



**Barrier-Free**

Create. Express. Achieve.

# Life Skills & Social Studio Handbook

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Supporting Neurodiversity

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## Welcome to Barrier-Free's Life Skills & Social Studio!

This handbook will serve as your guide to The Studio and our mission to support the development of life skills and social skills through an integrated-arts model with a focus on interpersonal interaction, authentic practice, and group collaboration.

### Disclaimer

As a condition of enrollment at Barrier-Free's Life Skills & Social Studio, all participants and families agree to abide by all the policies set forth by Barrier-Free and its staff.

Barrier-Free, reserves the right to terminate any participant's membership at any time for violation of policies, misconduct, or inappropriate actions by either the participants or their families/legal guardian(s).

### Key Contact & Studio Information

#### Studio Address:

7520 Main Street #103  
Sykesville, MD 21784

**Website:** [BarrierFreeMD.com](http://BarrierFreeMD.com)

**Email:** [info@barrierfreemd.com](mailto:info@barrierfreemd.com)

**Phone Number:** 301-799-8669

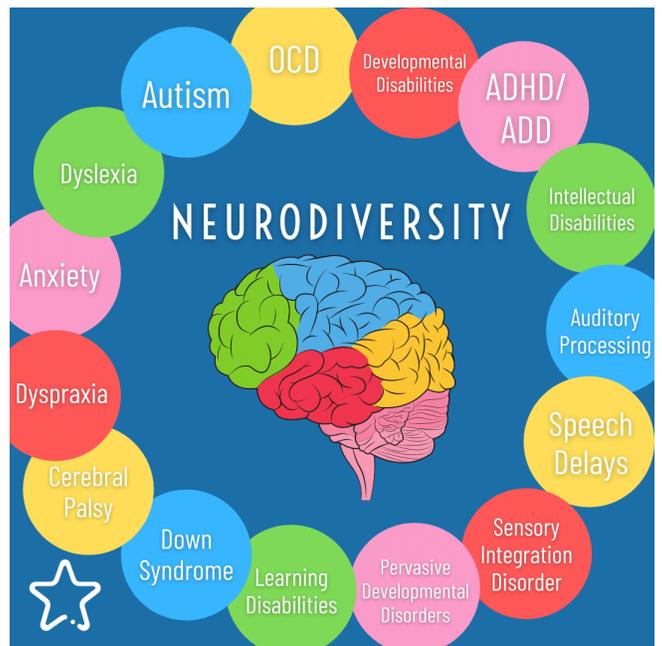
**Facebook:** [Facebook.com/BarrierFreeMD](https://www.facebook.com/BarrierFreeMD)

**Instagram & Twitter:** @BarrierFreeMD

#### Eligibility

Barrier-Free serves neurodiverse adults, ages 18+.

At this time, Barrier-Free does not offer programming for teenagers under the age of 18.



## Studio Staff



**Britt Burr**  
Creative Director & Lead Studio Staff  
301.799.8669  
[BrittBurr@BarrierFreeMD.com](mailto:BrittBurr@BarrierFreeMD.com)



**Lauren Burr**  
Executive Director & Lead Studio Staff  
301.799.8669  
[LaurenBurr@BarrierFreeMD.com](mailto:LaurenBurr@BarrierFreeMD.com)



**Michael Eaton**  
Studio Assistant



**Marie Angier**  
Studio Assistant

## Studio Policies



### SAMPLE STUDIO SCHEDULE

TIME	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
12 - 1pm	Closed	Nonverbal Communication	Closed	Written Communication	Closed
1 - 2pm		Rhythm & Beats		Community Connections	
2 - 3pm	Conversations 101	Creating a Character	Social Media & You	Lights, Camera, Action!	Professional Writing
3 - 4pm		Besties & Buds Friendship Skills		Scheduling Your Day	
4 - 5pm	Cooking Skills	Community Connections	Cooking Skills	Literature & Film	Cooking Skills
5 - 6pm	Community Connections	Dive into Disney	Nintendo Tournament	Phone Calls & Greetings	Storytelling

### Barrier-Free Life Skills & Social Studio is open:

Monday: 3 - 6pm

Tuesday: 12 - 6pm, option to come 12 - 6, 12 - 3, or 3 - 6

Wednesday: 3 - 6pm

Thursday: 12 - 6pm, option to come 12 - 6, 12 - 3, or 3 - 6

Friday: 3 - 6pm

### Community Connections

This is an opportunity for Studio participants to engage with the community and implement our learned life & social skills in society. Community Connections may be within walking distance or may be an outing to a local grocery store, event, or other opportunity.

Barrier-Free provides transportation for outings and participants and parents/guardians must sign a waiver during New Member Intake agreeing to such transportation.

## **Studio Registration & Tuition Payments**

Participants must register in advance for Studio Sessions on the Barrier-Free website at [barrierfreemd.com/studio-registration](http://barrierfreemd.com/studio-registration). No walk-ins accepted.

If paying via credit/debit card, Studio tuition payment is processed when registering online.

