



**CHILD & FAMILY
ASSOCIATES
OF GREATER WASHINGTON LLC**

High-Functioning Autism Groups Forming at CFA!

Green Tree Autism Groups for Middle-School Children

Child & Family Associates of Greater Washington, LLC (CFA) is currently accepting referrals of middle-school aged boys and girls diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder to participate in a dynamic and innovative integrative psychotherapy approach to reinforcing social skills. Interventions include a combination of treatment approaches tailored to the specific learning needs of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This 4 phase program includes initial assessment and screening; individual sessions to prepare for group; group activity therapy; and family therapy to reinforce gains made in individual and group sessions. There will be groups specifically for boys and girls.

Topics to be addressed include:

- Communication & Conflict Resolution
- Identifying and Responding to Social Cues
- Identifying Feelings
- Building Friendships

Group activities include:

- Art
- Games Tailored To Group Objectives
- Individual and Family Coaching
- Skills Worksheets

Overview of the Green Tree Autism Program

Phase 1: Initial Assessment

The purpose of CFA's Green Tree Autism Program is to promote effective strategies for diagnosing and treating Autism in children and teenagers. Green Tree program psychologists are experts who have extensive training and experience working with children and teenagers diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

Led by Dr. Christina Hyon-Wynn, the Green Tree group program is designed to incorporate the latest research in the assessment and treatment of Autism. As such, emphasis is placed on developing a same-gender cohesive small group atmosphere to encourage the repetitive learning necessary to achieve targeted goals and maintain gains. In phase 1, Dr. Hyon-Wynn will meet with prospective parents and their children to assess their goodness-of-fit for the

program. In some cases, a child's particular needs may be best served by a different treatment protocol than what is offered by the Green Tree group process. In such cases, Dr. Hyon-Wynn may work collaboratively with another CFA psychologist to adapt services for the child who may not fully meet criteria for inclusion in the group. In cases where services may not be available at our Green Tree program, we will make every effort to identify other referrals.

The Green Tree program will offer *one boys group* and *one girls group*. The maximum number of participants in each group is 6.

Admission criteria to participate in the group includes:

- boy or girl, ages 10 -13 years old
- diagnosed with, or suspected to meet criteria for, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), particularly meeting criteria for Aspergers Disorder or High-Functioning Autism [these children are typically identified as having mild to moderate social difficulties, but otherwise are achieving average grades academically]

Exclusionary Criteria

- Significant delays in speech or language ability
- moderate difficulties with oppositional and or defiant behavior in home or school
- psychosis or thought disorders
- medical conditions requiring on-site assistance, e.g., monitors, incontinence etc.

Phase 2: Individual Coaching

Many children identified on the Autism Spectrum have varying degrees of social skills deficits and typically do not do well with change or adjusting to group dynamics. In order to ensure the best possible success in the program, Dr. Hyon-Wynn will work with each child on an individual basis *prior* to starting the group therapy portion of the Green Tree program. These innovative coaching sessions focus on blending the best of teaching social skills with repetitive learning. For instance, at the end of each coaching session, the child's parent(s) are invited into the meeting and the child is encouraged to "teach" his or her parents the focus of the lesson learned that day, and practice with his or her parents the techniques learned. These individual sessions are geared to prepare the child and parents for the group therapy phase of the program.

Whereas a child may already be in individual psychotherapy, he or she will not be required to end individual therapy in order to participate. The Green Tree program is designed to also be a useful adjunct to services the child may already be receiving. However, the child may not participate in any other simultaneous group therapy during the course of the program. Dr. Hyon-Wynn will collaborate regularly with a child's other provider(s) to discuss progress and answer questions.

Some themes that will be addressed in Phase 1 include: introducing oneself; identifying and expressing feelings; learning to read facial expressions and contextual language clues; becoming open to others opinions and perspectives; building friendships and being an effective team player; learning problem solving skills.

Outcome measures will be given to children and their parents at the end of Phases 2, 3, and 4. These measures are geared to identify and 'fine tune' the individual child's treatment needs. These outcome measures will then be reviewed at the end of Phase 4 to determine if a child may benefit from additional services, and if so, if he or she would be a better candidate for individual therapy, group or family therapy, or a combination thereof. The benefit of this approach to on-going assessment is that parents will have actual data from which to decide what might be the best course of intervention after the program, rather than solely relying on the opinion of any one particular provider.

Phase 3: Group Therapy

Building on the themes addressed in phase 2, Dr. Hyon-Wynn will incorporate group activities tailored to address the nuanced needs of each child within the group experience. For instance, if many children in the group seemed to exhibit similar issues in reading facial expressions and social cues, more group time may be devoted to that module. Again, depending on the group dynamic, group sessions may range from 8-12 sessions, allowing time for members to teach one another the lessons learned in the program. Dr. Hyon-Wynn will communicate regularly with parents during this phase to discuss their child's group treatment goals.

Green Tree group activities will use worksheets, tailored therapeutic games and guided discussion to reinforce the objectives of each group session. Many of the children will appreciate the snack time during each group, and all working toward a collective goal to achieve a pizza party at the end of the group phase!

Phase 4: Family Therapy

The Green Tree Autism Program has been thoughtfully developed to incorporate much of the psychological research of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) that indicates multi-modal and repetitive therapies appear to have the most success in helping ASD children learn and sustain necessary skills. The family therapy phase of the Green Tree program allows for an even more tailored approach to address each child's particular needs. Dr. Hyon-Wynn will facilitate family therapy sessions that will build on themes identified over the course of the program and reinforce skills learned. She will also focus on teaching parents how to continue building on their children's success. Because each child will come with his or her own specific needs, time in family therapy may vary depending on the needs identified by parents.

Green Tree Group Program Costs:

Phase 1: Initial Assessment	Phase 2: Individual Coaching (8 sessions)	Phase 3: Group (8-12 sessions)	Phase 4: Family (as recommended)
\$340 (75 minute meeting with parents and another 75 minute meeting with child)	\$160 per 75 minute individual session	\$80.00 per 75 minute group session	\$150 per 45 minute session

For more information about this group, please contact Dr. Steve Harner
at **703-533-3930**, extension 1.

Each group will be limited to six participants.

Child & Family Associates of Greater Washington, LLC (CFA) is a group of highly skilled mental health clinicians seeking to promote better outcomes for our clients through partnership with families, physicians, schools, and other providers who may also influence client progress. CFA clinicians provide a range of assessment, counseling and intervention services tailored to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of children, adolescents and adults. We are currently accepting new clients and are available for consultation regarding parenting strategies with young children and disruptive and/or defiant children and teens. We also specialize in working with college-age and young adult issues.

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