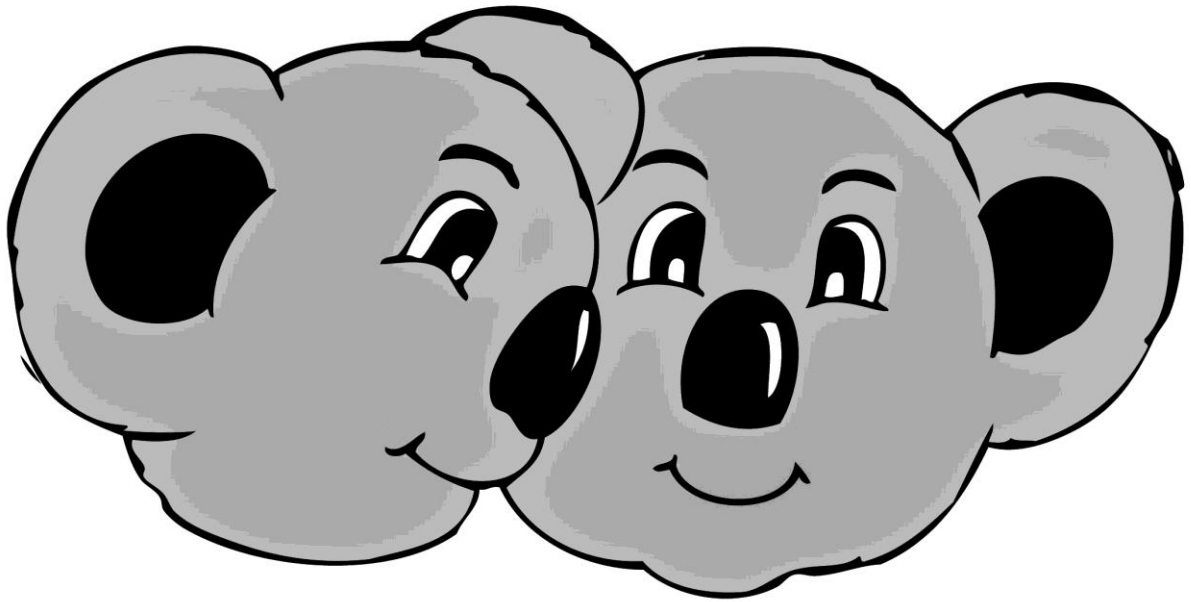


Introducing



Parent Information



## Parent Information

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*Your child is about to begin the Fun Friends programme. This booklet outlines some useful background information and how the programme works. It also contains information on each session your child will complete and how you can support this learning in your home environment.*

### **Background**

Everybody feels worried or sad sometimes.

All children feel anxious as a part of their normal development.

Fun Friends was developed by world renowned child psychologist Professor Paula Barrett to equip children and their families with life skills that build resilience and social-emotional strength to cope with stresses and challenges that are a part of everyday life.

Research has shown that children who are resilient (able to bounce back from adversity) are more likely to succeed at school, develop healthy peer relationships, and are less likely to develop mental health problems.

Your child will learn how to:

- ✦ be “brave”
- ✦ deal with difficulties
- ✦ recognise signs of anxiety
- ✦ relaxation strategies for staying calm
- ✦ how to build positive relationships with others
- ✦ develop positive thinking
- ✦ try new things and face their fears



## Parent Information

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### **What You Can Do At Home**

There are many things you can do to help your child become more resilient and happy.

Each week, your child will be introduced to specific skills which need to be reinforced both during the group and in the home environment in order for change to occur.

As a parent/caregiver you are an extremely important and influential role model. You play a vital role in the development and maintenance of the skills taught in the Fun Friends Programme.

The Fun Friends Parent Guide book has a lot of useful discussion starters, stories and pictures which you can use with your child. Please ask your child's teacher about the options for purchasing this book.

In addition, the following pages outlines the key skills and strategies for each of the sessions of the Fun Friends programme, and gives some helpful tips for how you can help your child and other family members to practise them at home.

It is our aim that your child, your family and community will enjoy the Fun Friends programme and will benefit from learning practical, useful skills for coping with stress, worry, fear and day-to-day challenges.

