

## WARREN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS, MACOMB COUNTY, MICHIGAN

# ARIS<sup>®</sup> Systemic Transformation: One Student, One Teacher, One Classroom at a Time

## Early Childhood Teacher Leverages Comprehensive Autism Early Intervention System to Drive Significant Growth

In the spring of 2023, Anne May, a 20-year veteran educator and early childhood autism teacher at Willow Woods Elementary, applied for the ARIS<sup>®</sup> Thrive Grant from STAGES<sup>®</sup> Learning. Of the hundreds who applied, Anne was selected, in part because of her explanation of the team walking alongside her in Warren Consolidated Schools in Michigan. She had the support of her administration, but lacked a curriculum and resources specifically designed for her classroom of autistic learners.

Through the grant, Anne gained access to the Language Builder<sup>®</sup> Academic Readiness Intervention System (ARIS<sup>®</sup>) by STAGES<sup>®</sup> Learning, which is a comprehensive curriculum for educators working with students with autism, language development delays, and other cognitive challenges. The program utilizes physical materials, a robust digital learning platform, and personalized support throughout the year.

Anne teaches a cross-categorical self-contained transitional kindergarten class with students diagnosed with autism or developmental disabilities. The eight students in her class for the 2023-2024 school year presented significant behavioral and academic challenges, which Anne says were beyond what she was accustomed to in her classroom. All students began the year as non-functional communicators requiring assistance with nearly all activities.

**“ARIS<sup>®</sup> has led to a massive improvement in Anne May’s classroom. Growth from all of our students. Growth from our educators. Growth from our aides. As an administrator, it is really amazing to see the whole package moving in the direction we want to see it move.”**

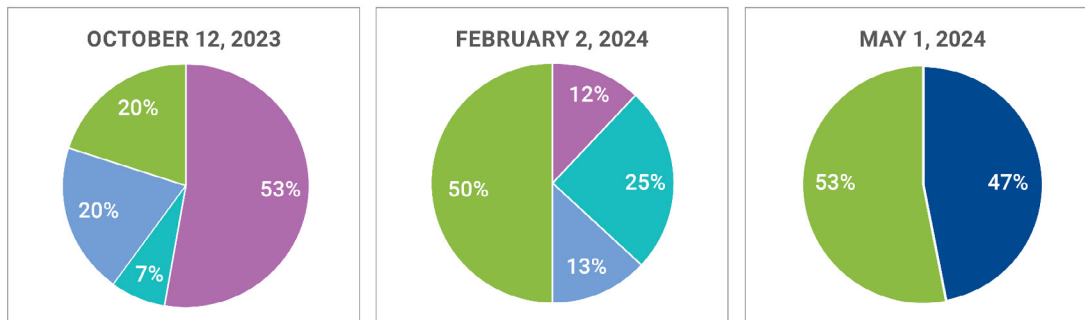
*— Amanda Abernathy,  
Special Education Supervisor*

Despite a challenging start to the school year, Anne found stability and success with ARIS<sup>®</sup>, which transformed her classroom practices, student growth, and the empowerment of her aides. ARIS<sup>®</sup> provided the structure she needed to support her students effectively and change the trajectory of her classroom.

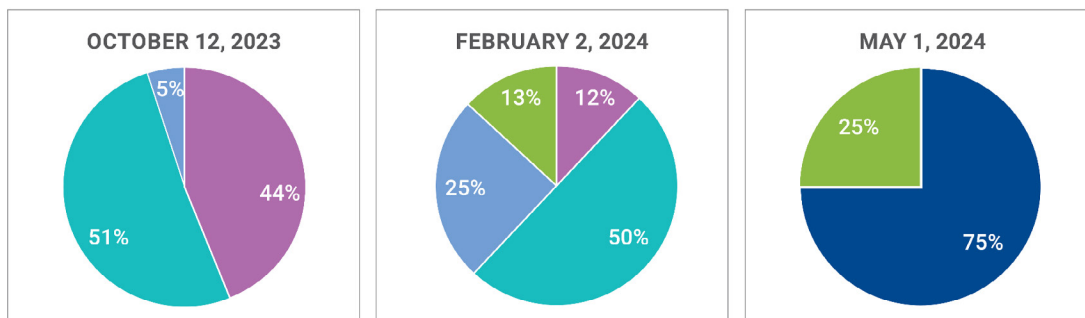
### ARIS<sup>®</sup> Helps Students Gain Skills Necessary for Academic Readiness

ARIS<sup>®</sup> includes seven distinct data collection formats aligned with its 202 lessons, which Anne and her aides used to track student progress. These assessments showed significant gains in joint attention and functional communication skills among all eight students. For instance, by May 1, all students were proficient in requesting comfort, a skill none possessed in October.

