

# The Friends Program Groups (2021-2022)

· September 14, 2021 through May 17, 2022 ·

**The Friends Program** is a therapeutic group program designed to address the developing needs of children with High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders from third grade through middle school, and their parents. Many of these children initially presented with ADHD, Anxiety, and Depression which they may continue to have with ASD.



## Coping and Thriving During Times of Frequent Change Due to COVID

Our focus is the relational world of kids on the Spectrum, helping them learn more about their own strengths and challenges, how to navigate their social world of school, friends, and activities after spending a year of virtual school, play dates, YouTubes, and Video Games.

## We work on Putting Words into Action

Communication activities, group art projects, stories, and games are utilized as a way of exploring, practicing, and understanding feelings and behavior and sensory issues. Key to this is:

- Understanding and integrating perspective taking into the children's social behavior.
- Learning to recognize how they and others feel.
- Understanding how they and others show their feelings.
- Exploring how others interpret their feelings and actions.
- How they interpret the feelings of others in person, literature, and virtually — e.g., the social circle and empathy.



## Groups

The **3rd—5th Grade Group** (Tuesdays from 4:15 - 5:30 pm)

The **Middle School Group** (6th—8th Grade) (Tuesdays from 6:15 - 7:30 pm)

The **Parents Group** meets at the same time as the Children's group. It provides a time to discuss current challenges and get support from Dr. Laurie and fellow parents.

**Cost:** The 75-minute groups are \$165 per session for the child and parent(s) combined. Parents are billed monthly

**Location:** As do our schools we feel that in person services are more effective than online. We will begin the program outside of Dr. Laurie's office as long as the weather and light allow. The office has windows, fan, and filtered air. We expect parents to be fully vaccinated as are all the staff and we will all wear masks. Snacks will be in individual bags. We will continue to track the COVID situation and will meet virtually, if warranted.

To sign up for the Friends Program, visit

<https://www.drleventhalbelfer.com/intake-forms.html>.

Download & complete the **Friends Program Consent Form**.

If you are a new client, please also fill out the **Children's Intake Form**.

For questions, contact Dr. Laurie Leventhal-Belfer

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