

Friends For Life at St Chad's

Cognitive Behaviour Programme

What is Friends for Life?

- * World's leading programme for building **resilience** in children to help them grow into confident, well adjusted adults
- * Developed in Australia by **Dr Paula Barrett**. The only programme recognised by **World Health Organisation**. It promotes self esteem, problem solving skills, psychological resilience, self expression and builds positive relationships with children and adults

How the Programme Works

There are four developmentally sensitive, evidence based versions of the programme:

Fun FRIENDS	Early Childhood	4-7 years
Friends for life	Primary School	8-11 years
My FRIENDS Youth	Upper Primary Middle Secondary	12-15 years
RESILIENCE for Life	Upper Secondary to adult	16 years onwards

10 sessions

Home Activities to generalise skills

Which programmes we are delivering

- * At St Chads we are delivering the **Fun Friends** and **Friends for Life** programmes
- * We have 6 members of staff who are trained facilitators:
 - Mrs Azadeh** Learning Mentor
 - Mrs Farrelly** SENCo
 - Mrs Ashley** Deputy Head,
 - Mr Clifton** LSA
 - Mr Mc Guinness** LSA
 - Mr Morris** Dinner Supervisor
- * We are now onto our second programme in the Autumn term 14. We ran a very successful group in Summer 14. There are lots of photos and children's work in our room to highlight the success.

Fear and Anxiety

Fear is the natural response to a threat to our sense of wellbeing. Fear is real danger.

Anxiety is fear response in the absence of the threat

Positive aspects of anxiety-

- * Allows us to adapt
- * Necessary for sport, tests presentations

Negative aspects of anxiety

- * **Psychological** –Emotional (nervous)
- * **Learning**(poor concentration)
- * **Poor behaviour**, reassurance seeking
- * **Physical** –Heart rate sweaty palms etc. When a child is in a heightened state they can't function need to calm down first

All children experience anxiety as part of their normal development

0-5 months	Loss of support, loud noises
7-12 months	Fear of strangers, fear of the unexpected
1 Year	Separation from main attachment figures, toileting and injury fears
2-6 Years	Many fears: loud noises, animals, darkness, separation, life changes, strangers, injury, monsters
7-8 Years	Supernatural beings, dark, media events, left alone, injury
9-12 Years	Tests and exams, school performance, bodily injury, physical appearance, thunder and lightening, death, the dark (low percentage)
Adolescents	School, home, safety, political issues, personal relationships, personal appearance, natural phenomena, uncertainty/future, animals.

This varies across cultures

Why is the FRIENDS programme is successful?

- * It builds **RESILIENCE**
- * Resilience = **to spring back or rebound**
- * Definition in the Oxford Dictionary – **The ability to overcome challenges. Being able to achieve good outcomes regardless of life events or circumstances**
- * ***Benefits of Resilience*** “ children who are emotionally and socially skilled are **more successful at school**”
(Durlak et al 2011)

What is the Friends programme about?

- * Working in **small groups, sharing, role plays, fun, creativity, normalisation and mutual support**
- * It isn't about reading and writing individually
- * It's about reflective work done at home
- * Their work book is important for **reflection** and **rehearsal of skills** outside the session

Why do we use the word “FRIENDS”

- * Our body is our *friend*
- * We need to be a good *friend* to ourselves
- * We can make *friends*
- * Talking to our *friends* is important
- * **FRIENDS** is an acronym for the skills and strategies taught in the programme
- * **For Life:** We need to use these skills throughout the rest of our lives when faced with challenges

The FRIENDS acronym

Feelings

Remember to Relax. Have quiet time.

I can do it! I can try my best!

Explore Solutions and Coping Step Plans.

Now reward yourself! You have done your best!

Don't forget to practise

Smile! Stay calm, talk to your support networks

F=Feelings

- * The friends programme helps children to learn to identify when they are feeling worried, angry or nervous by recognising their **own body clues** which prompt them to calm down relax and choose **'thumbs up' ideas for coping**
- * Teaches them to **regulate** their own feelings and learn to **understand** the feelings of others
- * Works on feeling, **happy, brave and confident**

R= Relax

- * This step teaches children to learn and practise a **variety of relaxation techniques**. Why? We find it hard to think straight if we are not calm
- * **Milkshake Breathing** – Slow deep breathing less our body relax and **slows down our heart beat** so we feel less tense and worried
- * **Muscle Relaxation** – When we are tense and then relax our body releases **happy chemicals(endorphins)**
- * **Visualisation** – Imagining a peaceful, happy relaxing place can help us feel **calm**
- * **Quiet Time** – helps our mind to **slow** down

I = I can try! (helpful thoughts)

- * This step teaches children to tune into their **self talk**. This is an important skill as thoughts influence feelings and behaviour.
- * **There are 2 main steps:**
 1. Awareness of **red thoughts(negative self talk)**
 2. Replacing with **green thoughts(positive talk)**

Red Thoughts vs. Green (POWERFUL) thoughts

“I’m dumb”

“I’m good at lots of things”

“I give up”

“If I try I’ll get better”

“I hate my sister/brother”

I find my brother/sister annoying sometimes, but other times they are fun to play with”

“I have no friends”

“I have 2 people I play with and my dog is my friend”

E= Encourage How to be a good friend

These sessions teaches children friendship skills and how to be **brave** by talking **small steps** towards something we find tricky or scary

Improve friendship skills through role plays(or with puppets for young children)

- * **Look people in the eye**
- * **Listen**
- * **Smile**
- * **Share**
- * **Take turns**
- * **help**

N= Nurture

Nurture is important as children need to feel **support and encouragement**. They need to feel they have people they can turn to at home, school and in their community.

They need **good role models** they can look up to and who have a **positive impact** on their lives

D= Don't forget to be Brave

- * Changing their **unhelpful RED thoughts** into **helpful GREEN ones**
- * Discussing **coping step plans** they might find useful
- * **Rewarding** themselves for their efforts

S= Stay Happy

- * Identifying **future challenges**
- * Setting **realistic** goals
- * Practising **FRIENDS** skills everyday
- * **Don't despair** when setbacks occur that is just life. It is how you deal with it that makes the difference

How can parents and carers help?

- * To **encourage** and **praise** your child
- * Each week your child will be introduced to **specific skills** to build their **resiliency**. They need to be practised at home and at school.
- * Ensure your child does the **home activity** each week. Spend time **discussing** it with them
- * Positive thinking style. Change **RED thoughts** to **GREEN thoughts** together