

PPA'S SURF GROUP PROGRAM

Social Understanding & Relationship Fundamentals



Interested in building your child's social skills?

Would you like your child to have more meaningful relationships?

Our SURF (Social Understanding and Relationship Fundamentals) Group Program has been very successful for over 16 years, providing stimulating, fun and effective social experiences for participants.

PPA's SURF Group Program aims to:

- Improve Social Skills
- Foster Successful Peer Relationships
- Develop Social Understanding and Social Responsiveness
- Improve Self-Monitoring and Self-Regulation Skills
- Improve Flexibility and Conflict Resolution Skills
- Increase Prosocial, Adaptive and Cooperative Behaviors

SURF Group Program Calendar 2018-2019

Series	Dates	No Groups held on:**
Series I	August 27-October 19, 2018	
Series II	October 22 - December 21, 2018	Week of Thanksgiving, November 19-23, 2018
Series III	January 7-March 1, 2019	Winter Recess, December 24, 2018 -January 4, 2019
Series IV	March 4 - May 2, 2019	Spring Recess, March 25-March 29, 2019
Series V	May 6 - May 31, 2019 (Mini-Series)	

**Prorated fee for observed religious holidays only.

Below are steps involved in registering your child for our SURF Group Program:

Step 1: Initial Consultation

- This meeting is for potential group members and caregivers. During this meeting, pertinent history is gathered, target behaviors are identified, and our Mind Tools are reviewed.
- This meeting also provides an opportunity to get acquainted with our group facilitators and office environment, and to ask any questions you may have about our SURF Group Program.
- This is a crucial step in the intervention process. As such, it is required for all new group members and must occur prior to starting group interventions.

Step 2: Review Fees & Policies

- The fee for the 30-minute Initial Consultation is \$100. Our fees for the group program are \$600 a Series (8 groups) with the exception of Series V, which is a mini-series of 4 group sessions (\$300).
- Payment for the entire series is required to attend to ensure a commitment to the program. There are no refund/credits for groups missed (with the exception of observed religious holidays). If a student joins in the middle of a series, the fee will be prorated.
- If your child misses a group, there is the option to do a 30-minute make-up session before or after their group the following week to review the concepts addressed in the missed group. *This must be arranged in advance.*

Step 3: Join the Group & Have Fun!

- In addition to your child's group, the last 10 minutes of most groups, one of the facilitators will provide feedback to parents/caregivers on the areas addressed in group and suggestions for ways to follow up on these skills.
- There will be periodic parent/caregiver groups that will be offered – generally 1 per series or every other series. We will inform you when the parent/caregiver groups are scheduled.
- Some of our families may choose to also receive individual or family therapy or parent meetings, which our group facilitators can also provide. This is a separate service from your child's group.

Below is important information about our program that should be reviewed prior to beginning our program to be aware of our policies. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Group Method/Instruction:

Our SURF Group Program utilizes an eclectic, evidence-based approach. We incorporate a variety of researched-based strategies to best meet each child's individual needs. In addition, we implement instruction methods such as incidental teaching and errorless learning to help our members feel successful and competent, and to build their self-esteem. These methods involve the use of positive reinforcement to increase desirable behaviors, while also teaching developmentally and/or socially expected behaviors as a replacement for problematic behaviors. Each group consists of both structured and unstructured activities (e.g., board games, science experiments, cooperative activities, etc.- something that is fun!), which are play-based and consistent with their developmental age, to create as close to a natural environment as possible. As such, the structure of the intervention and environment promotes skill generalization across settings. Our program was developed based on years of clinical experience, along with knowledge gained from current research regarding children's acquisition and generalization of social skills (social thinking and understanding). Our program is not based on a specific curriculum or protocol since these do not generally promote or lead to interactions and learning experiences that resemble the natural environment, thus limiting application and generalization of skills to real life. Instead, our goal is for each child to have a positive experience while also developing skills through organic interactions with their peers. We are pleased to offer a diverse and experienced team of group facilitators. Your child will have the opportunity to work with different facilitators, which will also encourage generalization of skills.

Group Readiness and Matching

Based on your child's needs and individual goals, the group facilitators appropriately match your child to a particular group. If your child has previously attended our group program, it is possible that he/she may have group members that differ from past groups. Further, the day/time of his/her assigned group may also be different from that of a previous year. Finally, please understand that we will do our best to accommodate your family's schedule of days/times; however, appropriately matching your child to a particular group is our priority. For some of our new families, individual and/or dyad interventions (different fees apply) are at times needed before your child can succeed in a larger group, as this allows us to assess your child's response to various intervention strategies that can then be implemented successfully within a larger group setting. Children who are new to our SURF Group Program may initially also need more intensive interventions to then feel competent and successful in larger groups. Your group facilitator will discuss this with you directly if she feels this is necessary.

Group Responsibility and Commitment

Each group is limited to six members in order to optimize therapeutic interventions. Group facilitators create activities and address target skills based on of the specific participants. Any absence can adversely affect the group dynamics, intervention and learning for all the group members. We structure the groups to mirror a naturalistic environment so that members are provided with situations and challenges that arise in everyday settings such as school and home. As such, members are not only learning skills through the instruction of the facilitator, but also through the interactions that occur with other group members. Accordingly, consistent attendance is not only important for your child's growth and progress, but also for the integrity of the entire group. While we understand emergencies can arise, our office policy for our SURF Group Program is that a commitment to attendance is mandatory.

Information on Other Services and When Additional Services are Clinically Indicated

Every child is unique in his/her needs and response to interventions. Our groups are designed to facilitate optimal growth for each child; however, generalization of skills will vary. In order to maximize opportunities for each child, partnerships between all parties are crucial. We encourage our families to schedule periodic individual/family appointments and school/teacher consultations. These provide excellent opportunities for everyone involved in your child's treatment team to develop skills needed to implement strategies outside of our office, thus helping your child to generalize skills learned in the groups. To assist in this matter, our group therapists are available for consultations, individual/family appointments, and school observations/meetings. This is a service separate from your child's SURF Group Program.

Individual/family appointments may also be necessary to attend to other areas (depression, anxiety, etc.) not addressed by group therapy, or those areas that require a more intensive intervention or an approach different from that provided by group therapy. There may be times when your child may require a higher level of care, either in conjunction with our program or in place of the group program. If this were to be your child's case, your group therapist would discuss this directly with you and provide a referral for other recommended services either with a professional on our team or with an outside therapist of your choice.

Communication with Office and Group Therapists

Our office provides friendly email reminders of group appointments as a courtesy, so please make sure we have your updated email address on file. Please note that whether or not you receive a reminder, your child's group will occur based on the published schedule unless we contact you to cancel or to inform you of a change. Once your child is enrolled in our group program, we recommend you contact the group facilitators directly with any questions or concerns. For all matters relating to billing, cancelling or scheduling, please contact the office at (305) 936-1002. Over the past 16 years the progress that our group members have shown has been outstanding. We are looking forward to starting another successful year of our SURF Group Program and to working with your child.