



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stacy Williams-Myers, CFRE
Development Director
Office: 863-683-6504

Achievement Academy Hosts Students from Lakeland Christian School's RISE (Research, Innovation, Stem Learning, Entrepreneurship) Institute

LAKELAND, FL (November 13, 2018) – Achievement Academy hosted RISE Institute students from Lakeland Christian School to participate in learning experiences about the use and application of assistive technology for children with special needs. RISE , which is an acronym for Research, Innovation, Stem Learning, and Entrepreneurship, exists for those who have an intense interest in research science. The RISE students who participated ranged from 6th - 9th grade. Occupational therapists and speech therapists from Achievement Academy provided this educational experience allowing students to gain a deeper understanding of how their robotics skills can be applied to create play opportunities for children with varying abilities through switch adaptations. Following the practical experiences and knowledge learned from their time at the Achievement Academy, the RISE Institute students will be partners with Florida Polytechnic University to create effective and meaningful adaptations to toys using switches. The RISE institute exists to cultivate technical expertise and leadership through skill-development, while creating a heart for people.

At Achievement Academy's three locations, our therapy program consists of individual Speech, Physical, and Occupational Therapy. In every one-on-one therapy session, our therapist's focus is simple - to help each child achieve their full potential. Therapists work closely with teachers, and parents in a collaborative team approach that makes sure each child is reaching their goals. The use of switch activated toys enables children to easily activate toys, learn cause and effect, participate with peers, and explore their environments. Some of the

accommodations that switch adaptations provide include fine motor skills, social engagement, and participation. Assistive Technology for play can vary in style, size, and complexity. Assistive technology supports children to access and enjoy their rights and participate in things they value - and it bridges the disparities between children with and without disabilities.

Achievement Academy is excited to see the progress, and the interest in assistive technology accommodations that the Rise Institute has shown through the leadership of its Director- Jennifer Canady.

About the Achievement Academy

*The Achievement Academy serves children from birth through age five with various developmental delays and disabilities. The Achievement Academy offers two programs, each provided at no cost to the child or family. The first program is a **Charter School** that offers specialized instruction by certified teachers; small class sizes; individual speech, occupational and physical therapies; and assistive technologies that enable each student to reach his or her full potential at one of the Achievement Academy's three campus locations (Lakeland, Winter Haven and Bartow). The second is a "**Birth to Three Program**" that provides early intervention services to infants and toddlers who are "at-risk" for developmental delays and/or have been identified with a specific delay. Professional Early Interventionists serve these children and their families. More than half of the Birth to Three Program's budget is funded by a generous allocation from the United Way of Central Florida.*



Lakeland Christian School students with Achievement Academy staff and students.



Achievement Academy staff and students.



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