

Gain Important Education Outcomes: Implement a Successful Art Therapy Program within K-12 Schools

Art Therapy is a creative and engaging way to address inappropriate behaviors such as bullying; identify an individual's barriers to learning; increase student retention; support special needs students; enhance academic performance; provide gifted youth with a new skill; increase motor and sensory skills; and, excite kids' learning experience . . . and there are a variety of funding stream opportunities available to implement a program.



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MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN K-12 SCHOOLS

"Art therapy attends to a student's verbal and nonverbal communications with the aid of a master's level therapist who is trained in art, psychology, and the therapy process. The art therapist is qualified to observe and analyze behaviors, art products and processes, a student's communications, and formalizing art therapy assessments and treatment plans for students for adherence to educational goals and benchmarks. As a whole, art therapy can offer students the opportunity to work through obstacles that may be impeding their educational success while facilitating appropriate social behavior and promote healthy affective development so students can become more receptive to their educational environment."

—Robert Lackie, MS, MA, ATR, LPC, TLMFT Shawnee Mission School Dist., KS

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Model Art Therapy Programs in K-12 Schools

Providing children and youth with timely, appropriate services promotes effective learning, social interaction, self-esteem, coping and resilience.



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ALABAMA (suburban)

Tuesday Art Abilities

This community consulting model serves 16 schools in Shelby County through a special art therapy program. The supplementary program runs nine weeks and focuses on developing motor skills, socialization, sensory adaptation, and more for children with moderate to severe special needs.

FLORIDA (urban)

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools art therapy program began in 1979. Due to the successes in students' emotional functioning, the focus of art therapy in M-DCPS changed from serving a wide variety of special needs students to servicing students identified with emotional/behavioral disabilities.

KANSAS (suburban)

Shawnee Mission School District

Art therapy within the Shawnee Mission School District began informally in 1972, as an adaptive art provision for special needs children who were not part of the regular education classrooms until passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975. Currently, art therapy is offered as a related service to students with IEPs.

KENTUCKY (rural)

Oldham County Schools

The Oldham County Schools' art therapy program works with seven schools to offer direct support of children, safe schools assessments, intervention, and serves as liaison with many regional resources. The program works to help students with a variety of issues including school transition, behavioral, and attendance.



NEW JERSEY (urban)

Jersey City Public Schools

The Creative Arts Therapy Program provides students the opportunity to participate in a process of creative expression using various media to enhance emotional, behavioral, and social growth. CATP is designed to address the needs of youth in crisis and offers counseling within the context of enjoyable, confidential, and non-threatening activities.

PENNSYLVANIA (suburban)

Mt. Lebanon School District

The Art Expression program mission is to facilitate positive socialization with youth through expressive art activities in an inclusive educational environment. The after-school program is a fully inclusive program designed to meet the needs of all learners in a noncompetitive setting. The purpose is to increase socialization, self-esteem, and communication skills among students.

TEXAS (suburban)

Hays Consolidated Independent School District

The primary purpose of the program is to provide art therapy as an enrichment service and a related service to special education students as specified by IEPs. Services are provided in both individual and group settings using accepted theories and techniques. The art therapist works to assist students in achieving goals through the promotion of learning, which is an action-based, dynamic process.

VERMONT (urban)

Burlington School District

The school population is comprised of approximately 218 students in grades K-5. Art therapists provide school clinician services to students and their families. Sessions utilize the arts to address and increase pro-social skills, social reciprocity, positive communication, problem solving and conflict resolution skills, while enhancing self-esteem and sense of mastery and autonomy through the art process.

WISCONSIN (suburban)

Green Bay Area Public Schools

Art therapy services serve a vital role in helping students with special needs or circumstances to gain a readiness for school participation and to make emotional and cognitive gains. Students are comprised of two groups: those with school policy-violations in the areas of violence, threats, weapons and AODA issues; and, those living with chronic mental illness.

Implementation Tools

There are a number of accessible options for implementing an appropriate, thriving Art Therapy program. Credentialed art therapists are experienced professionals that work with children and youth to help advance their confidence, resilience, self-esteem, and bring promise to the future.



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This user-friendly electronic toolkit was developed to assist the many diverse groups serving the youth population throughout the nation in initiating or expanding an Art Therapy program. Credentialed art therapists hold either a master's or doctoral degree in Art Therapy, and are best qualified to implement a beneficial, therapeutic, effective program.

