

## Working with local providers

Many medical professionals and EMS providers have no experience working with individuals diagnosed with PWS. Latham Centers encourages providers to reach out to us with general questions. We also offer comprehensive PWS training, educational resources, and customized consulting services. Our collaborative relationship with community providers is essential in maintaining the health and well-being of those we support.

### Tips for working with individuals diagnosed with PWS

- In food secure environments, those diagnosed with PWS know there is food, but that it is locked away. Do your best to make YOUR environment food secure.
  - Be sure that your provider understands the need for food safety, and the accompanying dangers of a food breach.
  - Do not incentivize good behavior with food; this perpetuates the cycle and leads to an unsafe environment.
- Reinforce wanted behaviors and ignore unwanted behaviors—as long as they are not unsafe.
- Do not try to argue with someone with PWS. Instead, try to redirect.
- Anticipate a possible change in plans by always having a Plan B in case the original plan falls through.



“We provide a different, well-rounded approach to people with intellectual disabilities. We have the professional supports in place and are hugely interested in community participation.”

— Latham Centers residential staff member

## About Latham Centers

Founded in 1970, Latham Centers' mission is to help children and adults with complex special needs, including Prader-Willi syndrome, to lead meaningful, abundant lives.

Latham Centers is internationally recognized for its expertise and success in working with individuals with Prader-Willi syndrome. Latham's programs include an intensive therapeutic Children's Services residential school for students ages 8 to 22 and an Adult Services program including 11 group residences and individualized supported community living settings.

After graduation from Latham School, some students transition into our Adult program. Though Latham's waiting list for group residence placement has grown, our supported independent and shared living offerings continue to expand.

Latham Centers is accredited by the Council on Accreditation.



To learn more about Latham Centers, please contact our Admissions Team:

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Latham Centers is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# Children's Program Expertise

at

# LathamCenters

*Specialized Services for Individuals  
with Complex Special Needs*



# LathamCenters

Cape Cod, Massachusetts

## Children's Program Expertise

Latham Centers is a leader in special education and residential treatment of children and adults with disabilities. More than half of Latham's population has Prader-Willi syndrome (PWS), and our community of support is exceptional. **Every student at Latham has unique abilities, as well as an intellectual disability and one of the diagnoses listed below.**

### Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS)

A genetic disorder that occurs in 1 out of 15,000 births due to an abnormality of the 15th chromosome. PWS is life-threatening and manifests with an insatiable appetite, behavioral challenges, and cognitive limitations. Most individuals diagnosed with PWS will require lifelong oversight from endocrinologists, orthopedic doctors, nutritionists, and psychiatrists.

Latham Centers is the leading provider of specialized PWS treatment in North America. Latham's approach to PWS treatment is a unique combination of food security, nutrition and diet management, exercise, weight monitoring, counseling and education, skill building, medication management, and positive behavioral support.

### Autism Spectrum Disorders

Persistent deficits in social communication and interactions. This may include deficits in verbal and nonverbal communication while developing, maintaining, and understanding social relationships. Autism may also include restrictive or repetitive patterns of behavior, interests and activities, and hyper or hypo-reactivity to sensory input.



## Non-Verbal Learning Disability

High risk for anxiety and depressive disorders. Individuals are unable to understand non-verbal cues such as tone of voice and facial expression, and often lack coordination and fine motor skills. Those diagnosed may also have difficulty understanding connections (getting the "big picture") and social norms.



## MENTAL HEALTH

### RAD - Reactive Attachment Disorder

Developmental trauma during the first two years of life due to abuse, neglect, and multiple disrupted placements. This results in deficits and an inability to develop "normal" healthy interactions and attachments with others.

### PTSD - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Direct experience or witnessing of traumatic event(s). Individuals may then experience intrusive thoughts and prolonged distress at exposure of cues that are reminiscent of traumatic event(s).

### Anxiety Disorders

Significant difficulty in controlling worry. This may present as feelings of restlessness/feeling "on edge," very easily fatigued, concentration difficulties, irritability, muscle tension, and sleep disturbance.

### Depressive and Mood Disorders

Those diagnosed face possible symptoms of depressed mood, diminished interest in activities, weight gain or loss, insomnia or hypersomnia, psychomotor agitation or retardation, fatigue or loss of energy, feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt, diminished concentration, and recurrent thoughts of death.

*Latham provides a safe, healing environment, a vibrant atmosphere, and a dedicated, highly trained staff. We focus on individualized treatment that supports both the student and his or her family. Graduates of Latham School are leading safe, healthy, happy lives.*

## Latham is a "dream come true"

Charlie\* is a student at Latham Centers who has Prader-Willi syndrome and Blount disease. He came to Latham because his needs were not being met in the public school system, and he was showing signs of depression, aggression, nightmares, and anxiety. His picking behaviors were increasing and he was starting to elope. Charlie needed residential treatment, and he was admitted to Latham Centers at age 17.

When he came to Latham, Charlie's weight of 430 pounds was life-threatening and he was nearly immobile. He used a walker and was on the verge of requiring respiratory support. Charlie also needed assistive technology to get into a van, and he was unable to safely go into the community. He was saddened by his inability to keep up with his peers at first, but with the support of the dedicated team at Latham, Charlie was soon on a path to a healthy weight. After just 10 months, Charlie had healthily lost more than 80 pounds, and he continues to inspire everyone around him. He walks farther distances than he believed possible, and with the help of his clinicians, teachers, nurses, and counselors, he is thriving. He continues to lose weight, and for the first time in years, he walks without the support of his walker and participates in activities on-campus and in the community. Wearing a tuxedo at the Latham School prom was a proud, happy day for him. Charlie's mother is grateful. "Latham is a dream come true for us," she said. "After years of fighting to find the right placement for my son, we found home. His PWS is no longer debilitating, but rather it's a challenge he can overcome with support from Latham staff."

Latham Centers' intensive therapeutic Children's Program celebrates milestones like Charlie's often. This nurturing place the students call home is life-changing not only for the children, but also for their families, the staff, and the community members who help Latham achieve its mission.

*\*name changed for privacy*

