

# GROUPWORKS WEST

“Making Connections, One Child at a Time.”

## ***SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT GROUPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS***

***WESTSIDE REGIONAL CENTER VENDOR (PW5555)***

WE OFFER GROUPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS FROM AGE 3 TO AGE 18. GROUPS MEET WEEKLY FOR 60, 90, AND 120 MINUTES. GROUPS MEET AFTER SCHOOL AND ON SATURDAY MORNINGS. GROUPS ARE ORGANIZED ACCORDING TO EACH MEMBERS STAGE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE OBJECTIVE OF EACH GROUP IS TO PROMOTE A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE OF THE JOURNEY OF FRIENDSHIP – NOT A MEMORY OF DISCREET SOCIAL SKILLS. GROUP INTERVENTION CAN ONLY BE SUCCESSFUL IF IT PROMOTES MEMORIES THAT INFLUENCE FUTURE SOCIAL PERCEPTION, SOCIAL BEHAVIOR, AND, ABOVE ALL, SOCIAL MOTIVATION.

AUTISTIC SPECTRUM CHILDREN/TEENS ARE HIGHLY MOTIVATED BY OBJECTS (CARS, TRAINS, LEGO, ROCKS, ETC.), STATIC SYSTEMS (FACTS, LISTS, CATEGORIES, VIDEO GAMES, ETC.), AND ROTE PROCEDURES (HOW THINGS WORK). THEY CRAVE REPETITION, SAMENESS, AND CONTROL. THEY SEEK TO IMPOSE ABSOLUTE THINKING (BLACK AND WHITE PROBLEM SOLVING) ON A WORLD THAT IS MESSY AND RELATIVE.

AT GROUPWORKS WEST, WE ASPIRE TO CREATE LASTING MEMORIES THAT PEERS ARE MORE ENJOYABLE, VALUABLE AND IMPORTANT THAN OBJECTS AND PROCEDURES. WE ALSO ASPIRE TO CREATE POSITIVE MEMORIES OF CHANGE, NOVELTY, AND ADVENTURE. WE CONDUCT GROUPS IN SUCH A WAY THAT MEMBERS LEAVE WITH LASTING MEMORIES OF FLUX, CHANGE AND NEW INFORMATION AS A SOURCE OF EXCITEMENT AND JOY RATHER THAN FEAR/ANXIETY.

DEEP AND LASTING FRIENDSHIPS REQUIRE THE ABILITY TO RESPOND TO THE CHANGING NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF SOCIAL PARTNERS WITH CURIOSITY AND EXCITEMENT. EMPATHY AND RECIPROCITY ARISE ONLY WHEN WE ARE TRULY INTERESTED IN THE CHANGING NEEDS OF OUR SOCIAL PARTNERS. MEMORIZING DISCREET SOCIAL SKILLS WILL NOT ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THESE ABILITIES.

AT GROUPWORKS WEST WE ARE INTERESTED IN CREATING ABILITIES THAT WILL MAKE SOCIAL INTIMACY POSSIBLE. WE WANT MORE FOR OUR CLIENTS THAN SUPERFICIAL SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE. WE WANT EACH AND EVERY CHILD TO BE MOTIVATED AND ABLE TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN A CLOSE AND VALUABLE FRIENDSHIP WITH A PEER.