Language Enrichment and Articulation Preschool
(LEAP)

The LEAP classroom is designed to meet the needs of preschool students who have significant delays within the area of communication and who require frequent therapy sessions to make meaningful gains as well as a classroom to promote carryover and generalization of speech and language skills. There are two components to the LEAP program—a Speech and Language focused classroom period and individualized speech and language therapy sessions.

The LEAP class will meet from 8:40-10:40 AM & from 12:40-2:40 PM Monday-Thursday. Students may receive speech therapy immediately before or after this class period upon the recommendation of the child’s IEP team. Students will enroll in either the AM class session or the PM class session.

Speech therapy: Students who have significant speech needs (i.e., multiple speech sound errors, a motor speech disorder (i.e., dysarthria, Childhood Apraxia of Speech) or exhibit use of multiple phonological processes) may receive up to 4 25-minute therapy sessions per week (as determined by the child’s IEP team). These therapy sessions will be led by one of the speech-language-pathologists within the LEAP program (Amy Marrero, Nicole Hatchett, or Lisa Zartman).

Classroom session: The two hour classroom session addresses communication skills through typical preschool activities. Class components include circle time / large group (i.e, book reading / literacy activities), small group (i.e., hands on activities such as art / sensory play related to targeted vocabulary or a focus book), snack time (to address pragmatic skills) and an unstructured work time (to allow students the opportunity to use the skills they learn in an unstructured setting with their peers. While our day may look very similar to many other preschool classrooms, each activity is specifically chosen to enhance the speech, language and literacy skills of our students. Classroom activities are chosen to address children’s language development, including phonology (speech patterns), semantics (word knowledge, word use, understanding and use of questions), morphology (word structure), syntax (sentence structure, sentence length), and pragmatics (social language skills including following directions, conversing with peers, communicating wants / needs / ideas effectively). Pre-literacy skills (such as phonological awareness, rhyming, letter-sound knowledge) are also systematically addressed within our classroom as many children with communication delays are at risk for later reading and spelling deficits if these skills are not in place during early school years. In addition, during our classroom session teachers work diligently to carry over specific speech and language skills that have been targeted within a child's speech therapy sessions. The LEAP classroom is taught by Lisa Zartman, who is dually certified as a speech-language-pathologist and ECSE teacher with the assistance of an instructional aide, Linda Doss.

LEAP is a specialized classroom with an intense focus on speech and language skills. The class does not focus on a traditional preschool curriculum (i.e., play skills, motor skills, social-emotional-behavioral curriculum) although many of these areas will be addressed naturally within our school day,