



Dear Parent/Caregiver:

I would like to share with you information about the FRIENDS For Life program. You may already know about the FRIENDS program, but if not, please read on to find out more.

The FRIENDS program, developed in Australia, is a classroom-based program shown to be effective in reducing the risk of anxiety disorders and building emotional resilience in children. Research indicates that up to 80% of children showing signs of anxiety no longer display those signs for up to six years after completing the program! For children who are not anxious, the FRIENDS program increases their level of self-esteem while reducing their feelings of worry and depression.

FRIENDS is an acronym for the skills learned in the program:

- F - Feelings
- R - Remember to relax
- I - I can try! I can do my best!
- E - Explore coping plans and solutions
- N - Now reward yourself
- D - Don't forget to practice
- S - Smile and stay calm for life

FRIENDS is being delivered in hundreds of classrooms throughout BC. There is a Fun FRIENDS program for Kindergarten and grade 1, a child program for grade 4 and 5 students and a youth program for grade 6 and 7 students. FRIENDS has been well-received by teachers, parents and students and its popularity continues to grow. To date, all school districts and many independent schools have been involved with FRIENDS.

Teachers, counsellors, and other educators receive a one-day training before delivering the program in their classrooms. Students are guided through a series of activities designed to teach them how manage their worries, problem-solve and deal with difficult situations by being prepared, rewarding themselves, and seeking support. Home-based activities are included in the program and each student receives a FRIENDS workbook. There is no cost to children or their families.

Parents have opportunity to help their children and learn more about what they are learning in the FRIENDS program. A FRIENDS on-line parent workshop and resources can be found on the F.O.R.C.E. society website at www.forcesociety.com For more information about FRIENDS parent education and resources, please email: info@friendsparentprogram.com

For more information about the FRIENDS program, visit our website at:
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/friends.htm

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'K Angelius'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly Angelius
Manager, BC FRIENDS For Life Program
Ministry of Children and Family Development