

## Functional Applied Academics (FAA) Program Description

### Who is an FAA student?

A student served in an FAA program learns best using authentic tasks in a real-world setting. This student requires modifications to extract meaning from the general curriculum (*or may be in the state extended standards*), and has great difficulty generalizing abstract academic concepts when called on to do so spontaneously. They also demonstrate a significant delay in social and daily living skills that must be experienced and rehearsed in functional simulations to internalize for later use. A student served through an FAA program may have a cognitive disability, a traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, or some combination of disabilities that limit their ability to complete the K-12 general curriculum without significant modifications. These students participate in the modified or alternate assessment options but they still are expected to participate in general education classes to the greatest extent possible.

### Characteristics of FAA programs:

- Academic and social skills are taught in authentic settings that match contexts in which students will be expected to use those skills during and after high school.
- Modified or alternate curriculum and assessments are required for meaningful participation in most content areas.
- Students rehearse social and academic skills that will contribute to their independence in work, recreational, and living after graduation.
- Lessons incorporate manipulatives and authentic tasks to teach core academic concepts, social skills, and daily-living skills.
- Community-based instruction is commonly used to assess the student's ability to generalize skills.
- Lower staff to student ratio than a typical interrelated program or general education classroom.

### Training and educational technologies employed by staff in this program:

- Teachers in FAA programs have training and/or experience working with students with cognitive disabilities and with modifying curriculum using assistive technology to make abstract academic concepts meaningful to the student.
- FAA programs tend to use real-life examples and experiences (*or simulations*) to teach academic, social, vocational, and daily living skills.
- Due to some disability-related deficits in memory, social skills and transferring knowledge, direct application in real-life contexts is required when assessing FAA students.

### Questions to ask when considering a program emphasizing Functional Applied Academics

- Does this student need substantially modified assignments in order to meaningfully engage in the curriculum? If so, in which content areas?
- Does this student qualify to take the Kansas Modified or Alternate assessment?
- Does the student understand concepts in the general curriculum but at a slower pace?
- Does the student require explicit training in the social skills expected of same age peers?
- Does the student require pronounced training in daily living skills in order to function independently in the community?
- Does the student require concrete examples in naturally occurring contexts in order to learn core academic concepts?
- Does the student require consistent repetition of material for retention?
- At the secondary level, does the student require vocational training to learn work skills that will enable them to access competitive employment after high school?