

FRIENDS Today!

2011-12



FRIENDS for Life is an *evidence-based, resiliency and anxiety prevention program* designed to be delivered to students in the classroom over a minimum of ten weeks. It is based on a cognitive-behavioural model and students learn life skills that will help them manage their worries and fears and cope with difficult situations and transitions they will face during childhood and adolescence.

Child Program:

In support of the *Child and Youth Mental Health Plan for BC*, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), FRIENDS was launched universally in BC elementary schools in 2004 and continues to be offered to all grade 4 & 5 students as a risk reduction initiative to prevent anxiety and improve the mental health outcomes of children and youth in BC.

*Also available in French!

Youth Program:

FRIENDS BC expanded program delivery in 2008/09 with the addition of the FRIENDS For Life Youth Program, now available to grade 6 and 7 students throughout B.C.

Fun FRIENDS Program

Fun FRIENDS, an early years version of FRIENDS, is now available for delivery in BC kindergarten and grade 1 classrooms.

Aboriginal Enrichment Activities:

Improving the cultural relevance of the FRIENDS material was considered essential to engaging Aboriginal children in BC schools. Selective content and activities were therefore modified to reflect poignant cultural references common to many West Coast nations. The enrichment activities developed are now being made available to teachers across BC who are delivering the FRIENDS child program.

Parent Education:

A parent educational component is also included in the FRIENDS program in collaboration with a parent advocacy organization, the F.O.R.C.E Society for Kids Mental Health. Through our workshops and online resources, parents and caregivers receive information about child anxiety and the FRIENDS skills taught in the classroom so they are better equipped to support their children at home.

SUCCESSES TO DATE ...

- FRIENDS has been implemented in all school districts, and many independent schools and First Nations schools province-wide.
- Over 4000 educators have been trained to deliver FRIENDS in BC schools.
- Over 70 parent workshops have been delivered, educating parents and caregivers about the FRIENDS program and child anxiety.