

Welcome to Our Allstars Programs!!!

What is Allstars?

Allstars is a social leadership program being coordinated by Dr. Laurie Harrier, LP, LSSP, NCSP, Executive Director for United Through H.O.P.E., Inc. It has various programs underneath it to assist the various members we serve. Each program underneath has different focuses and may only be for certain ages.

What is the purpose of Allstars?

The overall purpose is to provide supervised socialization opportunities for students with social difficulties while they are working on improving various “leadership” skills. The hope is that the skills already being taught through school, home, other private entities, etc. will be solidified, expanded, and generalized with additional practice in a “naturalistic” setting.

Social skill research consistently has demonstrated that social skills can be improved through discreet trial training and prompting, but true generalization only occurs when there are multiple opportunities to practice the skills in a natural (non-contrived environment) where there is adequate praise and positive support.

Why do we call it leadership skills and not social skills?

Everyone is social to a degree. However, not everyone possesses the skills to be viewed by others as a positive leader. Our goal is to build self-confidence, self-esteem, and a willingness “to try.” That is the true definition of a leader.

An additional goal of all of our Allstars programs is to build a wealth of experiences. Most of our members have limited themselves due to the choices they make (self-isolating, giving up, escaping from situations, being on the fringe just watching, being too overstimulated, coming off to aggressive such as verbally, physically, or emotionally, lacking complex verbal language or the initiation, lacking the ideas to relate, etc.)

How is Allstars Different From Other Social Groups?

First, because all of our Allstars programs are groups we do not teach the most basic social skills. We assume they have already been taught and modeled through other forms of therapy, and in homes and schools. Our Allstars programs take the social experience to the next level-understanding to transfer those skills to a group setting where you will not always be directly told to do something, instead you must infer by using your eyes, ears, and smart brains.

This being said, to some of our parents our programs may seem very basic and simple or they may be with members that are lower or higher than them. This is equivalent

to real life and helps everyone learn to regulate (socially, emotionally, and physically better) with staff assistance easier. It helps teach cause and effect best.

Secondly, our Allstars programs work on more global aspects that you need to function more successfully as an independent member of a group. These global aspects could include such things as etiquette, awareness, self-regulation, perspective taking (understanding not everyone has your same thoughts and opinions), forward thinking (aka thinking ahead), self-initiation, problem solving, and communication.

This being said, patience and empathy are two aspects routinely emphasized in our programs. Some parents may believe that these are not part of being social, part they are essential to becoming a strong leader later in life.

Thirdly, our Allstars program has the entire session filmed, however, due to privacy it is only used for those within the program to refine their skills. For some of the Allstars programs some sections of it are used later for what we call a social autopsy (so the group can discuss what occurred in that scene to highlight a particular skill better). For other Allstars programs some sections are sent home to aid in transfer of skills (called teaching footage).

Fourth, our entire Allstars has a 30 min unstructured freetime to it which allows for the development of social skills in a naturalistic setting. Similar to what they experience in a school recess or playdate.

Lastly, our Allstars social lessons are taught from a more broad idea of skills. We take mini skills and show how they apply to everyday events. We help them think more introspectively and broadly, instead of narrowly focused. This promotes generalization faster.

Who can be in Allstars?

Allstars serves those in Pre-K through High School. We recommend that those who are 18 or above consider our young adult programs.

We screen potential candidates for aggressive and/or oppositional tendencies. If a student has aggressive and/or oppositional tendencies the staff will determine if they are a good fit for the program.

We also screen for best fit based on cognitive, developmental, and speech level. Some of our programs may not be appropriate for those that are nonverbal or limited in verbal and/or cognitive skills or if there is a significant gap between their skills and their same age peers.

This screening will occur through the forms to be completed by the parent, student, and teacher, along with a short group play time. We encourage all parents to speak with us

ahead of time and be honest and realistic in where their child's skill level is so we can all start with the same realistic goals in mind.

This being said, everyone has the potential to be aggressive (emotionally, physically, or verbally) at any time. Circumstances that cause this may happen in our groups as they are more real life than most social skills groups. Staff works through these challenges with those who are involved in the moment. Safety of all members and social community expectations are stressed.

How is Allstars structured for groups?

Our groups are comprised of mixed ages, grades, and genders in groups. If needed groups will be broken down smaller to teach more deeply or review a skill. We do not comprise groups based on "disability," instead we can break down groups further based on their actual social needs.

