history, and/or child abuse record checks with various law enforcement agencies, including, but not limited to: the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Identification Division and/or the New Jersey Division of State Police, Bureau of Identification. Additionally, all employees are subject to testing for the use of controlled/dangerous substances prior to employment and at random intervals throughout their employment.

### **Crisis Management**

At times, program participants may engage in behavior that puts herself or himself or others at risk of injury, and a formal behavioral intervention plan may or may not be in place. In order to preserve the integrity of the instructional setting, the protocol for addressing a serious spontaneous aggressive or self-injurious behavior of a client whose behavior is momentarily unique, and/or whose behavior momentarily is not responding to the formal behavioral plan, will be addressed through crisis management techniques. All RCAAS staff are certified in crisis management techniques using the Safety-Care™ curriculum, which is an ABA-based curriculum. This curriculum focuses on prevention of crises using antecedent strategies that limit the likelihood that crises will occur.

## **Confidentiality**

RCAAS complies with HIPAA regulations regarding the safe keeping of all protected health information for our participants. The privacy officer is responsible for ensuring that all protected health information at the center is safeguarded using technology afforded to us through Rutgers University. This includes password protection, encryption and backup and recovery systems for information.

Protected health information is shared only with team members directly involved in the care of an individual participant. When sharing protected health information for an individual participant would benefit that participant, written permission will be sought from the participant/caregiver.

Any physical copies of protected health information will be stored on site in a locked cabinet and will be accessible only through administration.

## **Building Security**

The RCAAS headquarters building is locked at all times and is only accessible to RCAAS employees and program participants with key card access. All visitors must check in with the building administrator.

## **Staff Expectations During Medical Incidents**

1. In order to provide effective emergency care, all RCAAS program staff shall maintain active certification in CPR/First Aid in addition to completing supplemental health and safety training to be conducted by a NJDDD approved provider.
2. The telephone number of the poison control center and emergency services shall be posted in several locations throughout the RCAAS, and staff shall be informed regarding procedures for calling these numbers.
3. In the event of a medical emergency, staff are expected to take life saving measures that are essential and to contact the rescue squad and RCAAS administrative staff as rapidly as possible. A participant's support staff will accompany the participant to a medical facility. An administrative staff member will meet parents/guardian/group home provider if appropriate.
4. In the event of serious emergencies, the rescue squad will be contacted immediately. In the event of a lesser injury, the parent/guardian/group home provider will be notified and the participant may be transported to the nearest healthcare facility by an RCAAS staff member. If the participant requires emergency treatment at a local hospital emergency room, **the parent(s) /guardian(s)/group home service provider must come at once to meet the staff at the hospital.**

5. Any minor injuries such as scratches, bruises, splinters, etc., that occur at the RCAAS, and are treated by the RCAAS staff, should be further treated by the parents/guardian/group home provider when the adult gets home. (Example: ointment, cream, change the bandages, etc.)

**NOTE: All major and moderate injuries are to be reported as Unusual Incident Reports by the RCAAS UIR Coordinator according to NJDDD Circular #14 and Circular #15.**

### **Policy Related to Required Medical Treatment/Illness**

All program participants are required to provide record of a complete physical examination with an updated immunization record (including the Hepatitis “B” and Varicella (chickenpox) Vaccination) before entering the program. Annual physicals must be completed and documentation of the physical must be received by the RCAAS by July 1<sup>st</sup> of every year. Fifteen days prior to the July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline a reminder will be sent. If the documentation is not received by July 1<sup>st</sup> the participant will be suspended from the program until such documentation is provided.

