

## Contact Information

To find out how to enroll your child in  
Puzzle Ponies, please call or email  
Christine Randle, LICSW.

978-582-7103

[christine@flyinghighfarm.com](mailto:christine@flyinghighfarm.com)

[flyinghighfarm.com](http://flyinghighfarm.com)



## Location

Flying High Farm is located 1.5 miles  
from the center of Lunenburg, MA  
or 2 miles north of Route 2 (Exit 32).

Flying High Farm  
615 Leominster Road  
Lunenburg, MA 01462

# Puzzle Ponies

An equine-  
facilitated  
psychotherapy  
program for  
children on  
the **autism**  
**spectrum**

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Flying High Farm incorporates the therapeutic  
magic of ponies toward optimizing the behavioral,  
emotional and social growth of our youth.



## Who is Flying High Farm?

Flying High Farm is an equine-facilitated psychotherapy (EFP) practice in Lunenburg, MA. This innovative program was started in 2003 by Christine Randle, LICSW and NARHA Registered Therapeutic Riding Instructor.

Flying High Farm is established on the principle that ponies serve as agents of change for children living with life challenges - when these ponies are incorporated into psychotherapeutic intervention delivered by a licensed mental health professional who is also a NARHA Therapeutic Riding Instructor. Unlike other programs that focus on the physical benefits of ponies, Flying High Farm built its core on the emotional, interpersonal and psychological benefits of these four-legged co-therapists.

## Pony Power Farm Clinicians

All clinicians at Pony Power Farm are:

- MA Licensed Social Workers
- NARHA Therapeutic Riding Instructors
- MA Licensed Riding Instructors



## What is Puzzle Ponies?

Puzzle Ponies is an EFP program, located at Flying High Farm, dedicated exclusively to children and teens on the autism spectrum.

## What is EFP?

EFP is described as ponies being incorporated into a child's psychotherapy sessions with the intent to promote healing and growth. FHF clinicians work alongside ponies to facilitate children toward reaching and maintaining their therapeutic goals.

Puzzle Ponies strives to optimize the child's currently level of functioning thereby enhancing the ability, and desire, to interact with other people. Through grooming, caring for and riding the ponies, children with autism are exposed to a variety of stimuli outside of their control. This can be especially challenging and overwhelming for children who seek routine, but it provides them with an opportunity to be exposed to these situations and practice the skills to safely and effectively deal with life in general.

Typical individual sessions are 45 minutes long and are weekly or bi-weekly. Most participants have their sessions paid for by their mental health insurance. Check our website for a list of participating networks.



## Why ponies?

The pony itself provides the therapist with a multi-sensory vehicle around which to build a treatment plan. The pony's behaviors, unpredictable at times (*stomping feet to get rid of flies, nickering to a friend, turning its head toward child in search of a treat* - these are typical pony behaviors and do not pose a risk to the child) offer the challenge of being flexible to a child who prefers rigidity and routine.

Once the child realizes the reason behind the behavior - *Pixie is whinnying to Duncan because she misses him, Duncan is turning his head toward the child to nip at a fly on his shoulder, Duncan is rubbing his head on the child because his head is itchy, Pixie is reaching her head out because she wants a treat* - the behavior isn't as worrisome.

Talking about the behavior engages the child in conversation and encourages him to put himself in the pony's shoes to consider why the pony would act in this way. Seeing another's point of view is a challenge for people living with autism. Our ponies help to bridge this gap.

[flyinghighfarm.com](http://flyinghighfarm.com)