The group is a "closed group" which means that once the session starts no new members will be added until the next session begins. The ratio of staff to members varies based on type of program and the personalities and skill level of the enrolled members.

What are My Allstars Options?

Allstars is a set of programs that we have created. Not all programs are available each session as we may rotate new programs through based on who we are know is enrolling. We may also add new programs as a pilot before launching them fully.

Here are the Allstars programs that could exist.

- **Basic Allstars (primarily focused on grades K-2nd):**
 - This program focuses primarily on the development of more unstructured, but cooperative social play and the skills needed to begin being involved in recess & sport type activities at a beginning level.
 - For some members this is an entry level program that is used for staff to get to know their needs better and who upon re-enrolling will be recommended for one of our higher level programs.
 - This program will have a party day to work on skills associated with attending something that is being hosted. It normally has a group snack and two activities to participate in.

- **Bridge Allstars (primarily focused on grades K-2nd):**
 - This program focuses primarily on the development of social play and the skills needed to begin being involved in recess & sport type activities at a beginning

level. Additionally, it has a communication exercise of show and tell and also the beginning skills to board games built into its schedule.

- For some members this is an entry level program that is used for staff to get to know their needs better and who upon re-enrolling will be recommended for one of our higher level programs.
- This program will have a party day to work on skills associated with attending something that is being hosted. It normally has a group snack and two activities to participate in.

- **Imagine Allstars (primarily focused on grades K-5th):**

- This program focuses primarily on the development of social play from an imaginative play aspect.
- For our members they will be exploring how to play vet, doctor, construction worker, house, etc. A theme occurs each week and the social play is built around that
- This program also has regular less structured social play as a portion of it.
- For some members this is an entry level program that is used for staff to get to know their needs better and who upon re-enrolling will be recommended for one of our higher level programs.
- This program will have a party day to work on skills associated with attending something that is being hosted. It normally has a group snack and two activities to participate in.

- **Allstars Games (primarily focused on grades 3rd-5th):**

- This is program focuses on the social experiences on a playground, PE, field day. They will be playing a mini game that focuses on particular skills needed before the play their “pick up” game.
- They will also participate in a “Pick up” game is more like a street version of a sport (not all the rules are used)
- This program focuses heavily on stamina, involvement, and regulation (both social and emotional).
- This group will have a “team challenge day” to celebrate their time together.

- **Allstars Socials (primarily focused on grades 3rd-5th):**

- This is program focuses on the social experiences that facilitate long conversations, opinions, ideas, and “hanging out” to help them build stamina to stay involved, tolerate others’ quirks and opinions, and become more flexible.
- Allstars Socials is a program that focuses on various social situations our 3rd-5th

members will be encountering in real life such as outings, group and team activities, and extended conversations by participating in all of them!

- Trying, learning to not be in control, waiting your turn, and standing up for yourself so you are heard. We are preparing for the higher grades' expectations.

- **Allstars Moves (primarily focused on grades K-2nd):**

- This program focuses on various playground & field day games to help build confidence and awareness on a recess/playground setting PLUS games that utilizes dance & music aspects to help teach better self-regulation.
- It also has a heavy emphasis on following and hearing directions.

- **Allstars Teens (for grades 6th-12th,):**

- All members must be verbal and have functional basic speech skills, meaning no echolalia or only repeating what staff said. Additionally, they should be able to follow and remain with a group without constant 1:1 staff assistance.
- This program focuses on the "life skills" such as buying and locating items, going places, basic sports involvement, problem solving, forward thinking, and speaking up through initiation plus bonding and social etiquette.
- This could be broken up into a Girls Only version and adapted for them if more than 3 girls enroll in a specific session.

- **Allstars Add Ons: These are additional programs to further extend the skills we are teaching.**

- We have a facilitated play for board games where additional skills related to successfully playing board games are taught (turn taking, patience, experience of the skills)
- We have facilitated play for the toy room to build stronger play skills
- We have social autopsy add on which is where staff take clips from the day of Allstars that they participated in and work through various situations. It helps develop cause and effect and introspection.

When does Allstars occur?

Our sessions are 8 weeks in length, 2 hrs per day.

Members pick a group and stay with that group for the entire session they have selected. Members cannot make up a day by coming to another day/time, nor can they switch to another day/time.

See Intake form or the section pertaining to the Allstars program you are interested in for specific dates and times and schedule.

A member is expected to be at each day to obtain the most benefit from the program, as the skills build on each other. However, we understand that other obligations do come up. Our policy if a student cannot attend a session is:

- Call Dr. Harrier at either 1-866-857-7751 or 214-460-7922 at least 24 hours in advance
- No refunds will be given for a missed day
- There are no makeup days for a missed day.