Failure to meet the requirement for immunization against communicable disease will result in exclusion from the program unless:

- A physician’s written statement is submitted to the RCAAS indicating that an immunization is medically contraindicated.
- A parent or guardian’s written statement is submitted to the RCAAS explaining how the administration of immunizing agents conflicts with the participant’s exercise of bona fide religious tenets or practices

The following medical forms will be sent home in the parent/guardian/group home packet by the end of April. Forms must be signed and/or updated and returned back to the RCAAS on or before July 1<sup>st</sup>:

- Either Physical Examination or Health Information form
- Permission to Diagnose and Treat form
- Emergency Information Sheet
- Parents/guardians/group home provider of any participant with known severe allergic reactions should complete the Emergency Health Care Plan (EHCP) in consultation with their participant’s physician, and have the physician cosign and authorize the emergency procedures (e.g. Epi-Pen). Please contact the RCAAS administrative office for the EHCP form.



## **Illnesses**

1. When your participant is ill, please call the RCAAS between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. to say he/she will not be in.
2. If the illness is known to be contagious, it is even more important that you notify the RCAAS so that the other Parents/home representatives can be alerted to the symptoms of the illness (e.g., pink-eye, chicken pox, strep throat, Roseola, etc.).
3. When your participant has a fever, diarrhea, or any other kind of illness, he/she cannot return to program until symptoms subside or he/she has been treated with medication for 24 hours, or has a physician's note to return to the program. (Also see attendance policy).
4. If a participant is absent from the RCAAS due to illness for a period of five (5) consecutive days, a physician's written approval/clearance is required prior to the individual's return to program.
5. If your participant is ill during the day, and is unable to participate in program activities your participant will need to be picked up by a parent, home representative, or the designated emergency contact person. This decision is up to the discretion of the supervising administrator.

### **Attendance Policy (as it relates to illnesses)**

The purpose of this policy is to protect and maintain a safe and healthy program environment for all individuals associated with the RCAAS. Any participant with a suspected or confirmed case of a communicable disease will be excluded from the program. The parent/guardian, or group home staff will be contacted immediately in the event of a suspected communicable disease and will be required to pick up their participant as soon as possible from the RCAAS. For this reason in particular it is imperative that we have emergency numbers where we can reach a home representative at all times should a participant become ill and need immediate transportation to their residence. The RCAAS will require that an individual be removed from the program for symptoms including, but not limited to:

- Fever
- Diarrhea more than 2 times within an hour
- Vomiting more than once without reasonable explanation
- Pink-eye with discharge
- Body Rash
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Sore throat or swollen glands
- Severe coughing
- Runny nose with heavy greenish discharge
- Uncovered weeping skin lesions

- Injury required to be evaluated by the physician in an emergency room
- The individual is too weak or tired to participate in routine daily activity

A Physician's note will be required for the return of any participant following a suspected or confirmed case of a communicable disease. **\*Please note that the list is not to be considered all-inclusive and that RCAAS staff may use their discretion in contacting parents/home representatives.**

- The participant cannot return to the day program until symptoms subside (for 24 hours, or he/she has been treated with medication for 24 hours, or has a physician's note to return to the program).
- If the participant is at the RCAAS in apparent ill health for two (2) consecutive days, they may be sent home and temporarily suspended. The RCAAS will:
  - Notify the participant's support coordinator
  - Document the illness & any action taken and place in the individual record
  - A Physician's note will be required for the return of any participant following absences that last for a period of five (5) days

### **Policy for Administering Medication**

The Rutgers Center for Adult Autism Services (RCAAS) disclaims any and all responsibility for the diagnosis and treatment of the illness of any participant. The RCAAS recognizes that the attendance of a participant may be contingent upon the timely administration of medication duly prescribed by a physician, and will permit the dispensation of medication in the RCAAS only when the participant's health and continuing attendance in RCAAS so require and when the medication is administered in accordance with this policy.

For the purpose of this policy, "medication" means any prescribed drug or prescribed over-the-counter medication or nutritional supplement and includes, but is not limited to, aspirin and cough drops.

The following procedure must be followed before qualified personnel will be permitted to administer medication to a participant:

1. The medication must be delivered to the RCAAS in its original prescription labeled container with the participant's name, date, name of medication, dosage, schedule, and physician's name. The label on the medication MUST match the written prescription. Non-prescription drugs are to be in original container.

