



ESTEAM, The Arc's Newest Youth Program, Ignites Love of Robotics in Young Student



Reece Andersen is a third grade student who has a penchant for building things. When he combines his left brain analytical skills with his right brain creativity, the end result is a sophisticated creation. For example, Reece once proudly assembled a candy dispenser, made entirely out of cardboard. This creativity, love of learning, and engineering prowess makes Reece a great fit for The Arc's ESTEAM program.

ESTEAM is for kids for youth ages 14 to 18 years who want to explore and discover the world around them through science, technology, engineering, art and math. While Reece is much younger than 14, The Arc's youth services team recognized that Reece thrived in quieter environments and that he needed more stimulating activities to keep him engaged.

"The staff were quick to figure Reece out and see his abilities," says Cendy Andersen, Reece's mother. "They knew he needed to be challenged."

ESTEAM provides a combination of classroom instruction, hands-on activities and fun community outings that helps youth who experience disabilities explore the world around them. One day, youth may conduct fun science experiments, and the next day they may visit a local museum.

Reece's favorite activity is playing with the Ozobots, which are small programmable robots in the makerspace in the ESTEAM classroom.

"Reece is growing and having so much fun," says Cendy. "He finally has that special place where he's excited to go and where he feels like he belongs."