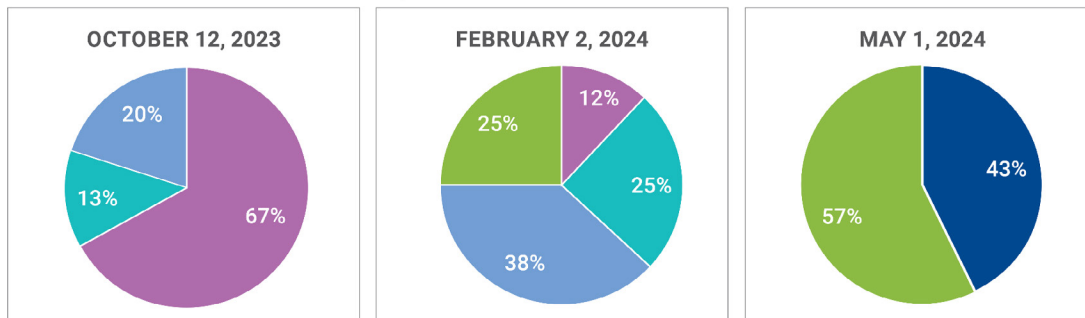
**ARIS® LESSON 40: Requesting a Desired Object**



**ARIS® LESSON 3: Responding to Name**



**ARIS® LESSON 44: Social Responses**



■ No Reaction 
 ■ Emerging 
 ■ Developing 
 ■ Proficient 
 ■ Extending

*Anne’s students demonstrated significant growth across key skills from October 2023 to May 2024.*

Underlying this data is the reality that Anne’s students – who previously were using behaviors (hitting, throwing objects, outbursts, etc.) to communicate – are now able to use words and appropriate gestures to get their needs met. Now they have the skills to be able to sit and learn. These foundational skills will enable Anne’s students to progress to pre-academic and academic lessons, setting them up to move closer to grade-level benchmarks. During the school year, each of the eight students in Anne’s classroom made dramatic learning gains, which are evident both in the data that was captured and in anecdotal stories.

**“Last summer, one student regressed and lost all of her language. She completely quit talking. As a result, her mom was really sad because she had been saying mommy and daddy. But within a few weeks using ARIS® she is talking at home again. It’s amazing because we’re seeing it in the classroom, and they are seeing it at home.”**

*– Anne May, Special Education Teacher*

## ARIS® Empowers Special Education Aides to Support Student Learning

ARIS® redefined the roles of the adults in Anne's classroom, providing a structured methodology that improved classroom management and reduced overwhelming language for autistic students. Special education aides took on more professional roles, significantly enhancing their contribution to student learning and reducing staff turnover.

Both Anne and Special Education Supervisor Amanda Abernathy report that collaboration within the classroom has improved dramatically since implementing ARIS®. As a result, Amanda explains, "We've had a significant decrease in turnover. Special education aides are hard to find and even harder to keep. When they play an active role...they stay. They are invested in the process."

Special education aides, Rita Korail and Jackie Kuril, say that the ARIS® lessons and materials are easy to use with the instruction they receive from Anne and that it's been a positive experience for both them and the students. Jackie says she has been amazed at the difference she's seen in the students since they began using ARIS® and that she enjoys using the curriculum.

**"The ability to have aides assume more of a professional role than a supporting role has been significant in [Anne's] classroom, and they take pride in it, and that to me, is huge. We want to make sure they feel like they are a valued part of the classroom. We want them to benefit kids."**

*— Amanda Abernathy,  
Special Education Supervisor*

**"I think [ARIS®] is working for us, because it's helping us be organized and see if the kids are improving in one area, then we can move on to the next area."**

*— Rita Korail, Special Education Aide*

## Success Prompts School District to Bring ARIS® to More Classrooms

The success in Anne's classroom with ARIS® prompted Warren Consolidated Schools to expand the curriculum to more classrooms and neighboring districts, aiming for a broader systemic transformation in early childhood special education.

Anne's consistent use of ARIS®, dedicating 10-15 minutes daily to the lessons, has led to substantial learning gains for her students, setting a strong foundation for continued success. The combination of structured data collection, professional development, and supportive administration highlights the transformative potential of ARIS® in special education.

Contact us at [info@stageslearning.com](mailto:info@stageslearning.com) or visit [www.stageslearning.com](http://www.stageslearning.com) to learn more about how you can bring ARIS® to your school or district.

SCAN for more info