2. Physician's written and signed statement of the medication's name, the purpose of its administration, the specific participant for whom it is intended, and the time when its use will be discontinued must accompany medication. A copy of the original prescription must be submitted along with this form. The prescription must state the individual's name, date, name of the medication, dosage and the time of day that the medication should be administered.
3. Written medication request from a parent or guardian giving permission to administer the medication prescribed by the physician must accompany medication.
4. When a long term medication is discontinued or changed, a written statement is required by the parent or guardian.

All participant medication will be appropriately maintained and secured by the RCAAS clinical staff. RCAAS clinical staff may report any participant who appears to be adversely affected by the administration of medication and recommend to the RCAAS Executive Director that the participant be referred back to the physician for a review of medication.

### **Procedure for Administering PRN (i.e., "As needed") medications**

Prior to administering any PRN medication, the staff at the RCAAS will make every attempt to contact the parent/guardian to inform them that the medication will be administered. If medication has been given, a phone call to the parent/guardian/residential staff will be made to inform them if and when medication was administered.

### **Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect**

All cases of suspected abuse or neglect are reported to the NJ Department of Human Services in accordance with state mandates. Upon report of an alleged instance of abuse or neglect administration will take immediate steps to ensure the safety of the participant including medical care if necessary. Caregivers are informed of any alleged unusual incident within one business day. An Unusual Incident Report is filed with the NJ DHS as soon as possible.

### **Delayed Openings/Closings**

The RCAAS uses an electronic notification system called "Remind". This system notifies all families/group homes and staff when a delayed opening, early dismissal or unscheduled closing is imminent (email, phone and text). Parents/Guardians/Home representative must complete and submit the appropriate Remind information form in order to get connected to this system.

If the RCAAS is on a delayed opening, the degree to which RCAAS staff will be available to provide morning transportation will be evaluated on a case by case basis. RCAAS staff will report to the center at 10 AM, and the participants will be expected to arrive at 10:30 AM.

If the program is open during inclement weather and the conditions do not improve before midday, we will have an early dismissal at 1:15 PM. Transportation will begin at 1 PM. In most cases involving an early dismissal the RCAAS will provide normal transportation for participants from the RCAAS to their places of residence. If we have a delayed opening, we will not have an early dismissal. It will be one or the other.

It is imperative that we have emergency numbers where we can reach a participant's parent/guardian/home representative should the program have an early dismissal. We cannot release participants to depart the program without having assurance that someone will be home to receive the participant. If we are unable to contact the parent/guardian/home representative and the RCAAS staff must leave without a participant, the parent/guardian/home representative will then become responsible for the participant's transportation to his/her place of residence, and a RCAAS staff member will be required to wait with the participant at the program until the arrival of the parent/guardian/home representative. We will also use the Remind notification system to inform you when the program is experiencing utility or phone problems.

### **Hiring RCAAS Staff to Work Outside of the Program**

RCAAS staff may choose to enter into a personal contract with a participant's family to provide services outside of the context of the center. Any agreed upon contract between an RCAAS employee and a caregiver should be made to include service hours outside the center's operating hours. The RCAAS administration may elect to request that staff suspend any agreement to provide services to an RCAAS participant if the agreement undermines the staff person's ability to effectively meet the expectations of their role at the RCAAS or if it is established that the agreement represents an ethical/professional conflict of interest.

### **Gift Giving**

There is sometimes discomfort about the appropriateness of gift giving to staff within the program context or the feeling that gifts might be expected, especially at holiday time. Some families use gift giving as a means to say "thanks," but not all families are in a position to do so though they equally appreciate staff effort. At the RCAAS gifts are **never** expected.

The staff at the RCAAS have a strong commitment to providing all program participants with the same high-quality support services without the expectation that they would ever receive anything extra in return. Gifts that are given to the RCAAS program as a whole (to be shared by both staff and participants) are always welcome. For those who wish to give an individual RCAAS staff member(s) a token of appreciation, we recommend a card or letter, or gift valued below \$25. Participants/caregivers might also consider a donation to an organization such as the RCAAS or other non-profit in honor of the staff member(s).