

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

A parent-assisted social skills program

ICCD's Friendship Groups are not broad social skills interventions, but specifically focus on building skills for developing and maintaining friendships. They are most appropriate for children and adolescents who are interested in developing connections with peers, but are having a hard time doing so successfully.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What topics do you cover during group? Friendship Groups focus on building skills for successfully participating in typical peer interactions. Therefore, group content heavily emphasizes important aspects of “*hanging out*” with friends, while also addressing other commonly occurring social situations, such as participating in lunch/recess conversations, being a good sport during team activities, and working on group projects. Moreover, groups address issues of humor/sarcasm, managing conflict, and handling teasing.

Must my child have a diagnosis to participate? No. Although some children with ASD, ADHD, NVLD, Anxiety, or other learning challenges may benefit from Friendship Group, other children without diagnoses may also be a good fit. With that said, insurance coverage will likely depend on whether your insurance company views Friendship Group as “*medically necessary*”.

What is the structure of groups? Groups run for 14 weeks and each group is 60 minutes long. The group curriculum is structured and sequential, with skills building upon one another each week. Therefore, it is important that participants commit to attending all sessions.

Where are the groups offered? Groups are offered in the Canton office. We do not currently offer groups in the Newton office.

How many children are there in each group? We aim to have approximately four to six children per group.

Are parents involved? Our Friendship Groups are offered with concurrent parent training sessions. That is, while the children attend group in one room, parents meet in another room and learn how to promote friendship skills in the home and community settings.

Who runs the groups? Friendship Groups are run by a licensed psychologist and doctoral-level psychology interns.

How much do groups cost? The group is \$50/week for the 60-minute session. Although not guaranteed, some families may be successful with obtaining coverage through insurance for these services. We currently accept BCBS and UBH and can assist you with seeking coverage from those agencies.

What is the fee for parent sessions? Parent sessions are \$20 per week out-of-pocket. Insurance does not cover parent education/training.

How do I enroll? The first step to enrolling would be an intake interview with you and your child. The intake interview is important, as it provides the group leaders an opportunity to get to know your child and learn about his/her strengths and weaknesses. This is important for making sure that your child is a good match with other children/adolescents in the group. To schedule an intake, please email Dr. Carolyn Kuehnel at ckuehnel@iccdpartners.org.

What if my child is not a good fit with the other children in the upcoming group? Ultimately, it is most important that your child has an opportunity to be successful during Friendship Group. If it is determined that there is not a great match between your child and other children in the upcoming group, you may be placed on a waiting list.



What Parents Are Saying:

Awesome resource for parents – I learned a lot about different places or websites that were beneficial and the kids had awesome leaders for their sessions and were able to gain very useful skills that will help in school and in life.

It is a great and very practical and honest way to help kids develop skills they need. I definitely saw progress and saw him using what he learned in school and with family and friends.

ICCD Friendship Group offered wonderful instruction and support for my child. I especially appreciated the parent group, (which I initially was not excited about), talking about the lessons helped my understanding and comfort with the material and motivated me to practice and be accountable for the homework – basically helped us get the most out of our sessions.

It is a great group for learning social skills, but it is up to the parents to put them in action.

I would recommend it to parents who were looking for an explicit, skill-oriented program. Very often friendship groups seem to have less explicit teaching and I'm glad this had "skills" taught plus time for the kids to interact.

My child made leaps and bounds in his social skills – he went from having no friends to being the life of the party!