If paying via check, Studio tuition payments must be paid in full by the start of the participant's first session within the two-week registration period. Checks should be made payable to Barrier-Free.

Checks may be submitted in-person at the start of a Studio session or sent via mail to:  
Barrier-Free  
7520 Main Street #103  
Sykesville, MD 21784

If paying via funding, invoices/requests for payment must be submitted prior to a participant attending Studio sessions.

### Current Studio Tuition Rates:

3-hour Studio Session: \$40

6-hour Studio Session: \$70

## **Studio Free Sessions/Trials**

All new prospective Studio members are eligible to receive two FREE Studio Sessions. During the first visit, the prospective new Studio member and/or parent/guardian will meet Studio staff and receive a tour of the space.

A Studio staff member will complete an [Intake Checklist](#) that will be reviewed with the new member and/or parent/guardian at the end of the first session. The checklist includes the things we look for when admitting a new member into The Studio. Please note, potential participants DO NOT have to match ALL criteria to be admitted.

After the two free Studio Sessions, if the participant would like to continue attending The Studio, participants and/or parents/guardians must complete the registration packet, review Studio policies & procedures, and sign the Studio Member agreements.

## **Studio Attendance**

Participants are expected to attend the Studio sessions for which they are registered. In the event of a cancellation due to sickness, last minute schedule changes, lack of transportation, etc. Barrier-Free will be happy to apply your Studio payment to a future Studio session but will not issue a direct refund.

Barrier-Free will allow for these changes to be made at a maximum of three sessions per month. Beyond the three cancellations/changes, Barrier-Free reserves the right to deny a participant's request for a Studio session change and will not refund the participant/family.

In the event of a family emergency, major illness or injury, or unforeseeable circumstance that prevents long-term attendance, Barrier-Free will gladly work with the participant/family to determine eligibility for a full refund of Studio tuition.

## **Arrival & Departure**

Participants are expected to arrive and depart their Studio sessions on time. The Studio will be open for participants, 15 minutes prior to session start time, e.g., Studio opens at 11:45am, for a 12:00pm session start-time.

Barrier-Free offers a 15 minute grace period for arrivals, e.g., participants must arrive by 12:15pm on a 12:00pm session start-time. If a participant has a known need to arrive late or depart early, please communicate this to Studio staff by email at [info@barrierfreemd.com](mailto:info@barrierfreemd.com) or by call/text to 301-799-8669 as soon as possible.

Participants must be picked-up or depart The Studio promptly at the session's end-time. If a participant is not picked-up 15 minutes after the session end-time, Barrier-Free will bill the family at a rate of \$5 per minute, e.g., session ends at 6pm, participant is not picked up until 6:25pm, family is billed for 10 minutes of overtime equaling \$50.

In the event a participant needs to consistently arrive late or leave early, e.g. school ends at 3pm and participant can only arrive by 3:30pm, please communicate this to Barrier-Free staff so we can make appropriate arrangements with your family.

### **Inclement Weather & Studio Closure**

In the event of a last-minute Studio Closure, participants and families will be made aware of such changes no less than 2 hours prior to the Studio opening. In these circumstances, participants and families will have the option to choose if they would like their tuition credited to a future session or refunded directly.

Barrier-Free reserves the right to close the Studio at any time, in the event of any circumstances which may arise that prevents the Studio from safely opening.

### **Parking**

The Studio is located in Downtown Sykesville's Historic Carriage House, which has an attached Public Parking Lot, no permits required. In addition, The Studio has 2 accessible handicap parking spots directly in front of our Studio. Participants/families are free to park in this lot for the duration of a Studio Session.

### **Parents/Guardians/Counselors**

Unfortunately, our Studio does not have a separate waiting area for parents/guardians/counselors. Downtown Sykesville offers a variety of cafes/coffee shops, stores, and outdoor seating for parents/guardians/counselors to use. If a one-on-one support is required, we are happy to review this with your family during the intake process.

### **Studio Observations**

Due to the small size of our Studio, parents/guardians/counselors are not allowed to remain in the Studio and observe sessions. If it is a participant's first studio session, a parent/guardian/counselor may remain present for the first 15 minutes, but must then leave the Studio.

In the event a family would like to request that their son/daughter have a personally arranged third-party observation (personal therapist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, job coach) be completed during a Studio session, such arrangements must be made ahead of time with Studio staff. Barrier-Free reserves the right to limit such observations depending on the nature/purpose of such observation and to protect the confidentiality of other participants.

## **Snacks & Lunches**

Participants should bring a snack and/or lunch with them to each Studio Session. Participants have full access to the refrigerator and microwave for lunch storage and prep. In the event that a participant forgets a snack, Barrier-Free will have some on-hand.

## **Daily Spending Money**

Participants should plan to have \$10 - \$20 in spending money each day. This can be cash and/or debit card. During Community Connections, we may stop by a local ice cream shop, book store, or other business. Participants will have the opportunity to make purchases at this time and Studio staff will support participants in making these purchases if needed and adhering to a budget if requested by parent/guardian/staff.

