



The Friends Programmes

'Fun Friends', 'Friends for Life' and 'My Friends Youth' are school-based anxiety prevention and resilience building programmes developed by Dr. Paula Barrett in Australia. The World Health Organisation cites 'Friends for Life' as the only evidence-based programme for anxiety in children that is effective at all levels of intervention (WHO, 2004).

Friends programmes help students to develop resilience by teaching them effective strategies to cope with, problem solve and manage all kinds of emotional distress, including worry, stress, change and anxiety. Skills learned throughout the programme help students both now and in later life. The programme can be run by teachers as a whole class programme, or as a small group intervention.

FRIENDS is an acronym for the skills taught throughout the programme:

- Feelings.
- Remember to Relax. Have quiet time.
- I can do it! I can try (Inner helpful thoughts)
- Explore Solutions and Coping Step Plans.
- Now reward yourself! You've done your best!
- Don't forget to practice.
- Smile! Stay calm, Stay Strong and talk to your support networks!

More information on the programmes can be found by following the links below.

- Presentation on NEPS' research on the **implementation of Friends by Irish Primary teachers**:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHYNhUlyyPA>
 - <http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/NEPS-Presentation-on-FRIENDS-for-Life-for-NCSE-Conference.ppt>
- Irish Primary and Post Primary **teachers/principals' reflections** of the Friends programmes.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDj1ny98hp0>

- Further information on the program can be found on the **author's website**;
 - <http://www.friendsresilience.org/>

Many NEPS psychologists deliver training to teachers to deliver the programmes in schools. For further information about programmes that may be running in your locality, contact your school's NEPS psychologist.