

Jennifer Kahn Ruoff, LMSW, MS. Ed

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Qualifications Summary

Devoted, self-motivated social worker with 25+ years of experience counseling children with special needs and their families. Results-oriented professional with a proven track record of devising effective, comprehensive strategies to maximize children's potential throughout Westchester County.

Strengths include:

- **Experience With a Wide Range of Special Needs:** Worked with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, ADHD, OCD, ODD, Cerebral Palsy, Tourette's, Apraxia, Sensory Processing Disorder, learning disabilities, anxiety disorders, depression, school refusal, Selective Mutism, Hearing impairments, social-emotional challenges, and others.
- **Diverse Settings:** Hands-on experience with family counseling, individual counseling, and support groups in school, home, and agency settings.
- **Advocacy Skills:** In-depth knowledge of both New York State and Federal Special Education Regulations and a proven track record of success helping families get the resources and services they need.
- **Specialized Training:** Trained in Applied Behavior Analysis, Group Psychotherapy, Restorative Justice, understanding the intersectionality of racism and trauma and working with the LGBTQ community.
- **Prior Teaching Experience:** Classroom experience with a practical knowledge of how to implement special education modifications into self-contained and integrated classrooms for students with special needs.

Education

Columbia University School of Social Work, New York, NY

Masters of Science in Clinical Social Work, May 1997. NY State License #055583.

Bank Street College of Education, New York, NY

Masters of Science in Elementary and Secondary Special Education, August 1995.

New York University, New York, NY

Bachelor of Arts in English and American Literature, May 1993.

American Group Psychotherapy Association

Principles of Group Psychotherapy Certificate Program, February 1997.

Restorative Practices Two-Day Facilitator Training, Irvington, NY

Trained as a Conference Facilitator in Restorative Justice to bring victims, offenders, and the community together to resolve conflicts, crises and discipline problems, June 2011.

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Professional Experience

Private Practice, Irvington, NY

2002 – Present

Social Worker / Special Needs Family Counselor / Special Education Advocate

Served both families and organizations throughout Westchester County. Clients and services include:

- **Special Education Advocate (2002-Present)** Helped families navigate through the special education system. Reviewed evaluations, attended EI, CPSE, and CSE meetings. Utilizing knowledge of New York and Federal education laws and regulations, helped parents to obtain appropriate services for each child with special needs and help create specific and measurable appropriate goals.
- **Education Consultant (2002-Present)** Determined appropriate services and public and/or private school placements for children with special needs. Observed children in school, home, and recreational environments and created effective home and school interventions based on individual temperament, abilities, and learning style.
- **Clubhouse Stars Consultant and Workshop Presenter (2018-Present)** Assist owner and teachers of this social skills program with new ideas and management techniques. Help provide referrals to community resources for the children in the programs ages ranging from 4-12. Workshop presenter for the parents on special education advocacy and positive parenting.
- **Parent Support Group (2002-2016)** Led support group for parents with children of various ages with special needs. Discussed family challenges and dynamics. Explored various treatment and advocacy options.
- **Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. (2010-2012)** Developed and ran workshops throughout Westchester County on parenting strategies, positive behavior management, and special needs training for teachers, child care employees and parents.

PTSA Special Needs Committee, Irvington, NY

2016 – Present

Founder and Co-Chair

- Collaborated with parents, administrators, BOE members and teachers.
- Brought in speakers and workshops for all district stakeholders. Provided resources for special education community. Facilitated Parent to Parent Support Groups.

Irvington Diversity Foundation, Irvington, NY

2011 – 2018

Executive Director

- Led a foundation comprised of community members, village officials, police officers, parents, and school administrators to embrace diversity and promote acceptance throughout the schools and the community.
- Chaired meetings, coordinated fundraising, set agendas and goals. Produced entertainment fundraisers.
- The foundation sponsored two nationally recognized programs, Facing History / Facing Ourselves and Restorative Practices, to train teachers and other faculty on the most effective ways to teach and react to bullying, bias, and harassment.

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Rosenthal JCC of Northern Westchester, Pleasantville, NY

2012 - 2013

Director of Programs for Enhancing Potential

- Administrator and supervisor of the special needs programs. Job included grant writing, hiring and training for all staff including the special needs after school program, a teen internship program, the summer inclusion program at Camp Discovery, a special needs theater program, the teen Saturdaynight socialization program, 2 parent support groups and an adult dance program.

Independent Contractor, Irvington, NY

2002 - Present

- **HTA of New York (2002-2010)** Provided family training and individual counseling for children with diverse special needs. Designed interventions to minimize power struggles and behavioral challenges and increase positive reinforcement.
- **School Choice International (2005-2007)** Counseled and educated families with children of special needs relocating to Westchester County both domestically and internationally.
- **Dynamic Kids (2005-2007)** Provided family and individual counseling. Advocated in EI, CSPE, and CSE meetings. Led parent support groups for families with children with special needs.
- **Days of Wonder Daycare (2002-2010)** Advised and trained teachers, parents, and staff on special education topics and effective behavior management.

