



SOLID STARTS



Solid Starts is a combined art therapy-music therapy early intervention group designed to build a solid foundation of interest and skills in the arts and develop early socialization skills. *Solid Starts* is designed for preschool and early school age children with developmental disability or a pervasive developmental disorder; groups for older children whose skills lag behind for their age can also be created. The goal of *Solid Starts* is to help children form good habits for a lifetime of using the arts as a vital means of expression. By combining music and art we can capitalize on a wide range of creative interests to make working on deficits more engaging.

Half of the group activities are art and half are music, or sometimes a blend of the two. Projects and goals are tailored to the needs of the individual group members; no two groups are the same and the number of possible projects is endless. Common art therapy goals include expanding a child's scribble vocabulary, moving past scribbling into preschematic drawing, improving art skills in the three primary media (drawing, painting, modeling), and successful joint work/project collaboration. Common music therapy goals include participation in singing, listening, body movement, and instrument play activities. Overall group goals include improvement in interest and motivation, fine and gross motor skills, visual and auditory attention to task, appropriate use of materials, ideation and brainstorming, flexibility, sensory exploration and integration, turn-taking and early teamwork skills, as well as individualized communication and behavior goals.

Solid Starts is usually facilitated by both a qualified art therapist and music therapist. Adaptations used to help facilitate success include visual supports, visual schedules, and reinforcement strategies. Group size is kept small so that one-on-one support can be regularly provided; a para or aide is welcome if needed. STL therapists monitor the children's social, behavioral, and creative progress and keep parents informed through either weekly emails or final reports.

Solid Starts usually runs for 8 weeks for 1 hour per week with a group limit of four members. Enrollment is typically open to children ages 2 to 6 years and then groups are clustered according to age range. *Solid Starts* can be modified for older or younger groups and shorter or longer durations. Price varies according to location.

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