



Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy

SOCIAL SKILLS GROUPS AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL COLORADO

General Description

Groups are designed to support children and adolescents with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum (including autism, Asperger's, and PDD) by using a consistent routine, visual teaching methods, play opportunities and sensory strategies. Groups may also be appropriate for children with other diagnoses, such as ADHD or general social cognitive deficits. Note: Children *must* be able to participate at a basic conversational level (i.e., they must have the language skills to ask and answer questions).

It is our goal to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and adolescents to learn new social skills, and then have the opportunity to practice these new skills with peers. Group can also include community outings to help generalize skills to different settings and environments.

Groups are led by a Speech-Language Pathologist and an Occupational Therapist. Groups meet once per week for 90 minute sessions and are offered on a seasonal basis (Summer, Fall and Winter) with 8-14 group sessions per season. Children may return for more than one season if recommended by the therapists. Groups are divided by age and skill level, and include preschool, elementary and adolescent "social thinking" group. The Adolescent Social Thinking Group is led by Speech-Language Pathologists only. Groups will generally have between 5 and 8 children, with 2 therapists.

Parents are expected to watch at least half of each session from an observation room, and participate in brief, weekly conferences. Educational instruction and various materials and resources (i.e. social stories, visual supports, work sheets and home work) are sent home to help reinforce new skills in all environments.

***Our therapists place a high importance on peer compatibility within each group. A group is formed when there are enough children available who are appropriate peer matches for each other. Children with significant language and/or cognitive delays might not be good candidates for the curriculum addressed in our programs; each child will be carefully screened to address their needs. Groups for all ages might not always be available at each location.

If you are interested in learning more about our social skills group program, please contact the group scheduling coordinator at 720-777-6611.