

**APPENDIX
TRIUMPH CENTER
SOCIAL SKILLS GROUP MODEL**

Triumph Center Philosophy:

The Group Program at the Triumph Center is based on our belief that a child's emotional, physical, and social development can be enhanced through play which emphasizes cooperation rather than competition. Through group discussion and play in a safe and structured environment, we believe that youngsters can build self-esteem and enhance their social skills. We are able to simulate familiar play situations, while providing enough structure and support to guide and coach children through their interactions. In essence, we "slow down" the social scene for kids. Through the use of cuing, prompting, and scripting, we help children enter into and sustain participation in play situations. Our counselors use positive reinforcement practice and modeling to promote sharing, turn taking, flexibility and good sportsmanship. Overall, we provide an environment that feels safe and allows children to take appropriate social risks.

The Group Format:

All children referred to our group program start by attending an initial interview with their parent(s) or guardian(s). Information from the interview is used as a guide in determining the best possible placement for each child. The child is then placed in a small activity group of three to seven members similar in age, compatible interests and behavioral styles. Each group is co-led by counselors who meet with the group for seventy-minute sessions on a weekly basis. These groups focus on helping children improve their social skills while engaging in a variety of common childhood activities, including informal talk time, cooperative play, and creative group activities. All groups close with a brief snack period, during which events of the group are reviewed and discussed, thereby reinforcing the skills learned and deepening the peer relationships.

Our Social Skills Training Model:

Triumph Center counselors promote positive interaction and social skills development through a variety of therapeutic activities and discussion topics. Specific interventions are chosen by counselors to promote trust building and positive peer relationships. While each session may vary according to the group's functioning and developmental level, all groups follow a structured routine in which specific skills are taught and reinforced through a careful step by step approach to social learning. For younger or less experienced groups, counselors help children build basic pragmatic communication skills such as listening and turn taking. Counselors also provide specific training to help children express feelings and handle differences in more adaptive ways. As groups progress in age and experience, children eventually learn to interact at higher levels using skills such as problem solving, negotiating and working together. These skills form the building blocks necessary to make and sustain friendships.