

RAINBOWDANCE© TESTIMONIALS

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Refugee Mothers and Toddlers, Chelsea, MA.

Typically, we have only a couple of kids, but they do come back. We can see even the most agitated children begin to relax...last week, we saw one boy just on his own with his mom, for the first time; they are having numerous challenges together (she has young twins at home, too). When I saw mom at the end of the week, she volunteered that the day after grp, when things had been rough, he had gotten out a blanket and started doing the movements!!! This was a pleasant surprise to both of them (and us!!!).

Today for the first time, we had 4 moms and 5 children (ages 19 months to almost 4). It went beautifully. Thank you for teaching us: the group is clearly a lovely and soothing opportunity for both kids and adults...

Pam Miller, EdD, LICSW

Safe Start Director

MGH Chelsea

Katrina Survivors: LongBeach, MS.

"I must say, I am still so overwhelmed on how well your program goes over everytime we have a class. I have seen some interesting things take place with very active children after just 2 classes. My boss was so impressed after the first class that we are beginning to spruce up the old trailer and create a Rainbowdance atmosphere as best we can. After I returned from your workshop, I wanted to get started right away but the building was not yet ready to access so I began working with my toddlers on little things. We would "tickle tickle" in circle time, and when crawling under the table we learn to follow directions singing "Out, out out, out!" We worked on "Stop" and "rest", and most of all have loved learning the sign language. We finally cleared the space and have had our first experimental class. My director wanted to try it with the four year olds first. Now keep in mind we have just begun the extended day schedule, so children who were not always together ended up together. My director swore it was the hardest bunch in the school. I wasn't sure it would work, especially with twelve children. We just went for it, and they loved it! The next day was bad weather, and the kids were all wound up, so my director asked me to do Rainbowdance again. I wish you could have seen those "very active" boys loving their little bears in the lullaby ending circle. They truly were in another place. Later I went in their room and asked them to tell me what they liked best about it and their answers let me know that Rainbowdance is exactly what we need."

We have been having a great time with Rainbow Dance. You will be so excited to see how the children have just really grabbed on to this program! I have children every day for about 20-25 mins and then on Wed. I actually have two groups one in the morning and one at noon. These children are in the 4 year old class and actually do the entire program. But you may like to know that every child has participated in some part of Rainbow Dance and the effects, and benefits to me seem to be the same. I will say they love it! Even though our groups are big we are seeing children repeating songs, such as "ball, ball" and "round and round" just throughout their day. I have not officially trained any teachers they just watch and catch on. Some teachers even take it back to their classrooms, using "stop, and rest" to gain classroom

control. I have children begging me first thing to "please can we be horses today" So I know our children are certainly enjoying themselves. Sometimes they get mad when its time to leave. Even the toddlers are slowly catching on. We have about mastered "ball, ball" and tickles and "big sounds" , and are working on Round and round. All classrooms have the music now and can work on pieces.

Karen Meyers

-First Baptist Preschool

ABCD Jamaica Plain, MA. Head Start Director:

The Rainbowdance program has been at this center for three years. This past year, we piloted a gender specific program to determine the effect of having the children work together, for the Rainbowdance hour, as gender peers. ... "I think RD is having a wonderful effect on children or teachers or the walls or something. Much calmer this year.

March is usually the time when kids start falling apart, but it hasn't happened this year.

What you do you need to bottle it and market it nationwide!

Glad you and RD are in our lives".

Joyce

Deaf Autistic Children, Boston, MA.

When the ladies explained that they would like to come to my class once a week to do Rainbow Dance with us, I admit that my first reaction was skepticism. How in the world would we fit this activity into our day?

My students are already years behind their peers and three of the four are on MCAS-alt this year. Not to mention the fact that I had seen Rainbow Dance before, with the very young classes at our school. This did not seem appropriate for my nine- and ten-year old students. No, this did not seem to be something that would benefit my students nor help me to meet their academic goals. Despite my initial reaction, I agreed to have them come the following Wednesday to try it.

The first class was magical. My students all took off their shoes, donned tunics and sat with strangers despite the fact that any of these events in isolation could have and should have triggered the obsessive behaviors and anxious reactions I had seen so many times already in the year. Even my youngest and most delayed student put her aggressive behaviors aside and relaxed.

