



CREATIVE ARTS COMMUNITY



Creative Arts Community is an art therapy socialization group based on research that demonstrates the usefulness of visual and musical interventions in therapeutic group settings for children with autism spectrum disorders.

Children with related concerns such as communication or sensory issues, shyness, or attention-deficit/hyperactivity are also welcome. *Creative Arts Community* can easily be modified to become an inclusion group if desired.

Our multi-media art projects are tailored to each group's abilities and require that the children practice collaboration, teamwork, flexibility, negotiation, and compromise. No two groups are the same and the number of possible art projects is endless. Some examples include interactive portrait drawing, group murals, community quilt, friendship boxes, figure painting, clay modeling, and body tracings.

Through structured art activities plus circle time conversations at the beginning and end of group, *Creative Arts Community* members learn about each other, practice imaginative symbolic play, articulate what they made and why, build confidence in their creativity, experience supported self-expression with group feedback, practice conflict resolution skills, and get both adult and peer feedback on their social behaviors.

Adaptations used to help facilitate success include visual supports, visual schedules, music selected to impact the children's energy level, constant social reinforcement, and the opportunity to earn private art-making time as an incentive for positive behavior (which provides a release valve for personal interests and a brief respite from social demands).

Our art therapist monitors both the children's social and artistic progress and keeps parents informed through either weekly emails or final reports. In *CAC* it is tradition to have an art show on the final week of group to reflect on our progress and celebrate with family and friends.

Creative Arts Community usually runs for 8 weeks for 1-1.5 hours per week with a group limit of six members. Enrollment is typically open to children ages 5-9 years and then groups are clustered according to age range. *CAC* can be modified for older or younger groups and shorter or longer durations. Price varies according to location.

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