Alcott School, Yonkers, Scarsdale, and Tarrytown, NY

2002 - 2004

Social Worker

- Team member for seven pre-school classrooms, including integrated and self-contained classrooms.
- Fostered a positive, nurturing school experience through family training, teacher training, and individual counseling.
- Facilitated parent support group and social skills group.

Central Speech & Language Pathology, Hartsdale, NY

1997 - 2002

Social Worker and Special Educator

- Provided counseling, family training, and advocacy for children ranging from birth - 6 years old and their families.
- Represented Central Speech as the evaluation agency at CPSE meetings.
- Reviewed evaluations and participated in the creation of IEP.

Pleasantville Diagnostic Center at the Jewish Child Care Association, Pleasantville, NY

1997 - 1997

Summer Social Worker

- Provided therapy for boys ranging from 6-15 years old in residential treatment care.
- Case manager for five children.

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Eastern Middle School and Glenville Elementary School, Greenwich, CT **1996 - 1997**

School Social Work Intern

- Counseled students individually and in groups on social skills, family divorce, and other topics.
- Facilitated tutoring programs.

Fred S. Keller, Parent Education Program **1995 - 1996**

Parent Educator Intern

- Taught parents of 3-5 year olds with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and other disabilities how to utilize Applied Behavior Analysis with their children.
- Created home education programs to maintain consistency between home and school.

Teaching Experience **1993 - 1995**

- The Solomon Schechter Jewish Day School of Westchester, White Plains, NY, *Resource Room Teacher and Associate Teacher* (1994-1995)
- The Churchill School, New York, NY *Student Teacher* (1994)
- The Child Development Center, New York, NY *Student Teacher* (1994)
- The City and Country School, New York, NY *Student Teacher* (1993-1994)

Awards

Celebrating Diversity in Business Award **April 4, 2017**

Celebrating Diversity Final Five Award in the Standard Bearer Category **April 4, 2017**

Westfair Communications

Publications

Special Needs Resources for Westchester families: a guide, in Westchester Parent, Vol. 7 No.11, August 2007.

Resource Guide for Special Needs Kids in Westchester, in Westchester Parent, Vol. 5 No.12, September 2005.

Resources for Children with Special Needs and their Families, in Westchester Parent, Vol. 3 No.8, April 2003.

Book review on *Children in Groups*, by M. Fatout in Research in Social Work Practice, Vol. 9 No.2, March 1999.

Book Review on *Performance Breakthroughs for Adolescents with Learning Disabilities or ADD* by G. Markel & J. Greenbaum in Journal of Child and Adolescent Group Therapy, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1997.

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Presentations

Special Education Advocacy, Clubhouse Stars, January 2019

Positive Parenting, Clubhouse Stars, November 2018

Bullying: How a Community Can Combat Bullying and Bias, Prideworks Conference for LGBTQ Youth and their Allies, March 2014

Red Flags in Child Development, What to Expect from the Evaluation Process and Resources, Byram Hills Parent Association, December 2013

Bullying: How a Community Can Combat Bullying and Bias, Prideworks Conference for LGBTQ Youth and their Allies, November 2012

Speech and Language Development: When to be Concerned, Child Care Council Workshop, November 2012

Bullying: How a Community Can Combat Bullying and Bias, The Loft Panel Discussion, April, 2012

Autism: An Overview, Child Care Council Workshop, January 2012

Overcoming Barriers Working with Children with Special Needs, Child Care Council Workshop, May 2011

Positive Behavior Management, Westchester Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC), Spring Teacher Workshops, March 2011

Managing Challenging Behaviors for inclusion preschool classes, Ongoing Workshop Series for Child Care Council, March 2011

Overcoming Barriers Working with Children with Special Needs, Child Care Council Workshop, February 2011

Challenging Behaviors for self-contained classrooms, Child Care Council Workshop, February 2011

Challenging Behaviors for school-aged children, Child Care Council Workshop, February 2011

Working with Children with Special Needs, Child Care Council Workshop, January 2011

Managing Challenging Behaviors for inclusion preschool classes, Ongoing Workshop Series for Child Care Council, November 2010

Working with Parents for daycare professionals, Child Care Council Workshop, October 2010

Positive Behavior Management, Westchester Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC), Spring Teacher Workshops, March 2010

Positive Behavior Management, Westchester Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC), Spring Teacher Workshops, April 2009

Positive Behavior Management, Eastchester Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA), December 2009

Positive Parenting, Days of Wonder Daycare, March 2008

Special Education Advocacy, Pathways School, December 2005

Positive Parenting, Dynamic Kids, January 2004

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Professional Affiliations

American Group Psychotherapy Association, Westchester Group Psychotherapy Society, Council for Exceptional Children, National Association of Social Workers, New York State Society for Clinical Social Work, The Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders, New York State Coalition of Social Workers.