The primary goal is always to help each student reach his or her fullest potential. Consultation with parents, teachers, and other pupil service personnel continues throughout the treatment process. In recent years, Art Therapy has become increasingly recognized and appreciated by education administrators as a valuable related pupil service that supports and improves the well-being of children and adolescents in educational settings.



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Outcomes & Applications

There are a number of important social and therapeutic benefits that are advanced through Art Therapy. Research and study clearly reveal art therapy's positive impact with regard to health, cognition, social interaction, trauma, stress reduction, anxiety, confidence, abuse, and most of life's challenges. Art Therapy aids children and youth of all ages – from toddlers to tweens, and teens to young adults.



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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT

[Nine schools were included in this study to obtain measurable terms and to identify problematic behavioral presentations observed in inner city schools; overall effect of school resources on target behaviors; and, changes promoted by art and music therapy intervention.](#) Tepper, B. & Silva, R. (2010). [The use of art therapy to improve academic performance.](#) Pleasant-Metcalf, A. & Rosal, M. (1997). [A 12-year-old whose academic performance decreased after parents divorced received art therapy treatment, which focused on problem solving and self-concept.](#) Pleasant-Metcalf, A. & Rosal, M. (1997).

COGNITION / REMOVE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

[Three elementary students having experienced personal trauma reap the benefits of art therapy which helped them re-energize, relaxed sense of sadness, and developed or re-developed a sense of empowerment and hopefulness.](#) Kaufman, B. (2010). [Study of 34 primary school children to investigate the use of three art-based instruments using imagery that measure children's cognitive development.](#) Hagood, M. (2002). [Correlational study of art-based measures of cognitive development: clinical and research implications for art therapists working with children.](#) American Art Therapy Association.

GIFTED STUDENTS PROGRAM

[Do gifted students have greater depression levels in contrast to non-gifted students? Clarissa Nieves, Lisa Buckingham Mentors: Michael M. Barsnack, Sabato D. Sagaria.](#) According to Mueller (2009) "gifted children that are exposed to bullying, and their extreme sensitivity have led them to aggressiveness, extreme depression and social isolation." [Gifted students function at higher cognition levels than non-gifted students, but may require greater attention to their emotional needs because of barriers they encounter with depression \(Neihart, 1999\).](#) "Distance Training in Gifted/Talented Education: Description of a Collaborative Working Mode," Rural Special Education Quarterly (1996); ["Enhancing Emotional Development Through Art and Imagery With Gifted Students"](#) (1993), Dr. Heidi Van Ert.



POSITIVE INTERACTION ALTERNATIVE

[Group of teens engaged in expressive mask making to address the age appropriate developmental tasks of identify formation and improve self-concept.](#) Brumleve, E. (2010). [A cooperative classroom art therapy intervention in a public elementary school that provided conflict resolution education, social learning, and group cohesion among sixth-grade students.](#) Gibbons, K. (2010).

RETENTION / ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT

[Art therapy services implemented for students in a ninth-grade English classroom of an urban high school were successful in reducing drop-out rates, decreasing school failure, and improving students' attitudes about school, family, and self.](#) Rosal, M., McCulloch-Vislisesel, S., & Neese, S. (1997).

SOCIALIZATION IMPROVEMENT

[Art therapy programs meet a variety of student needs, allowing students the opportunity to address emotional and social needs.](#) Bush, J. (1997). [Pregnant adolescent females from economically and socially disadvantaged environments participated in a comprehensive program enhanced by art therapy.](#) Stiles, G. & Mermer-Welly, M. (1998). [Group art therapy intervention within a school setting to increase coping skills and decrease disruptive behaviors in a group of 6 eighth-grade students at risk for making a poor transition to high school.](#) Spier, E. (2010).

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS PROGRAM

[Art therapy treatment implemented with two boys who had similar classroom behavior disorders.](#) Rosal, M. (1993). [Single-case study investigated the effectiveness of art therapy with a five year-old male with sensory integration difficulties.](#) Kearns, D. (2004). [Art therapy study of two boys opens the door to children participating in tangible ways in the screening and evaluation of their own AD/HD drug trials.](#) Munley, M. (2002).



Resources

Now, more than ever, valuable resources exist to assist in the funding, development, staffing, and implementation of a successful Art Therapy program. Public, private, nonprofit, health and research sectors, and others offer financial and organizational support.



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FUND A PROGRAM

Art Therapy practice is based on knowledge of human developmental and psychological theories which are implemented in the full spectrum of models of assessment and treatment including educational, psychodynamic, cognitive, transpersonal, and other therapeutic means.

