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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Center for Autism and Related Disorders
Receives Grant to Help San Diego Children with Autism**

San Diego, CA | December 20, 2011 -- The National Foundation for Autism Research has awarded the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) research and development department a Community Project Grant. The grant will be used for CARD's Creating Opportunities to Meet Peers and Advance Social Skills (COMPASS) study to teach social skills in a playgroup setting to children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). CARD's San Diego, California, treatment center will conduct several 12-week playgroups, starting in February, 2012.

The COMPASS study, which is a randomized controlled trial, will include 24 children between the ages of five and seven years who reside in San Diego. It will specifically measure each participant's improvement and generalization of skills in five key areas that include sharing, turn taking, initiating play, joining play, and maintaining play.

"We are grateful for NFAR's support. Many individuals with autism spectrum disorders face significant challenges in the development of social skills. Our study will conduct behaviorally oriented playgroups with the goal of enhancing foundational social skills. Such social skills are known to be essential to overall quality of life," says CARD Director of Research and Development Jonathan Tarbox, PhD, BCBA-D. Tarbox is the study's principal investigator. "We are hoping the San Diego study can provide a research-based model that any community can easily duplicate."

The NFAR Community Project Grant will support CARD's research department in its groundbreaking work. The primary focus of CARD research is assessment and treatment based on applied behavior analysis (ABA), although CARD's research addresses any topic that may hold promise for producing information that could improve the lives of individuals with autism.

About the Center for Autism and Related Disorders:

The Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) is among the world's largest and most experienced organizations effectively treating children with autism and related disorders with state-of-the-art therapy. The mission of CARD's research department is to conduct empirical research on the assessment and treatment of autism and to disseminate its research findings and derived technology through publication and the education of both professionals and the public. For more information about CARD, visit www.centerforautism.com.

About the National Foundation for Autism Research:

The National Foundation for Autism Research (NFAR) was founded in December, 2003, to aid in the development, expansion and support of effective treatment programs and services that improve the quality of life for children and young adults with autism and autism spectrum disorders. To date, NFAR has awarded nearly \$500,000 in grants and direct services throughout San Diego County. This grant is one of six awarded by NFAR this year in its Community Project Grants category. For more information about NFAR, visit www.NFAR.org.

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