



Olivia von Ferstel
and
Selene Aguayo-Gisholt
Master level Mental Health Counselors
and Expressive Therapists
with extensive clinical experience,
co-lead **Sibling Group**.

The synthesis of Olivia and Selene's training and clinical perspective informs their work, compassion and deep respect for the siblings of children with special needs. This compassion and respect clearly reflects the creative, thoughtful way they design, implement and facilitate these groups to meet the sibling's unique needs.



"By participating in Sibling Group, my daughter feels special about herself as an individual and as a sister. She benefits greatly from the camaraderie and understanding from other group members.

She feels they care about her and validate her feelings. She's been able to talk about how her brother makes her feel, to tell him directly and to tell us what bothers her.
Thank you"

For more information on the specific format and structure of **Sibling Groups** and for dates and times, please call
Olivia von Ferstel or
Selene Aguayo-Gisholt

187 Spring Street, Lexington, MA 02421
P 781 861-7081 F 781 861-3625
www.communitytherapeuticdayschool.org
ctds1@verizon.net

Directions

From the East

Route 2 to Exit 54A "Waltham Street, Waltham," left at stop sign onto Hayden Avenue, follow to the end, left at stop sign onto Spring Street, cross back over Route 2, CTDS is on the right.

From the West

Route 2 East to Exit "Spring Street," merge onto Concord Avenue to stop sign, CTDS is opposite, turn left onto Spring Street and then right into the CTDS driveway.

From the South

Take route 128 North to Exit 28A "Trapelo Road/ Belmont," merge onto Trapelo Road and immediately get into the left lane, left at the first light (Smith Street, which becomes Spring Street), CTDS is 1/2 mile on the left.

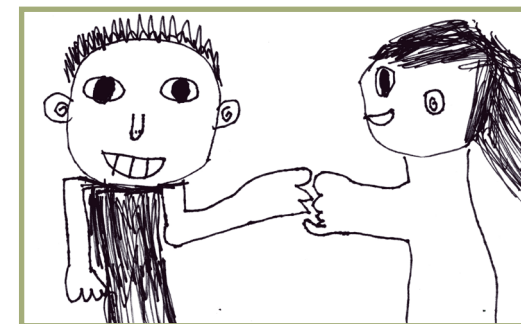
From the North

Take Route 128 south to Exit 29A "Route 2 East," take first exit off Route 2 (Exit 53) "Spring Street," merge onto Concord Avenue to stop sign, CTDS is opposite, turn left onto Spring Street and then right into the CTDS driveway.



Community Therapeutic Day School

SIBLING GROUPS REACH OUT



Sibling Groups foster a sense of possibility, resilience and ability to respond to opportunities and challenges with the support of others.





"I FEEL HAPPY WHEN I COME TO SIBLING GROUP
BECAUSE I EXPRESS MYSELF AND MY FEELINGS.
I HAVE FUN AND MAKE FRIENDS."

Since 1991, the Community Therapeutic Day School (CTDS) has been offering **Sibling Groups** as part of the comprehensive therapeutic services provided to the families of the children enrolled at the school.

CTDS is responding to an interest from families and related professionals to expand these popular groups beyond the day school program.

Sibling Groups are designed to help an exceptional and often overlooked population of children: Siblings of children with special needs. These siblings are in complex social and psychological circumstances and have needs of their own that require attention and support.

To be in a family and in relationship with a sibling with psychiatric, neurological and/or developmental special needs can be one which cultivates a unique lens through which to view the world; a lens imbued with compassion, insight and acceptance. It can also be a trying and potentially isolating experience. However, being a sibling of a child with special needs rarely, if ever, makes up the entirety of a child's being. Siblings are artists; siblings are athletes; siblings are students and friends; siblings are individuals with needs all their own. Having a brother or sister with special needs is only one facet of the sibling's experience.

The goals of **Sibling Groups** are to provide a safe and supportive setting in which siblings can explore and discuss their individual experience of having a brother or sister with special needs, while providing the distinctive opportunity for siblings to connect with peers who are in similar circumstances.

Siblings will develop skills to better understand their relationship to themselves and to their brother or sister. Siblings will address and work through their complicated feelings while celebrating their joys and successes.



Sibling Groups are based in expressive therapies and involve art activities, play and discussion. Fun and imaginative activities give siblings the opportunity to explore and express the dynamics and themes inherent in the experience of being a sibling to a child with special needs. The group leaders establish the structure and focus of the groups in a creative, sensitive and thoughtful manner.



- **Sibling Groups** are divided into two different age ranges: **5-8** and **9-12**.
(A group for teens may be offered at a later date based on need and interest.)
- Each group meets once a month from **October thru June** for **ninety minute sessions**.
- Consistent participation in all nine groups is required in order to foster group cohesion and for siblings to obtain maximum benefit from the activities involved.
- Group size accommodates up to **eight members** and will meet at the same day and time with the same leaders.
- An initial telephone interview with parents is required for enrollment in **Sibling Groups** at CTDS. Information from the meeting will be used as a guide in determining the best possible group placement for each sibling.
- **Fees are prepaid for the nine-session cycle.**

