

Founder and Director

Celebrate the Children's founder, **Monica G. Osgood**, is an experienced behavioral consultant and therapist who specializes in teaching social skills to children with autism and other disorders in relating and communicating. Monica has been working this population for eleven years. Her experience includes four years at a school for autism in North New Jersey. She began as a classroom behavioral assistant and was promoted to Home Program Coordinator and eventually Social Skills Coordinator. The responsibilities with this position included the development and implementation, with very encouraging results, the social skills program for the entire school. She conducted social skills groups at the school on a daily basis for children of all ages and various developmental levels. In addition to running social skills groups, extensive work was also done transitioning special needs children into regular education settings. As a result of this work she has acquired an extensive range of materials and information on how to teach social skills to children with special educational needs.

Currently, as a consultant to many school districts in New Jersey Monica's responsibilities involve insight into curriculum and IEP development, teacher training, trouble shooting and the implementation of behavioral and social skills strategies for self-contained and mainstreamed students. In September of 1998 she created a program for autistic pre-schoolers and elementary age children in a public school in Mt. Arlington, New Jersey. The program is based on her own philosophies in combination with DIR(Greenspan). The program consists of a pre-school classroom and partial and full inclusion for older children. The program has been very successful and currently there is a waiting list.

In conjunction with her work in the school systems, Monica also provides home programs and consultation for children with relating and communicating difficulties. This intervention includes social-emotional development, parent/sibling-child relationship support, self help skills, and academic support. In addition to therapy these positions include hiring and training staff and family members to work with the children; the implementation and monitoring of programs to be run with the children; staff management; and placement and support of the children into regular education settings.

Monica is a faculty member of the Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders(ICDL) and has had the opportunity to work closely with Dr. Greenspan who has been very supportive of the Mt. Arlington program and other projects Monica has created. Monica has completed a DIR certification program as one of the first professionals ever to receive this formal certificate. The past three summers Monica worked as faculty with Drs. Greenspan and Wieder providing a DIR certification workshop to professionals. In November of 2001 she presented at the annual ICDL conference as a faculty member with Dr. Brazelton, Dr. Greenspan, etc. Additional accomplishments include many speaking engagements at conferences across the USA, regular consultations to school districts and conferences in Wales, Ireland and Amsterdam, and the supervision of annual DIR summer camps both in the USA and Wales. Most recently, Monica has appeared on Welsh Channel 4 and BBC1 sharing the DIR approach with British parents and professionals documentary style.