## **What to Wear**

Participants should dress in weather-appropriate clothing that is comfortable for moving and shoes comfortable for walking. In the event that there is a special opportunity that would require clothing considerations, e.g., gardening in the community garden, participants will be notified in advance.

## **Special Events**

Barrier-Free welcomes the celebration of birthdays, graduations, and other special events during Studio sessions! If families would like to supply items for a celebration to occur during a Studio session, please contact us directly and we will be happy to help facilitate.



## **Photo/Video Consent**

All Barrier-Free participants consent to being photographed/video recorded in an appropriate manner by Studio staff and to have their name shared via Barrier-Free's website and social media.

## **Illnesses, Emergencies, Allergies, & Medications**

Studio lead staff are first aid/CPR certified and will respond accordingly to any illness or emergency. In the event a participant feels ill, families/counselors will be contacted immediately. In the meantime, our staff will be able to make the necessary arrangements to care for any ill participant.

During registration, participants have the opportunity to voluntarily disclose any medical conditions that may require additional considerations, e.g., anaphylactic allergies, asthma seizures.

In the event of an anaphylactic reaction, Studio staff are trained to administer epipens but do not have a Studio epipen on hand. Participants at risk of such a reaction must bring their own epipen to The Studio.

At this time, Barrier-Free does not supply a certified med tech and cannot directly administer medication to participants. Barrier-Free staff are able to help store and remind participants to administer their own medications at a certain time if needed.

## **Elopement**

Studio participants are expected to reasonably engage in a 5:1 staff-to-participant ratio. If, at any time, a participant elopes from The Studio, or makes an attempt to elope, Barrier-Free reserves the right to immediately terminate their Studio membership.



## **Personal Belongings & Cell Phone Use**

Participants may bring and safely store personal belongings at The Studio. Barrier-Free may not be held responsible for any damage to personal property that occurs during Studio sessions.

Participants agree to use their cell phones and electronic devices in a responsible manner. During Studio group activities and learning sessions when electronics are not necessary, all devices should be stored in a place that they will not be a distraction to oneself or others. Barrier-Free Studio staff reserves the right to ask a participant to turn off and store electronic devices if they are being used in a distracting or inappropriate manner.

Additionally, Barrier-Free participants must ask their peers for permission to take photographs before taking or posting pictures. Participants have the right to respectfully decline being photographed by another participant.

## **Communication**

Studio staff may be contacted via email, phone, or text by participants or families and will return correspondence within 24 hours. At times, participants may want to connect with one another beyond The Studio by exchanging phone numbers, emails, social media friend requests, etc. This is acceptable as a form of social connection and friendship building. Participants have the right to respectfully decline exchanging information with other participants at any time.

Additionally, Barrier-Free embodies the philosophy of “inclusion” and allows its staff the freedom to appropriately communicate with participants outside of Studio sessions. This may be in the form of social media friend request acceptances, phone number exchanging, or email exchanging with the intention of forming friendships.



## **Respectful Language**

Studio participants must speak to one another with respect at all times both within and outside of The Studio. This includes teasing, excessive joking, exclusion, derogatory language, etc. In the event that disrespectful language is used Barrier-Free will follow a three-step process:

- First Occurrence: Studio staff will address the participant directly regarding any language that may have been disrespectful and work one-on-one to ensure understanding of what has been said and how it could be harmful/hurtful.
- Second Occurrence: Studio staff will address the participant directly regarding any language that may have been disrespectful and have a conversation with parent/guardian/counselors (if applicable) regarding the occurrence.
- Third Occurrence: Repeat step two, and Studio participant's membership will be terminated.

## **Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment**

Barrier-Free has a ZERO TOLERANCE policy for any form of verbal, physical, or cyber bullying, intimidation, or harassment amongst participants both within or outside of The Studio. If any occurrences or evidence of any such behaviour is reported to Studio staff, Barrier-Free reserves the right to immediately terminate the membership of any participant and may not issue a refund for any outstanding sessions.

## **Termination of Membership**

In certain circumstances, when it is in the best interest of one or more participants, it may be necessary for Barrier-Free to terminate a participant's membership. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before terminating membership.

Reasons for termination of enrollment include the following:

- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by participant or family
- Intentional destruction of Studio property by participant or family
- Speaking negatively of Barrier-Free or its participants in a public fashion
- Continued missed tuition payments without communication to Barrier-Free
- Inability of Barrier-Free's Life Skills & Social Studio, to meet the participant's needs
- Disrespect of the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use.

## Supporting the Studio

Barrier-Free remains committed to being affordable and accessible for all participants and families. If you would like to support our Studio, check out our Amazon wish list at [amzn.to/3omj3k6](https://amzn.to/3omj3k6).



## Additional Questions?

Please direct any questions to Barrier-Free via email at [info@BarrierFreeMD.com](mailto:info@BarrierFreeMD.com) or 301-799-8669.

