

Paula Barrett Friends Programs

Friends for Life



Paula Barrett Friends for Life Logo

The *Friends for Life* program has been developed by Paula Barrett for children aged between 8 and 11 to assist them in coping with anxiety, fear, and sadness. Friends for Life has been developed to be administered alongside educational and curriculum guidelines, and as such is complementary to school-based learning.

Anxiety is an increasingly common issue amongst young children, and can arise from worry about relatively mundane activities such as going on a school camp, being around friends or finishing schoolwork, or can be a result of worry about global occurrences like earthquakes or terrorism. The *Friends for Life* program targets these feelings of worry and fear in children aged 8-11 in order to teach them emotional resilience and practical strategies for managing stress.

The *Friends for Life* program comes under the FRIENDS group of programs. The acronym FRIENDS describes the fundamental family-based approach to anxiety and depression that each program within the FRIENDS series of programs is based on;

Feelings (talk about your feelings and care about other people's feelings)

Relax (do "milkshake" breathing, have some quiet time)

I can try! (we can all try our best)

Encourage (step plans to happy home)

Nurture (quality time together doing fun activities)

Don't forget – be brave! (practice skills everyday with friends /family)

Stay happy

Paula Barrett's FRIENDS program is a social skills program that has been designed to target children who may not attract the support or assistance that they require. FRIENDS has been implemented in many countries worldwide, including New Zealand, Canada, The United States, Mexico, South Africa, The Netherlands, Germany, Portugal, Finland and Norway, The United Kingdom, and Hong Kong. It has also been translated into Russian and Arabic. It is the only childhood anxiety program that is recognised by the World Health Organisation for its rigorous dedication to clinical research.

In Australia, Medicare allows families to claim a rebate for the Friends for Life program through the Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP).

Fun Friends



The *Fun Friends* program developed by Paula Barrett is a play-based program that develops social, emotional and coping skills in children aged 4-7. Fun Friends teaches children methods for coping with anxiety, fear and depression, promoting emotional resilience. Children in the *Fun Friends* program learn skills that they will benefit from throughout their life.

Fun Friends is delivered in a variety of formats;

- The Semi-Intensive program takes place over 12 weeks and involves simple games and activities, with a maximum group size of 10 children to avoid the children feeling overwhelmed by the presence of a large amount of people. Parents also attend, and learn the skill sets along with the children as well as how to continue to implement the program at home.
- The Intensive Holiday Programs take place over holiday periods and as such are most convenient for families that do not live in Brisbane. Holiday programs involve one session every weekday of the holiday period for a maximum of two weeks.
- The program can also be delivered individually, in a focused session with a single family.
- *Fun Friends* has been delivered in childhood centres, pre-schools and primary schools around Australia. Training is delivered to educational facilities through one day training workshops, enabling educators and other support staff to apply the principles of the program within the school or centre.

The *Fun Friends* program has been developed by Paula Barrett to;

- Build resiliency in children through the development of social and emotional skills
- Empower families and educators
- Promote learning through play and inquiry
- Encourage the development of support networks and identify positive role models

The program provides children with skills such as;

- Making eye contact
- Speaking confidently
- Talking about feelings
- Empathy
- Understanding body language
- Making friends
- Being brave and happy
- Trying unfamiliar things
- The use and understanding of the 'red' and 'green' thought concepts.

The *Fun Friends* program comes under the FRIENDS group of programs. The acronym FRIENDS describes the fundamental family-based approach to anxiety and depression that each program within the FRIENDS series of programs is based on;

Feelings (talk about your feelings and care about other people's feelings)

Relax (do "milkshake" breathing, have some quiet time)

I can try! (we can all try our best)

Encourage (step plans to happy home)

Nurture (quality time together doing fun activities)

Don't forget – be brave! (practice skills everyday with friends /family)

Stay happy.

In Australia, Medicare offers a rebate for the *Fun Friends* program through the Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP).