

Training in Core Social Skills **Level I: “The Hidden Conversation”**

Target Group: Children in grades 1-6 who may have difficulty interacting successfully with others due to social skills deficits.

Purpose: Children can have difficulty interacting with others because they miss the subtle nuances of social interaction, or what we call social cues. They hear the words people say, but don't understand the full message because they do not understand the “hidden conversation” - that is the part of the message that is made up of all the nonverbal ways we communicate. They also may be unaware of the subtle messages they send, unintentionally, through their own body language or tone of voice.

Our goal is to help children enhance their ability to interact with others by learning the importance of nonverbal communication and how “hidden” messages are sent to us and by us. Children will become more proficient at responding appropriately to these messages, as well as sending messages that help them interact more successfully with others.

Description: This therapeutic and psychoeducational group consists of 8 sessions. Each session is 1 hour and 15 minutes. There will be discussions, demonstrations, videos, games and roleplays. Lessons will be based on the curriculum “Navigating the Social World”, as well as drawing on many other age-appropriate resources and strategies. A course outline will be provided to parents and teachers, so that they may support their child in practicing and mastering the skills covered. Brief individual parent meetings will be held following the last session to discuss each child's progress and recommendations.

Emphasis will be on the following:

- learning vocabulary for feelings and how they are communicated.
- Recognizing, understanding and responding to nonverbal and contextual cues from others (body language, facial expression, etc.).
- recognizing and using voice cues such as tone, volume to communicate effectively.
- looking at our own nonverbal conversational skills and recognizing how these can affect the messages we send and how others receive them.

Date: Tuesdays, Feb. 16 – April 13, 2009 (no class during spring break)

Time: Session 1 - 4:00-5:15 p.m. (grade 1-3)

Session 2 - 5:30 – 6:45 p.m. (grade 4-6)

Cost: \$35/session *Cost of psychological services are reimbursed by many employee extended health insurance plans and Blue Cross. Appropriate receipts will be provided.

Location: Leo Nickerson Elementary School,
10 Sycamore Ave., St. Albert

Facilitators:

Corinne Eckert is a child and adolescent psychologist who works with children and families in private practice, as well as providing behaviour consultation and assessment to schools. She has worked in schools as a teacher and school counsellor, as well as in children's mental health as a therapist. She has facilitated many children's groups, as well as parent sessions and teacher/teacher assistant training in child mental health and strategies/skill building.

Sue Barrie has a nursing background and has worked in special education for 23 years. She has training in child development issues such as behaviour management, self-esteem building and

anger management. Sue has worked as a Lifeskills Facilitator in St. Albert schools, helping students from grades 1-9 learn skills to interact successfully with others.

Registration: Email ceckert@telus.net or call (780) 454-4634 to discuss whether this group would be appropriate for your child. A registration form will then be sent to you.