

Parent Packet- CSC Friendship Club & Friendship Camp

Facilitator(s): **Patty Ramsey** MACP-MFT and/or **Echo Lynn** MACP-MFT

What is Friendship Club/Camp?

The goal of Friendship Club/Camp is to add life skills to your child's "toolbox of *resiliency*"; thus increasing their ability to self-regulate and be socially aware. *We are here to create a space where children can practice Self-Regulation, Social Awareness, and foster friendship making and maintaining techniques.*

This will be accomplished by creating an environment that sets your child up for successful peer interactions, and the use of positive reinforcement as a cornerstone of communication. As facilitators, we will be champions for their success and model appropriate behaviors and reinforce good habits. These skills will be taught through various play-based/ creative group activities. These activities will serve to strengthen your child's ability to be a good friend to others and navigate the social landscape.

We will be implementing a behavior reinforcement system of rewards and natural consequences. Each day, your child will have the opportunity to earn Friendship Bucks as an individual reinforcer and, various group reinforcers. Group members will have an opportunity to turn in Friendship Bucks for prizes from our treasure chest at the end of each group session.

Rewards provide external motivation to try non-preferred or difficult activities, and reinforce desired behaviors. Group members are encouraged to try new activities and participate, and once they have had a positive experience- it creates an internal motivator to continue that same choice. Right now your child's "job" is to play and learn how to be part of a group, we pay them via Friendship Bucks for doing this job.

The key to the system's effectiveness is having professional moderators who are able to balance the rewards and consequences appropriately while also modeling behaviors and coaching the children in the moment.

What do you do during Friendship Club/Camp?

Play! Children use tools during play that they don't use independently. Facilitators use structured games, pretend play, and free play in order to introduce and support the building blocks of social play, and challenge children in a social arena. Playing is hard work. There are new rules, dynamic personalities, and things that are unexpected which happen all the time. By providing a safe space to experience and practice dealing with the challenges that play provides, children will become more confident in their ability to make, manage, and keep friends.

What will my child learn during Friendship Club/Camp?

Topics covered throughout the group are:

1. Follow Directions and Rules (what is expected vs. unexpected)
2. Being Flexible (Superflex Curriculum)
3. Communication- Verbal, Nonverbal, whole body listening
4. Reading the Room and Perspective Taking (Being a Social Detective)
5. Problem Solving (peer conflict resolution)
6. Emotional Regulation (Zones of Regulation, dealing with anxiety, anger, frustration, feeling silly)
7. Cooperation (working in a group, taking turns, sharing ideas)
8. Good Sportsmanship (being a good loser/winner, nice sayings)
9. Accepting (saying "ok" during non-preferred activities)

*Topics addressed are dependent on the group dynamic and group needs.

Is there parent involvement?

Caregivers are given a hand out and/or provided with a verbal run down of the session. Supplemental materials to work on with their child at home will be emailed or discussed during phone calls in order to continue social growth.

Friendship Club- there will be 2 mandatory parent meetings which will take place before the first session and after the last session. Friendship Club is run on Saturday mornings and offered via an open enrollment basis (sessions booked in 4 week segments).

Friendship Camp- No mandatory parent meetings required. Weeklong summer camps are held at various times throughout the months of June, July and/or August and take place between the hours of 9am-1pm Monday-Friday. Children must bring a light snack and lunch.

Where is Friendship Club/Camp held?

Friendship Club is held at the Child Success Center. It is an occupational therapy gym that provides unique opportunities to integrate sensory needs into our play. It is the ultimate kid zone with swings, trampoline, yoga balls, tubes to crawl through, beanbags to toss, and all on a safe matted floor.

*Average child to facilitator ratio is 3:1 (sometimes 2:1, depending on intern availability).

*Water is available for children at the center, or they can bring their own water bottle.