

## Our Mission

The Birchtree Center exists to promote independence, engaging relationships, and productive lives for children & youth with autism at home, at school & in the community.

## SAIL Participants

Students with autism who attend The Birchtree Center's year-round special-educational day school in Portsmouth, NH, participate in *SAIL* activities from ages 14 to 21.

Our autism experts work closely with students' families and local agencies to develop individualized plans to promote *independence for life*.

## Service Locations

Students develop and practice their skills across multiple settings:

- **In the Classroom.** Autism specialists work with students one-on-one and in small groups to develop communication, academic, social skills, and more.
- **Throughout Our School Building.** Students use school bathrooms, fully-equipped kitchens, and a laundry area to learn self-care and independent-living skills. Students learn vocational skills working at our student store, school library, and more.
- **In Our Neighborhood.** A variety of stores, restaurants, and shops within walking distance of our center. Students visit our neighbors regularly to develop shopping, vocational, social, and leisure skills.
- **In the Community.** Students and staff make regular trips to nearby libraries, grocery stores, nature preserves, and more to learn to access resources in our community as independently as possible. They also exercise at local fitness centers to develop the healthy habit of regular exercise.



THE  
**BIRCHTREE**  
CENTER

est. 2002



## Helping students help themselves... and give back to our community

We teach students with autism the skills they need to maximize their *independence* and *productivity* in adulthood.

Students learn job skills by volunteering at local businesses and nonprofits. They learn *to give back* by participating in community service projects. Some students also offer light-assembly and mail-stuffing services for local organizations as part of their pre-vocational training.

**Can our students help you?** If your business or organization would like to partner with Birchtree's autism experts to provide hands-on, real-world experience to Birchtree's students with autism, please contact our Transition Coordinator at 603-433-4192 or [SAIL@birchtreecenter.org](mailto:SAIL@birchtreecenter.org).



A not-for-profit organization  
serving NH, MA & ME  
[www.birchtreecenter.org](http://www.birchtreecenter.org)

# STUDENTS ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE FOR LIFE (SAIL) ACTIVITIES



Preparing students with autism  
for full & productive adult lives



603-433-4192

[www.birchtreecenter.org](http://www.birchtreecenter.org)

A nonprofit based in Portsmouth, NH

## Goal of SAIL Activities

Birchtree's Students Achieving Independence for Life (SAIL) activities prepare students with autism for **full and productive adult lives**.

SAIL activities include intensive, year-round instruction in four essential areas:

### ✓ Vocational Skills

Birchtree's Transition Coordinator works with local employers to find opportunities for students to gain **practical workplace experience**. We strive to match the vocational abilities and interests of every student.

Students sample a variety of jobs at our center to help them develop marketable skills and to identify areas of strength and interest.

Center-based jobs include working as cashiers or servers at our school store, operating a

snack-cart service, inventorying and stocking supplies, delivering notices, and working in our school library and in other designated areas throughout our center.



Many of our students participate in vocational skill building in collaboration with our community partners. Students develop vocational and pre-vocational skills while doing supervised work at local nonprofits, schools, and businesses. Students also operate a light-assembly and mail-stuffing service for nonprofits and small businesses.



### ✓ Independent Living

Students with autism need intensive instruction and consistent practice to maintain the **skills essential to adult success**, such as healthy eating, food preparation, cleaning, shopping, laundry, and personal hygiene.

Our highly trained staff members give students practical, hands-on learning experiences in our Life Skills Area and in a variety of community settings so independence is generalized across environments.

### ✓ Lifelong Learning

Throughout the school day, students strengthen their functional application of literacy, language, math, and other academic skills, and prepare for **a lifetime of active learning**. Instruction takes place one-on-one and in small groups in our classrooms, throughout our center, and in the community.

This practical, experience-based instruction allows students to apply their academic skills in a variety of settings and prepares them to continue their education as adults.



stock photo posed by model

### ✓ Community Participation

SAIL participants learn to access resources in our community with as much independence as possible. We help students develop leisure, social, vocational, communication, and life skills so they are prepared to become **active participants in their communities**.

Students develop healthy fitness habits by exercising in our school gym and at local fitness centers and pools. We also help students explore their leisure interests and establish community connections that will allow them to enjoy those leisure activities in adulthood.

Students also learn **to give back** to our community through service projects such as maintaining public gardens, organizing food drives, or volunteering for other local nonprofit organizations.



*The Birchtree Center admits students of any sex, race, creed, color, marital status, national/ethnic origin & economic status.*

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