Circle of Friends: An Evidence-Based Practice

Circle of Friends is a highly effective model for improving inclusion and strengthening social skills for students with disabilities. The following nationally recognized organizations endorse key components of the Circle of Friends approach - working with students in the natural environment with feedback from peers who are trained to model and shape social language skills:

**National Autism Center:** Circle of Friends meets the criteria for being an Evidence-Based Practice as identified by their **National Standards Project.** Our program incorporates three established treatments shown to be effective for individuals on the autism spectrum:

- Peer Training Package
- Natural Teaching Strategies
- Modeling


**National Professional Development Center** on Autism Spectrum Disorder: Circle of Friends is well-aligned with Evidence-Based Practices identified through the following:

- **CoF components include:**
  - Modeling
  - Naturalistic Intervention
  - Peer-Mediated Instruction & Intervention
  - Prompting

- **CoF supports successful carryover from:**
  - Social Narratives
  - Social Skills Training
  - Structured Play Group

[http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/](http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/)

**American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA):** defines inclusive practices as interventions in which “the unique needs of children with communication disorders are met in the least restrictive environment. ASHA advocates for inclusive practices as an appropriate service delivery model.”

**Autism Speaks:** Circle of Friends strengthens areas that promote a successful transition to adult life. The Autism Speaks **Transition Tool Kit** provides research-based strategies useful across all systems to build life skills for community employment. The following four strategies are Evidence-Based Predictors for post-school success:

- Inclusive Practices and Programs
- Collaborative Networks for Student Support
- Social and Social-Emotional Instruction and Skills
- Self-Determination, Independent Living and Skill Building
