

## What is AACES?

Asperger's Awareness, Community Education, and Support (AACES), is a program of Family Service designed to increase independence and decrease isolation among young adults with Asperger's. Each component of AACES supports the transition of young adults, 18-26 years with Asperger's Syndrome and/or PDD/NOS, into adulthood.

This program was established through the efforts of parents and community leaders who were concerned about the lack of programs for adults with disabilities, specifically Asperger's Syndrome and PDD/NOS, and it is a first step in filling a significant service gap.

AACES services will help these young adults:

- develop and learn social skills
- achieve educational goals
- find/maintain employment
- learn appropriate independent living skills
- receive treatment for anxiety and depression if needed

Staff work to create situations where members learn additional skills in social interactions, and then can practice those skills as part of the program.

### AACES Location and Contact

Suite 012 at the Oxford Valley Mall  
*Near the fountain entrance to the mall*  
Amy Conte, MS  
Coordinator of AACES  
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### FAMILY SERVICE ASSOCIATION Serving Bucks County residents in their homes, in their communities and in our offices

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Langhorne, 19047  
215-757-6916

Quakertown Office  
312 W. Broad Street  
Quakertown, 18951  
215-538-1616

Doylestown Office  
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Doylestown, 18901  
215-345-0550

Bristol Office  
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Bristol, 19007  
215-781-6602

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#### Our Mission

To protect, maintain, strengthen, and enhance individuals,  
families, and children, and their social and  
psychological functioning

#### Our Vision

Strong communities of healthy individuals, families, and children

#### Family Service Association

Protects the elderly  
Reduces substance abuse  
Increases opportunities for adults  
Improves lives of those with mental illness  
Prepares children and adolescents for the future  
Improves the quality of life for those living with HIV/AIDS

Family Service is a member of The United Way of Bucks County and is accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services, Inc. The agency is licensed by The State of Pennsylvania to provide both outpatient Mental Health, and Drug and Alcohol services.

Services and employment are provided in a nondiscriminatory manner without regard to race, sex, color, national origin, ancestry, religious creed, disability, age, or limited English proficiency.

This program is funded by Bucks County Behavioral Health System, The Pew Charitable Trusts/OMG Collaborative, Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry/Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Foundations Community Partnership, The Allerton Foundation, and donors like you.

# AACES

## Asperger's Awareness, Community Education, and Support

Helping young adults with Asperger's lead  
more independent lives



Family  
Service  
Association

Strengthening the lives of individuals, families,  
and communities since 1953.

## Tracks to Employment:

Job Readiness Workshops, Social Skills Seminars  
Service Learning Center

Tracks to Employment program offers several components to help young adults gain the community and vocational experiences that lead toward self-sufficiency. Individuals who seek employment can participate in an 8 week Job Readiness Workshops focused on skills like completing a job application, work ethic, professionalism, resume writing and job interviewing. A twelve week Social Skills Seminar focuses on the “soft skills” essential to retaining employment addresses topics such as effective communication in the workplace, working with a team, self-advocacy, and effective emotional management in the workplace. Lastly, participants have the opportunity to put these skills to use at Déjà vu Thrift, a new Service Learning Center component of this program. The Service Learning Center gives a ‘real world’ opportunity for participants to learn on-the-job hard skills and those “unwritten rules” of a workplace environment. The Service Learning Center is a safe environment for participants to make mistakes, improve their weaknesses, and find their strengths. An individualized approach with each Tracks to Employment participant enables each person to set goals and to be linked with community based work experiences, job coaching, mentoring and other services as required.

## Parent Involvement and Support

Family Service Association recognizes that there are unique challenges for parents and family members of those with Asperger’s or PDD/NOS. Families may experience a range of concerns and feelings as they help their son or daughter move toward independence. Through a combination of educational programs, support groups, and individual consultation, the AACES staff will help family members find answers to their questions, link them to available community services, and assist them as they navigate the system of programs and benefits available for their family member.



## Coffeehouse: Member Socialization

AACES offers several socialization programs for members to gain social comfort and to make connections with other young people. These include **Coffeehouse** (for individuals between 18 – 26 who have graduated from high school), **Junior Coffeehouse** (for young people between 16 and 21 who are still in high school), and **27+** for adults over the age of 27.

Through a combination of planned activities, discussion groups, and casual conversation, members have the opportunity to: enhance their communication skills; develop problem-solving skills; and strengthen their ability to understand and respond to non-verbal cues.

## On My Own: Case Management, Benefits and Resources

To gain independence, an adult with Asperger’s or PDD/NOS may need to learn about benefits and resources and develop the skills necessary to access and manage those benefits. The AACES staff at Family Service Association provides individual case management services to support young adults as they negotiate the different systems of benefits and develop their self-advocacy skills.

## Admission criteria to the AACES program includes:

- Age 18-26
- High School graduate or completed GED
- A diagnosis of Asperger’s or PDD/NOS
- IQ score 70 or above
- Resident of Bucks County
- Demonstrates motivation to participate in the program, and agrees to adhere to program expectations which will be explained at admission