What is the structure of Allstars?

Each Allstars program has its own structure as each programs' overall goals are unique. Please refer to that program for the specific structure and full details are in the enrollment packets that can be requested by email from us.

All programs have leadership duties assigned, have a 30 min freetime to socialize, and a newsletter that is emailed to you that outlines what was taught/occurred that day. All members receive a prep email each week to prepare for the weekly meeting.

Award ceremonies occur on a spontaneous basis throughout each session. These are filmed and sent home if a flashdrive is provided to staff.

What are the Leadership Skills That will Be Covered During the Session?

Each session has two leadership skills that are covered. These skills are naturally wrapped into all the activities and expectations for that day to promote a holistic understanding. At UTH we believe in not compartmentalizing anything as we work from a systemic model of thinking. The skills taught are the same for any group, although the groups' "experiences" may not be the same as each group has a uniqueness about them that the members bring to the group.

Will I Receive feedback on my child's Progress?

Yes, at the end of the session you can ask to receive a written feedback of how your child has progressed over the course of the session. Often staff will also provide feedback when you pick your child up. We also send home to everyone who provides us a flashdrive the still pictures taken that day and any special moments that occurred such as that member's awards they received, birthday party they had, or party they participated in.

An opportunity to purchase teaching footage is available. The teaching footage is a larger selection of the video footage that shows moments throughout the day for you to discuss with your child. It might show the stances in sports we are working on and how to do them well, how to play with others, how to work through an issue successfully,

how to transition successfully, or answers to our questions. **That being said this footage is designed for review to build skills. It is not meant for comparing members, to judge anyone, or to disseminate to anyone outside your home.**

Will My Child Receive Homework?

In essence YES. Your child will move faster through the program the more time the family, school, and other therapists practice what is being taught in Allstars. A high level of involvement from the members' support structure, particularly parent and school staff, increase generalization.

To facilitate generalization there will be a weekly email that will talk about the skills they are learning and tips on how to help generalize the skill in other settings. They can also enroll in add on opportunities, family sessions, and opt to purchase the teaching footage or provide a flashdrive to review still photos.

Staff also talks with every family after every session during pick up. Relaying how they did and providing tips for the upcoming week.

Is there a fee to participate in Allstars?

Yes, but certain programs or add ons have different fees. See that specific program for information. All payments are due on the first day of the session.

We accept check or cash. If you would like to pay by credit card or HSA card then you can as long as you contact our staff to run the card. A 5-6% credit card convenience fee will be applied.

We can provide a receipt for tax or insurance purposes upon request, but we do not file with your insurance. To request a receipt please email us.

What if I am a New Member to the Allstars Program?

A person is considered a new member if they have NEVER been in any of our Allstars programs.

All new clients must Participate in An Intake (it is completed as a group)

- The fee for the intake is \$20 and is due at the time of the intake
- The intake is at a designated date and time and there are no exceptions.
- No member can come to the group intake unless all forms have been returned and they are invited to attend. The invite will come through email after everything has been received and reviewed.
- Forms to be returned prior to intake are:
 - Intake form

- New client teacher form
- New client parent form (late fall-summer programs)
- Group intake includes:
 - a filmed 20 min participation in group freetime
 - a 15 min “interview” with member
 - group explanation of the program to the parents
- Intake dates:
 - Intake is at the site you have enrolled at.
 - See your intake form for the intake date that pertain to your particular start date for your session.

This being said, the intake is NOT with the current members. We stress this because at the intake many parents become nervous about who is in the groups with their child and begin to compare their child to those they see. We can give you an overview of who is returning. But normally those at the intake may range in age, grade, and skills and can be choosing a different Allstars program from your own child.

Is my child’s data that is collected confidential?

Yes, only the staff working with Dr. Harrier will see the information. There is a possibility that your child’s data may be used for research purposes as this program is unique and we are partnering with local universities to aid in research in the area of social skills and social play. However, to protect your child’s privacy all data will be coded prior to use in a research project. All video footage is destroyed at the end of the session, with the exception of award ceremonies in case a child needs these.

Who do I contact if I have Questions about Allstars?

Please contact Dr. Laurie Harrier at United Through H.O.P.E., Inc. at 1-866-857-7751 or info@unitedthroughhope.org or by email at laurieha@airmail.net or on her cell at 214-460-7922.