Research in the field confirms that the creative process involved in artistic self-expression: helps people to reconcile emotional conflicts, manage behavior, and, solve problems; fosters self-awareness; increases self-esteem; develops social skills; reduces anxiety; and, aids in reality orientation.

FUNDING ALTERNATIVES

Corporate & Foundation

Government

USEFUL LINKS* The American Art Therapy Association neither endorses any specific training, service, or provider listed; nor is responsible for the content found on the websites listed.

- ✓ [American Academy Of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry](#)
- ✓ [American Academy Of Pediatrics](#)
- ✓ [American Art Therapy Association Tip Sheet](#)
- ✓ [American Public Health Association](#)
- ✓ [Americans For The Arts](#)
- ✓ [Arts In Education](#)
- ✓ [Autism Society](#)
- ✓ [Centers For Disease Control - Mental Health](#)
- ✓ [Child Trends](#)
- ✓ [Children's Defense Fund](#)
- ✓ [Clearinghouse On Early Education & Parenting](#)
- ✓ [Drexel University Libraries](#)
- ✓ [Georgetown University Center - Child Development](#)
- ✓ [HelpGuide.org](#)
- ✓ [My Feelings Coloring Book - \[Chinese\]\(#\), \[English\]\(#\), \[Spanish\]\(#\)](#)
- ✓ [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)
- ✓ [National Association For Education Of Young Children](#)
- ✓ [National Association Of School Psychologists](#)
- ✓ [National Center For Health Statistics](#)
- ✓ [National Federation Of Families For Children's Mental Health](#)
- ✓ [National Guild For Creative Arts Education](#)
- ✓ [National Institute Of Mental Health](#)
- ✓ [National Institute Of Mental Health, Children](#)
- ✓ [Office Of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention](#)
- ✓ [Project ABC](#)
- ✓ [Project Launch](#)
- ✓ [State Departments & Divisions Of Mental Health](#)
- ✓ [State Health Facts](#)
- ✓ [Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration](#)
- ✓ [U.S. Department of Education](#)
- ✓ [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services - HRSA](#)
- ✓ [U.S. Department Of Health & Human Services - ACF](#)
- ✓ [UCLA Center For Mental Health In Schools](#)

Learn More

Art Therapy is utilized in a wide array of settings to promote well-being, socialization, communication, and healing; ease stress, pain, and loss; improve cognitive and motor skills; and empower through life's transitions. There are a number of resources available to assist in developing, incorporating, expanding, or enhancing an Art Therapy program.



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ARTICLES & VIDEOS

- [Art Therapy & Effective Bullying Prevention](#)
- [Adolescent Parent Package - AMA](#)
- [Art Therapy & The Resolution Of Trauma](#)
- [Art Therapy Has Many Faces](#)
- [Art Therapy In Schools](#)
- [Art Therapy Intervention Following Disclosure Of Sexual Abuse](#)
- [Art Therapy Offers Outlets For Military Kids](#)
- [Art Therapy With Adolescents](#)
- [Children Grapple With The Reality Of The September 11 Attacks](#)
- [Children's Behavioral Responses & Creativity Within An Emergency Shelter](#)
- [Creating With Kids: Talking About Art](#)
- [Emotional Wellness: Collection Of Articles, American Academy Of Pediatrics](#)
- [Empowering Students Through Creativity](#)
- [Empowering The Traumatized Child Through The Use Of Art & Action](#)
- [Encouraging Troubled Youth To Stay In School](#)
- [Expressive Mask Making For Teens: Beginning Insights](#)
- [Healing Emotional & Psychological Trauma](#)
- [Healing Grief Through Art: Art Therapy Bereavement Group Workshops](#)
- [Help Kids Decompress](#)
- [Helping Your Child Build Inner Strength](#)
- [Intro To Special Issue On Art Therapy In Schools](#)
- [Medical Art Therapy: Tracy's Kids](#)
- [Mental Health: Report Of The Surgeon General](#)
- [Resilience: Build Skills To Endure Hardship](#)
- [Resilience: Helping Your Child Build Inner Strength](#)
- [Resiliency: Who Goes The Distance & Why?](#)
- [Steps To Healing Following Violent Trauma](#)
- [The Emotional Toll Of School Shootings](#)
- [The Road To Resilience](#)
- [What Is Resilience? PBS](#)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For additional background about Art Therapy.