



LINKS is a program where a student with special needs is LINKed with one or more general education student(s) during lunch and recreation time. LINK volunteers are encouraged to eat lunch and spend recreation time with their friends and include their assigned student with them. Many Derby students have benefited from this program in the past and have found it very rewarding.

Throughout the school year, the LINKS volunteers will meet during lunch and/or recreation time to problem-solve and share experiences. There are also field trips, pizza lunches, fun desserts, and other perks provided throughout the school year.

Some LINKS work with students with special needs once per week, while others choose to be involved several days per week. Students are required to make a 10 week commitment. After the 10 weeks, they may choose to continue with their LINK or to take some time off, allowing other students to become involved. They may return to LINKS at the beginning of the next marking period.

Please feel free to contact our school social worker at [acollins@birmingham.k12.mi.us](mailto:acollins@birmingham.k12.mi.us) to further discuss the LINKS program!

*“I like playing monkey in the middle and hanging out with my friends. We have fun talking and playing games.”*

Current student in the Autism Program



**Derby Middle School**

LINKS Program

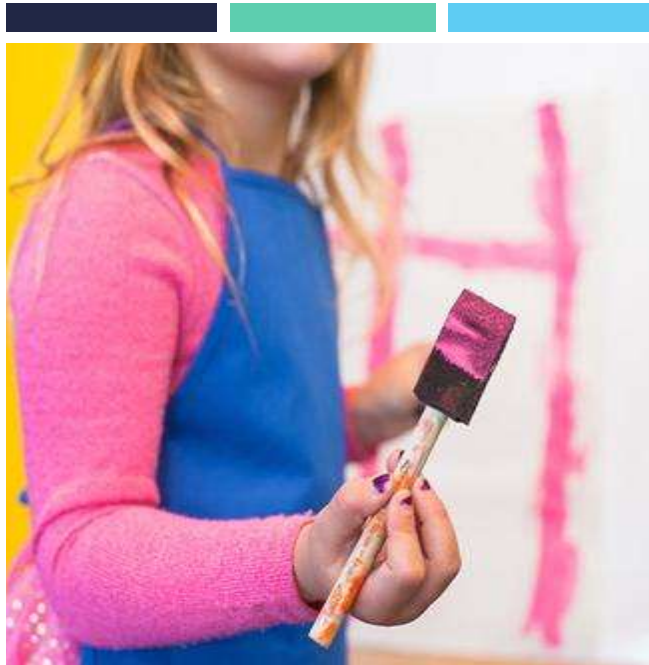


*“LINKS to me is helping others that feel alone or don’t have many friends because of their disabilities. I like being a positive role model.”*

Current 8<sup>th</sup> grade LINK

### What are the benefits for the LINK?

- Learn how to relate to people with different needs
- Develop an increased understanding of individual differences
- Experience an increase in skills: organization, responsibility, problem solving, decision making, and accountability (Koppang, 2003)
- Improvements in academic competence
- Sense of empowerment



*“There needs to be more emphasis on what a child can do instead of what they cannot do.”*

Temple Grandin

### What are the benefits for the students with social deficits?

- More comfortable in social situations
- Understand more unwritten social rules and appropriate social behavior
- Increase social network (more friends!)
- More attentive, focused, and organized in classes
- Improvements in academic competence
- THE LIST GOES ON!!



