

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Archway Programs Celebrates New Facility with Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

Archway Early Learning (AEL) opens its door to a waiting community

ATCO, NEW JERSEY (July 7, 2025) – Archway Programs celebrated the grand opening of Archway Early Learning (AEL) with a ribbon-cutting ceremony mere moments before students arrived for their first day of the Extended School Year (ESY).



Lower School Principal John Petsch (center) and Executive Director, Education, Susan Lafferty (right), cut the ribbon on the new Archway Learning Center. George Richards, CEO and CFO (left), and Vice President and COO Shawn Gibson (far right), were also in attendance.

After nearly three years of development, the doors are open, and the new AEL program is now running. Designed for students ages 3 to 8 with diverse abilities, the program features a 2-to-1 student-to-staff ratio and a multisensory approach to learning. It emphasizes socially appropriate methods, responses, and play daily. All related services are provided on-site, and students have access to a new playground and exploration areas as part of the full-day program.



Jazz Jasania Wallace, a paraprofessional, and Asia Burke, a paraprofessional (seated), along with Jessica Bonastia, a special education teacher (behind the desk), await the arrival of their students.

The new location boasts large, bright, and airy classrooms equipped with colorful artwork and a variety of work and play stations.

You could feel the energy and excitement as special education teachers Jessica Bonastia and Alexa Elliott eagerly awaited the arrival of their students. Bonastia created the scope and sequence for the program and looks forward to watching the students' progress in the specialized environment.

“I am so proud to be a part of the opening of Archway Early Learning,” said Ms. Bonastia. “This program will provide our students with great opportunities to grow, learn, and succeed in a safe and specialized environment. We are excited for everything this opportunity brings!”

Each child's individualized program is supported by a variety of therapies, often including Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), Speech and Language Therapy (S/L), and Behavior Intervention.

Students receive a personalized education that focuses on early literacy, numeracy, social skills, emotional regulation, and play, all taught through engaging and hands-on activities. Students develop phonemic awareness, letter recognition, and early writing skills while exploring math concepts, such as counting and basic operations, through interactive materials.



Michelle Masciarelli, paraprofessional (from left); Heather Powell, paraprofessional; Alexa Elliott, special education teacher; and Henry Keresty, paraprofessional (right), await the arrival of their students on the first day of school.

Social skills such as taking turns, following directions, and emotional expression are cultivated through group activities and peer interactions. Play-based learning fosters creativity, problem-solving, and positive relationships, supporting both academic and social development. Through sensory-rich, interactive experiences, students build essential skills for success in a nurturing environment.

Enrichment activities include swimming, art, music therapy, physical education, and sensory activities that are particularly beneficial for students with autism. Students may also follow a sensory diet created by their Occupational Therapist.

The entire staff is excited about the new learning opportunity, and Alexa Elliot, a special education teacher, expressed her enthusiasm for the new beginning.

“I am so excited to be starting this new journey with the Archway Early Learning program,” said Ms. Elliot. “A lot of hard work has gone into this program, and I am looking forward to our first day. I can’t wait to see the growth, learning, and memories that will take place in this building!”

If you would like more information about the AEL program, please contact Karen Tiver, Supervisor/School Intake, at 856 767-5757 ext. 403.

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About Archway Programs

Since 1965, Archway Programs has met the individualized needs of thousands of families throughout New Jersey. Archway Programs is a diverse, non-profit, human services organization which includes approved private schools for students with disabilities in addition to several model programs providing unmatched services. Built on a solid foundation of core values, providing safety, possessing compassion, and promoting individuality, Archway Programs strives to improve the life of every individual served. Our goal is to ensure that each individual's needs are met, and customized services are provided and partnered with passionate, committed, and talented professionals in a safe environment. Over 450 individuals are currently employed by Archway Programs, and this dedicated and talented staff provides services to over 1,800 children and adults requiring individualized care. Please visit www.archwayprograms.org for more information.