

The All Bright Spotlight

All Bright Therapies
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The Benefits of Group Therapy

For most children, basic social skills such as eye contact, turn taking and initiating conversation are acquired quickly and easily through interactions with peers at their typical daily environments. These might include parks, playgrounds, parent-arranged play groups, community classes, daycare and preschool. However, for children with delayed language, developmental disorders, or sensory processing difficulties, these social skills often need to be taught in a therapeutic environment as they are not simply learned by exposure to social situations.

Social skills for these children need to be taught in a systemized and guided method at an early age in order to develop a solid foundation of social skills to build upon throughout the school-age years. Social skills therapy begins with establishing basic turn-taking routines and establishing joint attention. These skills lead into a hierarchy of skills including peer negotiation, conversation initiation, topic maintenance, problem solving with peers, and conversation closure. Unfortunately, these social language skills are difficult to teach or facilitate in a one to one individual therapy session.

This is where group therapy becomes an important part of the therapeutic process. As a parent, you might wonder: Why should I enroll my child in a therapy group? He already gets individual speech or occupational therapy. He plays at the park. We do play groups. The questions for you to ask yourself are these:

- Do you see your child regularly interacting with peers during his/her play groups and time at the park?
- Do you see your child using his/her language appropriately to work with peers?
- Is your child able to share his/her toys with peers during a play group?
- Does your child interact with/play with other children during play groups/at the park?
- Is your child able to control his/her body when around peers (not hitting, biting, or pushing)?

If you answered no to any of the above questions, a therapeutic play group may be beneficial for your child. Therapeutic play groups are frequently led by either two speech-language pathologists or one speech language pathologist and one occupational therapist. Speech Pathologists facilitate social language and occupational therapists help children regulate so they can cooperatively interact with their peers. Play groups incorporate developmental activities that target social skills and the child's ability to communicate and interact with his/her peers. Activities encourage expressive and receptive language development, listening and attention skills, play and social language skills, sensory processing and motor coordination. All activities are designed to help your child be successful in structured and unstructured small group settings. If you have questions or think your child might benefit from group therapy, contact your pediatrician or contact us for further information.

Front Office Staff:

Nina Ortega, Office Assistant
 Elizabeth Garcia, Office Assistant

Speech Therapists:

Amanda Albright, MS, CCC-SLP
 Lauren Agruss, MA, CCC-SLP
 Alison Epperly, MS, CCC-SLP
 Joni Prihoda, MS, CCC-SLP
 Mary Ratliff, MA CCC-SLP
 Rima Sejpal, MA, CCC-SLP

Occupational Therapists:

Kaitlyn Davis, OTD, OTR/L
 Jennifer Gamblin, MS, OTR/L
 Alyssa Illian, MS, OTR/L
 Anne Urban, MS, OTR/L

●An All Bright Family's Story●

Tara's* family initially became concerned with her fine motor skills and her behavior in group settings when she was 17 months old. She began receiving therapies through early intervention and group therapy was recommended at about two years of age to address the family's concerns with Tara's behaviors. Tara participated in a speech/occupational therapy group once per week at All Bright Therapies. Here is what they have to say:

What were your initial concerns that brought you to All Bright?

Fine motor skills. She didn't hold her own bottle or feed herself. We also had behavioral concerns. She had decreased attention in group settings and had temper tantrums.

How did Tara benefit from group therapy?

She transitioned into preschool with ease and she now has more confidence in group settings.

What are some things that she is able to do now that she had difficulty with prior to therapy?

She feeds herself and is able to take turns with others. She truly enjoys preschool!

*Name has been changed for confidentiality

Services We Offer:

Speech Therapy:

Apraxia • Articulation • Phonological Disorders
Pragmatic and Social Language Disorders
Cleft Lip and Palate and Craniofacial Syndromes
Cerebral Palsy and Neuromotor Disorders
Genetic Syndromes • Speaking Valves

Occupational Therapy:

Poor Motor Planning • Motor Delayed Infants
Fine and Visual Motor Delays • Handwriting Difficulties
Regulation Disorders • Sensory Integration Dysfunction
Torticollis • Brachial Plexus Injury
Splinting and Bracing

Groups and Classes:

Social Language Groups • Articulation Groups • Language Development Groups • Feeding Group • Apraxia Group
Body Awareness Group • Handwriting and Pre-writing Group • Self Regulation Group • Parent Education Course

We currently have availability for Speech and Occupational Therapy group for children aged 2.5 to 4 years of age.

Please call if you are interested.

Some Fun Chicago Summer Activities:

Ravinia

Kraft Great Kids Concert Series- http://ravinia.org/KidsClub_concerts.aspx

Family Space and "Instrument Petting Zoo" - http://ravinia.org/KidsClub_familyspace.aspx

Chicago KIDS Day- May 21, 2011

<http://www.chicagokids.com/calendar/detail.asp?detailType=e&detailID=12045&month=5&day=21&year=2011>

Wagner Farm- <http://www.wagnerfarm.org/>

Chicago Public Library Summer Reading Program- http://www.chipublib.org/eventsprog/programs/kids_sumread.php

Wonder Works- <http://www.wonder-works.org/index.html>

Make a Messterpiece- <http://makeamessterpiece.com/index.php>