*On the following page the acronym used for "FRIENDS" is broken down into the areas of learning your child will follow during the programme. It is a useful reference tool – a spare copy of this page is included at the back of this handout. Please feel free to rip it out and hang it on your fridge for easy reference for the whole family.*



## Parent Information

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### **F = FEELINGS**

- ✦ My body gives me clues to help me know how I'm feeling.

I can recognise that I'm feeling worried because:

my palms are sweaty

I have butterflies in my stomach

my heart is beating fast

and I need to go to the toilet.

- ✦ This is my body's way of telling me it is time to do something to calm down.

### **R = REMEMBER TO RELAX – HAVE QUIET TIME**

- ✦ I can do bubble breathing, practise relaxation, have fun times and quiet times too.

### **I = I CAN DO IT! I CAN TRY MY BEST!**

- ✦ I can think of more helpful GREEN thoughts, such as:

“It doesn't matter as long as I try my best”

“My Friends and Family will be there to cheer me on”

“I'll just practise as much as I can, then try to have fun on the day”

### **E = ENCOURAGE**

- ✦ I can learn new things and try things that are hard for me.
- ✦ I'll take small “baby” steps and try new things so I can feel really proud of myself.
- ✦ Making a Coping Step Plan will help me.
- ✦ I can reward myself for each step I climb!

### **N = NURTURE**

- ✦ There are many special people in my life
- ✦ They can help me in lots of ways.
- ✦ My Family, friends and teachers can all help me learn and try new things.

### **D = DON'T FORGET TO PRACTISE**

- ✦ I can use the FRIENDS plan to feel confident and brave about all sorts of things.
- ✦ I can practise my relaxation games so that when I feel tense and stiff, I can relax my muscles straight away.
- ✦ I can also practise GREEN thoughts, like “I'll be OK, I can do it.”
- ✦ I can practise making Step Plans and trying new things too.

### **S = Smile! Stay calm for Life!**

- ✦ I can stay cool and calm, because I know the steps of the FRIENDS plan, which will help me to be confident and brave.



## Parent Information



### Example - Session 1: Getting Started

#### Learning Components

- ✦ Sense of Identity (who am I, saying who you are to others).
- ✦ Feeling scared is OK we can all learn to be brave (looking people in the eye, smiling saying hello with a brave voice, trying your best, trying something for the first time, sharing, trying and being the last, staying happy and sharing our toys are all ways of being brave).
- ✦ We are all different and we are all the same too.
- ✦ Social skills training through games.



### Tips and Activities for Parents/Caregivers to Reinforce Skills learnt in Session 1

- ✦ Encourage your child to look people in the eye when talking.
- ✦ Practise using a brave voice with your child. This can be turned into a game where you experiment using different tones, voices and volumes. You can use role plays and puppets.
- ✦ Praise your child when they smile and stand up tall.
- ✦ Talk about the way in which people are different and emphasise that it's okay to be different.
- ✦ We all have a lot in common as well. You may like to use books or atlases to look at people in different countries with different cultures and talk about this.
- ✦ Talk about times you were brave, and praise your child for "brave" behaviours, such as trying new things, speaking in a brave voice, being kind to others, and facing scary situations.
- ✦ Give them specific feedback e.g. "I liked the way you spoke to our neighbour with a big loud voice. That was very brave of you."
- ✦ You might like to use a "brave chart", and give your child a sticker/stamp every time you see them doing something brave. You might like to negotiate rewards for your child e.g. when they have 20 stickers.
- ✦ At the dinner table, have each family member share their "happy ting" that happened that day. It can be something big or small! This encourages them to focus on the positive.
- ✦ Get each person to talk about a time that day when they did something brave.
- ✦ Encourage your child to talk about the things that upset them including any fears or worries.
- ✦ Share some of your own childhood worries and fears. This will help your child to understand that feeling anxious and worried is normal and okay. We all feel this way sometimes – even adults!
- ✦ Your child will be learning new skills to manage these worries in the Fun Friends Programme each session.



Parent Information

# The World's Leading Resilience and Life Skills Programmes

For more information on individual programmes and their suitability for your child please visit our programme specific websites:



4-7 year olds = [www.funfriends.co.nz](http://www.funfriends.co.nz)



7-12 year olds = [www.friendschild.co.nz](http://www.friendschild.co.nz)

12=18 year olds = [www.friendsyouth.co.nz](http://www.friendsyouth.co.nz)



FRIENDS Programmes brought to you in New Zealand by:

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