



Art Therapy and Floortime Services for ASD Now Offered in Columbus Circle

[Intentional, Creative, and Engaged LLC](#), located in Manhattan, provides art therapy for individuals on the autism spectrum. Art therapy is beneficial for this population in that it provides an additional avenue for communication and supports social and emotional growth.

New York, New York ([PRWEB](#)) May 24, 2011 -- Art is a powerful vehicle for self-expression and supports the development of creativity and communication. The non-verbal aspect of the medium can be especially important for individuals diagnosed on the autism spectrum as they often struggle with auditory processing and expressive language. [Art therapy](#) aims to offer these individuals another avenue for communication and expression. For example, an individual may have a strong visual system that helps them to explore and understand the world around them, but a weaker auditory/language system that makes it difficult to express one's ideas. The idea is to use an individual's strengths to support areas of challenge.

Depending on the individual and the medium, art therapy can promote sensory integration, support language development, and/or provide an opportunity for expressing emotional ideas. Sessions at [Intentional, Creative, and Engaged LLC](#) focus on helping the individual bring his/her passion for artmaking into a shared world. This is important in that it may lead to a deepened understanding of his/her images, helping to expand beyond what he/she has seen before, and to engage meaningfully with another about these ideas.

As a [Licensed Creative Arts Therapist](#) who uses a developmental perspective, [Dana Whiddon](#) (founder of Intentional, Creative, and Engaged LLC) excels at bringing a child's passion for art-making into a shared experience. Dana uses the art media to encourage reciprocal interactions and to support the development of abstract thinking. Dana is aware of the child's sensory, visual, and motor-planning systems and will adapt materials to promote optimal exploration and expression.

An individual doesn't have to possess savant-like skills to benefit from art therapy. Rather, assessment is based on the following criteria:

- a) Does the child demonstrate an interest in using the materials?
- b) Would the sensory input provided by the materials be helpful for increasing shared attention, regulation, and engagement?
- c) Does the visual support provided by the drawing, sculpture, etc. promote sustained interactions and/or symbolic play?

If art isn't what gets your child "cooking," sessions will be tailored to exploring your child's passions by following his/her lead as in the traditional Floortime manner. Intentional, Creative, and Engaged LLC uses the [DIR/Floortime model](#) because it addresses the core deficits of autism rather than treating specific symptoms or behaviors. The DIR/Floortime model capitalizes upon an individual's passions, harnessing their affect for sustained interactions that promote relating, communicating and thinking. This approach looks at all aspects of social and emotional development, providing a framework for developing an individualized treatment plan that addresses the unique strengths and challenges of each individual. After an assessment, the therapist can then develop a program that helps the child to develop greater social, emotional and intellectual capacities.

[Intentional, Creative, and Engaged LLC](#):

ICE LLC was founded by Dana Whiddon, MA, ATR-BC, LCAT. Dana is a New York state Licensed Creative Arts Therapist. Five years ago, she accepted the challenge to create an art therapy program at a private



therapeutic day school in Manhattan that serves children and adolescents with developmental disabilities. The program flourished, growing to include three full-time art therapists serving over one hundred students. In this role, Dana worked closely with multi-disciplinary teams to coordinate individualized treatment programs. Dana receives ongoing supervision in the DIR model and has received extensive DIR/Floortime training by leading clinicians in the field. Dana has presented nationally on the benefits of combining DIR/Floortime with art therapy principles to foster growth up the developmental ladder. In addition, she is a candidate at the Institute for Expressive Analysis.

###



Contact Information

Dana Whiddon, MA, ATR-BC, LCAT

Intentional, Creative, and Engaged LLC

<http://danawhiddonlcat.com>

(917) 397-0757

Online Web 2.0 Version

You can read the online version of this press release [here](#).