



Therapeutic Groups for Kids Frequently Asked Questions

Groups are a powerful tool to help kids who may lack critical social skills or have behaviors that make them vulnerable to teasing, rejection or isolation. They also help teens make more successful transitions through the challenges of adolescence.

Children's Health Council's (CHC's) groups are distinguished by professionals' abilities to match kids in the right group, parent participation, interdisciplinary group leaders and evidence-based practices.

Here are some answers to frequently asked questions. If you don't find the answer to your question here, please contact us:

How do I get started?

For new clients, call 650.688.3625.

What happens when I call?

1. Over the phone, we'll find out more about your child and your needs to determine a possible fit for a group.
2. If a group seems like the next best step, we'll schedule you and your child for an in-person interview. Meeting with you and your child is a critical step to making an appropriate match.
3. Before the interview, please complete the CHC Groups Questionnaire (available for download on our website) and fax it to 650.688.0206 at least one day before your interview. Also please bring the completed form with you to your interview.

For current clients, ask the professional who is working with your child for a referral. S/he can then connect you with the group leaders and start the matching process.

What happens after our interview?

After group leaders complete interviews with all families interested in groups, the matching process begins. The group leader will contact you to let you know if your child is a good fit for a group.

What happens if my child is not a good fit, but still needs help?

The group leader will either refer you to other appropriate services, suggest a different group, put you on a waitlist for the next group formation, or refer you to other groups in the Bay Area.

Are groups covered by insurance?

Many insurance companies provide reimbursement for group services. Coverage is determined by your carrier and your plan. Please contact your insurance company to determine coverage. To receive reimbursement, you must submit claim forms to your insurance company directly. The business office at CHC is available to help guide you through the insurance process.

How much do groups cost?

Almost all of our groups are \$90 per hour. Prepayment is required. Financial counselors are available to help with payment plans, and financial aid is available.

How long do groups last?

Groups last one to two hours depending on age of child and group goals, run from 12-20 weeks, and meet from one to two times per week.

I want my child to participate in a group, but we will be out of town for some of the sessions. Do I have to pay for the entire group?

Please consider joining the group at a later date when your child can participate fully. Missing two or more sessions may diminish your child's success. Groups are offered throughout the year. If you and the group leader decide it's appropriate to enroll in the group despite planned absences, please note that the cost of the group is a flat fee. Rates are not reduced due to absences.

What if a group leader is absent? Is the group cancelled?

If a group leader is absent, we'll make every effort to find an appropriate substitute. If an appropriate substitute cannot be found (substitute must comply with insurance billing policies), the group will be cancelled. If the group is cancelled, your money will be refunded or credited to another service.

What if the group isn't an appropriate match?

Please talk to the group leaders and share your concerns. If the leaders have concerns, they will do the same. They may recommend a different group or a different strategy for help. If you and the leader determine the group is not a good match, you will receive a refund or credit for the unused portion of group services.

Can my son or daughter try a group before enrolling?

This depends. For some groups and some younger children, participating in a group for one time is an appropriate option. For other groups, however, due to the curriculum and the nature of the group, this not feasible. If you'd like to try a group, please ask during your interview if this is an option.

What should I have my child bring to group?

Contact your group leader for specific items your child will need. Generally, groups often go outside when the weather is nice, so please be prepared with a jacket, sunscreen or hat. For active groups, please make sure your child wears comfortable, sturdy shoes to prevent the risk of injury. Finally, some groups give assignments between sessions. Please help your child to remember these assignments.

Should I bring snack for my child?

We provide healthy snacks such as pretzels, raisins and water. For young children, snack time is an important opportunity to practice skills. If your child has dietary restrictions, please make sure they have a healthy snack to bring to group. Please inform your group leader of any dietary restrictions.

When may I observe *my child's group session*? How does it work?

For most of our groups, parent observation with a parent leader present is a regularly scheduled event.

Parents report that this scheduled observation time with a parent leader is the most valuable part of the group process. During your observation behind a one-way mirror, the parent leader will explain what the child is learning, what is developmentally appropriate, and what the group leader is doing with the child and why. Parents also have the opportunity during this time to ask questions and get coaching about how to handle situations more effectively at home. Please make every effort to attend parent observation sessions.

To protect patient confidentiality and to support HIPAA regulations, parents can only observe group sessions with a parent leader present. While parents can often watch their child in individual treatment sessions without a professional, this is not possible when there are multiple children present.

Where do I wait while my child is in group?

If possible, please wait in the building. However, when staying on site is not feasible, please stay within a 10-minute drive from the building in the event you are needed and are called back to CHC before the group ends. If you leave the premises while group is in session, we require you to leave a cell phone number to reach you.

Children's Health Council has Wi-Fi connection and a resource room stocked with parenting books and DVDs available for checkout. There are also two computer terminals with Internet access available for use in the resource center.

Unless specified in the group description, we do not provide child care. Children must stay within supervised areas and are not permitted to wander the building due to HIPAA regulations.

What do I do if I have to *bring my other children to Children's Health Council (CHC)* while my child is in group?

Options include: playground down the street, walking paths around CHC, or coloring or reading in the lobby. If you wait in the lobby with your other children, please make sure they stay with you.

If you are observing your child, please make alternative plans for your other children. Children are not permitted in the observation rooms for groups.

When can I talk to the therapists to find out how my child did in group?

Scheduled observation sessions are excellent opportunities to find out more about how your child is doing. In addition, every group includes the chance to briefly talk with group leaders after each group session. Also at the end of the group series, the group fee includes an individual parent meeting to discuss progress and next steps. Please be mindful the time immediately following group is limited for group leaders. If you require more time, you may

schedule an additional appointment not included in the group fee. Appointments are billed at the group leader's hourly rate.

What if I'm late picking up my child from group?

Please call the front desk to let the therapists know you are on your way. Some younger children become very upset when they do not see their parent waiting for them after group.

Additionally, as group leaders are talking with parents after group, they have a limited ability to safely supervise your child. For repeated late arrivals, CHC reserves the right to charge the parent for overage time or to discharge the child from the group.

My child has a runny nose. Should he come to group?

Please keep your child at home if you see these symptoms:

- Fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing, glassy eyes, persistent crying, or lethargy
- Diarrhea, such as loose or runny stools
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours
- Discharge (green or white) from the eyes, usually accompanied by redness and itching
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Unidentified rash (not an allergic reaction)

Please keep your child at home if you feel he or she is not well enough to participate in the group activities.

We look forward to working with you.

Please sign and date that you have read and understand CHC's group procedures and policies covered in this document.

Print Name

Signature

Date