Seeing the students relax allowed myself and my two paraprofessionals to relax as well. As my skepticism began to fade away, I found myself enjoying the activity and seeing my students in a new light.

In the months that followed, we have all witnessed incredible growth in my class. The students are thrilled to see the picture of our Rainbow Dance friends on the schedule every Wednesday, as am I! It provides a wonderful respite in the middle of the week, and helps us to refocus our energy and put any negative incidents aside. It allows my students to let down the shield around them and engage with those in their environment.

Before our holiday break, our class gave our Rainbow Dance friends four small stones that were engraved with powerful words. I'd like to share the letter we included with them, which I wrote from my students' perspective.

To Our Dear "Rainbow Dance" Friends:

This is the season in which the world pauses to reflect on those things that matter most in life. We hope that these small tokens of our appreciation will serve to remind you of the wonderful gifts you give the children of our school, and particularly this classroom, each time you work with us.

Thank you for giving us Peace:

We have come to find harmony in the routines you have introduced to us. We are learning to "listen" to our bodies and find a stillness within. We can relax and feel safe with you.

Thank you for giving us Joy:

We feel bliss when we work together. We come together as a group and see nothing but smiling faces all around us, from adults and peers alike. We never have to feel uncomfortable with you.

Thank you for giving us Strength:

We have all experienced moments where something we could not do last week suddenly feels right. We are learning to persevere and to overcome our obstacles. We have seen that there is nothing we can't do with you.

Thank you for giving us Hope.

We have learned that our apparent limitations should never allow us to fear moving forward. We have seen great things from each one of us, and this reminds us that each of us has an opportunity to grow. We have seen that you believe in us and celebrate our achievements.

Thank you so much for every smile, every moment of eye contact, every ounce of patience. The staff and students alike feel your love and did not want this holiday season to pass without each of you being able to take a piece of our love home with you, to remember how much we appreciate everything you have done in the short time we have known you.

Rebecca Mc Vey, Teacher: Horace Mann School – Room B311: Deaf Autistic Class

Kripalu Week Long Intensive Trainee:

Dear Robert and Dicki,

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart and the ends of my whirling fingertips for the work you did with all of us last week. I am back in my office seeing six clients today and can feel so much of the essence of what we did, and some of the specific work, coming through in my work with others. It also left me with so much joy and hope. I did yoga with a friend this morning and will join a class tonight. I hope I get another good 25 years to take this kind of good care of myself and others. Thank you.

LESLEY UNIVERSITY INTERN;

When I first met D. he cried almost constantly and was aided through his days at his Head

Start program with the almost-full time support of one of his teachers. Initially, he resisted sitting with his peers on the parachute to participate in Rainbow Dance each wee, and instead he sat in a chair with his teacher holding him, singing the songs to him as he watched as wriggled in her arms. Unable to regulate his own body within a classroom and to focus on the elements of Rainbow Dance, this time to observe and to begin integrating the music into his body allowed him to eventually join the circle during certain parts that he had learned. Throughout the year during which I worked with D. he eventually learned to participate in the complete Rainbow Dance groups, first with the direct support of his teacher and later with the self-control to both enthusiastically demonstrate his mastery of the songs and movements and also to clearly communicate his need to sit out or take a break when he was unable to match the group's energy level or mood. He developed a connection not only to the Rainbow Dance program but also to its leaders and his peers while they participated together; he exemplifies a child who has been helped by this intervention to look out and toward his peers, to seek connection and grounding rather than remain disconnected, unattached, and unsettled.

CBI Rainbowdance Trainees 2012:

I wanted to let you know again how much I enjoyed the training. It was so much more than I thought it would be...and I felt so grateful to be part of it. I expected to go to this training offering a little from my heart but more from my head. This group really didn't allow for that. I worked really hard from my heart, and my whole body, and because of it I felt more connected to myself and to the others that were there. I was really exhausted on Monday-dragged myself out of bed and spent the day trying to be gentle with myself- eating well, drinking a lot, being in nature, journaling and doing yoga. I realized how deeply the whole experience affected me, more so than I was prepared for or expected. Some things locked up now started flowing again...

