

HCDSB After School Social Skills Programs

We are pleased to share that HCDSB will continue to offer free After School Social Skills Programs for the 2025/26 school year. All program groups will meet Tuesdays beginning September 23, 2025, at St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic Elementary School (390 Gordon Krantz Avenue, Milton). A parent/caregiver is also required to participate.

We will be offering several different programs. Please read the program descriptions provided below and select the one most appropriate given your child's current social skill strengths and needs.

Kindly note that programs can not accommodate participants whose needs do not align with group learning objectives. Any student requesting to be in a program not suited to their strengths and needs may be asked to join a different group.

Intake will be conducted on a first come first serve basis via applications received by May 23, 2025. For some groups, an additional screening will take place to ensure the participants meet the criteria outlined by the program.

While we will endeavor to place all registrant requests, space in some areas is limited. Should there be more interest than spots, participants will be selected through a lottery process. Applicants will receive notification regarding the status of their application via email by August 1, 2025.

Please call Denise Kollee, Senior Manager in Special Education, 905-340-2239, should you require support in selecting the most appropriate program for your child.

You are invited to indicate an interest in participating in one of these programs by completing the application link in each program description.

Friendship Time HCDSB Students in Grades 5-8 (6 weeks, 4:30-5:30)

Friendship Time will use evidence-informed strategies to provide opportunities for students to interact with others and to practice early social communication and play skills. Parents must be present during the full hour of the program and participate in learning strategies to support their child's ability to practice the skills at home and in the community. This program will focus on the following skills: sharing and turn taking skills, playing games, entry level conversation skills and self-regulation/calming strategies

Please note: This program is most suitable for students not accessing grade level Ontario Curriculum (e.g. have modified or alternative programs)

[APPLY HERE](#)

Children's Friendship Training

HCDSB Students in Grades 2-6 (13 weeks, 4:30-5:30)

CFT is an evidence-based, social skills intervention for students between the grades of 2 and 6 who are **motivated to make friends**. Lessons cover topics such as: having conversations, joining groups at play, being a good sport, handling teasing, and having get-togethers. During each session children are taught social skills, provided with a demonstration these skills, given the opportunity to practice the skills through role play and during play, and provided with homework to continue to practice their skills. Caregivers must be able to attend a simultaneous session where they learn how they can assist their child with making and keep friends.

Children's Friendship Training is best suited for students who:

- can sit, sustain attention, and answer questions independently for 15 - 20-minute lessons while waiting their turn, listening to peers, and participating actively and learn in a small group
- benefit from rules and direct instruction/practice of skills needed to make and keep friends
- can consistently engage in two-way conversations on topics of interest and can switch topics to less preferred if required
- can engage in reciprocal play using simple board and card games, and understand the concept of winning/losing
- have emerging skills in recognizing and considering others' thoughts, feelings, and viewpoints
- *have limited interfering behaviours*

APPLY HERE

PEERS

HCDSB Students in Grades 7-9 (17 weeks, 4:30-6:00)

PEERS is an evidence-based, social skills intervention for students in grades 7, 8 and 9 who **are motivated to make and keep friends**. It includes 17 consecutive weeks of group sessions with both a student and parent component. Lesson topics include starting, joining and ending group conversations, hosting get-togethers, appropriate use of humour, using electronic communication and handling teasing and bullying. During each session students are taught social skills, provided with a demonstration of these skills, given the opportunity to practice the skills through role play and during play, and then provided with homework to continue to practice their skills outside of the weekly session. A caregiver must be available to attend the caregiver session where they will learn how to be a social coach for their child.

PEERS is best suited for students who:

- can sit and answer questions independently for 30 - 45-minute lessons while waiting their turn, listening to peers, participating in discussion and able to learn in a group format
- can consistently engage in two-way conversations about topics of interest and can switch topics to less preferred if required
- can engage in reciprocal play using simple board and card games, and understand the concept of winning/losing
- benefit from rules and direct instruction/practice of skills needed to make and keep friends
- are demonstrating emerging skills in recognizing and considering others' thoughts, feelings, and viewpoints
- have limited interfering behaviours

APPLY HERE