By participating in this I can feel much more empathic to the experience of the group members I am working with and may work with in the future. As leaders, you were all wonderful role models for the way a fun but nurturing and safe holding environment is created and maintained. Thank you Dicki.

Kia also can't stop talking about her experience. Thanks so much to being open to her attending even though she hadn't been to the original training. We were both wondering if there is any follow-up after being trained to get together in some ongoing way for supervision/ reconnection/ dancing together. We both think the connection is important. It is rejuvenating to be with other Rainbowdancers. It is a little isolated in this part of the state not having regular access to BCF or participating in any of the regular Boston groups. Thanks again.

Lesley Graduate Dance Therapy Student:

Dear Dicki,

May I just say that your energy today around your performance piece and the work you are doing through Rainbowdance is so profound. I feel a bittersweetness as I am sad to not have witnessed it sooner. Better late than never, I suppose! Thank you for all the time, dedication, presence and determination you put into your work. It truly shows. You are creating a large wake behind you that is gaining speed and momentum and will continue to ripple on for generations to come. Thank you for being an example of how to positively contribute to today's world. That is no small feat and somehow you manage to do it. I am deeply touched and inspired.

Eternally grateful,

Jessica

Montessori School Enrichment Director:

Thank you SO much for your kind words of support. As this all has been happening, my wife, Sara, and I have looked into other opportunities and are currently considering an offer to work in an international school outside of Mumbai, India. Very exciting! Indeed, we will land on our feet. I value so much our shared passion and philosophy for helping kids become true, peaceful, global citizens and look forward very much to keeping in touch. I'm copying my personal email address on this message so you have it.

With deep respect,

James

Mother of mom and toddler RD:

Even though Skye does not like participating in class so much, she does her whole routine at home. I can hear her saying, "tickle tickle looooud sound" at night when she is soothing herself to sleep. It's very cute and for that we are really thankful for what your class has given us.

Happily,

Sandra (Skye's mom)

Mom of adopted Chinese girl with developmental delays:

My daughter Anna arrived in my arms in Nanchang, china in May of 2009, at 16 months old, weighing 16 pounds and barely able to sit up. her developmental delays were so severe and she was so malnourished, that when the orphanage nannies handed her to me that day, my first thought was that they had mistaken her age. She seemed more like a 6 month old than a 16 month old. We brought Anna home, fed her lots of cream, and slowly she started to put on weight. Within a month she started to crawl, and finally we could no longer see her collar bones jutting out above her shirt collar. Her little legs were so skinny and lacking muscle tone - she had clearly never used them to support herself in standing position - and it took time for them to strengthen. At the very end of august, we were on vacation in Vermont when Anna took her first steps at 19 months old. By the end of our 2 weeks in our hilltop cottage, Anna was walking. She wasn't very steady, but she was extremely determined.

I had heard wonderful things about early intervention, and had called to schedule an evaluation as soon as we arrived home from china. It took a month for the EI team to fit us in, and when they finally did, they were very nice but utterly useless. They determined Anna would qualify for physical therapy once a week for 60 minutes, but the therapy never amounted to much more than observing Anna as she quickly began to meet her missed milestones. by the third or fourth visit, the PT and I agreed that Anna didn't really need her services. it was great that Anna was catching up at such an accelerated pace, but there was something still missing - something I had expected from EI that clearly wasn't part of the therapy they were offering. While Anna was moving swiftly from crawling to standing to climbing and getting closer and closer to walking, she lacked the confidence most children gain from slow progression. She was unsure of her own stability, and had a very inadequate sense of balance.

In January 2010, just as Anna was turning 2, we started our first class at Dicki Johnson Macy's Rainbowdance Attunement program for toddlers and parents. I knew immediately that this was exactly what Anna needed: a therapeutic practice of repetitive movement and balance, accompanied by gentle music and singing, with mom by her side. Anna was, and remains, extremely wary of strangers. During our first class, she kept her face hidden in my lap most of the time, by the second she started watching the group leader with studied interest, and by the third she was smiling and following along with most of the movements. Through her dance classes, as the spring progressed, Anna started to see movement not merely as an objective, but as a means of expression and a source of great pleasure.

Rainbowdance has provided us with exactly the kind of supportive and loving movement therapy that Anna most needed. These days Anna is running, hopping, jumping, and we are full of anticipation for the coming year of Rainbowdance.

Nancy Popper

RAINBOWDANCE ENDORSED PRACTITIONER AND FORMER INTERN 2012
Hi Dicki & Val,

I just had to tell you about an incredible experience last night at work, thanks to "lessons I learned at BCF"! I was co-teaching a Social Skills Group for teenage boys with Autism, we have 5 boys in the group from 10-14 years old and they range the entire spectrum of ability from low to high functioning so it is so difficult to have activities they can all enjoy. My coworker is always so thankful when I bring out the movement props for 30min of the group because it is the one section that they usually all participate :)

Yesterday, the lowest functioning boy in the group, Deon, really spun out of control during the parachute activities of Rainbowdance and was running around the room. My coworker had him sit away from the group to take a break so he could calm down. I went into my Baby Birds remix without music since I didn't have a co-leader at this point and the boys were so focused on tickling themselves and naming body parts to

tickle it was really amazing how they all became centered and calm again. At this point Deon came running over to us sitting on the parachute and laid down on his stomach next to me. I just put one hand on his back solar plexus and continued with the baby birds for much longer than usual and everyone was so peaceful, I had never seen all 5 of them like this at once! Deon just closed his eyes and reached his hand out to the boy next to him, then Deon put his hand on the other boy's foot! This boy sitting was so shocked, he just stared at Deon and put his hand on top of Deon's. All the moms and grandmas in the room were in awe that they could sit together peacefully while touching.

Of course the moment only lasted a minute before Deon decided to lick the other boy's foot! But hey, it was a great minute while it lasted!

Thank you for all my DMT knowledge, I wouldn't be able to do any of this without the incredible experience of working with you both at BCF :)

*Love,
Alicia Matosich, MA, R-DMT
Therapist at GOALS for Autism, Inc.*

RN and Mother of Toddler: self soothing

My son, Anthony, has been experiencing Rainbowdance since he was 18 months old. As he got older, my husband and I found the hour before dinner time to be the most challenging for him due to being over-tired and hungry and maybe even a little bored. The behaviors were becoming challenging for us as parents to handle. We started to put him in his highchair early to watch us cook, hoping that would help. Without prompts or any suggestion, Anthony started to use that time to practice Rainbowdance moves. He would pick up a napkin off the table and say "shake shakeshake stop" along with the hand/arm movements and perform the entire "ball ballball" routine quietly to himself. This self-soothing behavior was remarkable for us to witness. Anthony, now 3, continues to practice Rainbowdance as a self-soothing practice and also as a fun activity to do with me and his

brother. He received Rainbowdance scarves as a gift from his Aunt for Christmas and now he is independently teaching his 1 year old brother, Deaglan, the routine, again, without prompts or suggestion. It is truly fascinating to watch. Our family is a believer in Rainbowdance's magic, and it has truly become a positive part of our daily routine. We can say it has changed our lives for the better. As a mother, I love what Rainbowdance has done for my kids, but also what it has done for me. It's lasting impression has prompted me to desire to share what I have learned with others in my community. Rainbowdance most recently has helped my family with the major transition of a move to another State. It has been our connection between our Boston life and the new life we are making.

Clinical EI interventionist: Use of gesture

I currently work with a 2 year old little boy who was addicted to drugs in utero, and presents with a variety of sensory challenges and difficulty with self-regulation. I do Rainbowdance with him and his mother, who struggles with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, once per week. From the beginning, he has actively participated with enthusiasm throughout each session. His mom reports regularly using elements of Rainbowdance to calm him when he is frustrated or upset at any point in their day. Recently, mom reported they attended a doctor appointment which was highly stressful for both of them. In the midst of some testing the little boy used the sign "stop", which he learned in Rainbowdance. The doctor was unsure what he was expressing, but mom understood and told the doctor to stop. The doctor insisted they needed to finish the testing or they would need to return another day. Mom said they would return another day, and she took him home. She described this as an empowering moment for both her and her son.