

# Early Risers



Skills for Success

## A Skill Building Program For Children and Their Families

**Program Director**

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“I believe the program has benefits. Our students have received these benefits and it has made a positive change.”

--James Semmen, Principal



“The children need to know they have someone else in their life helping, listening and caring. They remember and use something in their life.”

--Kris Dirksen, Teacher

“Early Risers has been an integral part of my younger student’s education. Because their self-esteem is increasing, their academics are also increasing.”

-- Lorraine Simpson, Teacher



“I could cite countless examples of students who have improved behavior and academics as a result of their involvement with this program.”

--Gail Feneis, Principal

“The Early Risers Program has been extremely positive and well received at Parkside Elementary. The entire staff and I value the positive impact it has had on students and their families at our school.”

--Rob Nudell, Principal

“This program is great. It provides assistance and support to classroom teachers in ways that *help* students with issues, concerns and behaviors... Students have shown a lot of growth in behavior, promptness, getting assignments done on time and being responsible.”

-- Candy Yount, Teacher



# "Early Risers" Service Model

Administrative Partners

Community Public Schools

University of Minnesota Prevention Specialists

Community Child & Family Service Agencies

Direction and Oversight

Community Practitioner Advisory Board

Training and Technical Assistance

Primary Intervention Agents



Intervention Components

Child

Family

## Child

### Child-Focused Interventions

1. Summer Child Skills Program
2. Regular School Year Child Skills Program
3. Monitoring & Mentoring School Support Program

### Methodology

- ✚ Literacy Acquisition and Literature Appreciation
- ✚ Social Skills Development and Pro-Social Peer Affiliation
- ✚ Emotional Understanding and Self-Regulation
- ✚ Self-esteem enhancement via accomplishment in creative arts, sports, & hobbies

## Family

### Family-Focused Interventions

1. Family Skills: Parent Education and Skills Training
2. Family Support/Case Management

### Methodology

- ✚ Proactive Parenting Practices
  - Discipline
  - Monitoring/Supervision
  - Communication
  - Involvement
- ✚ Parent Psychological Well-being
- ✚ Social Support
- ✚ Home-School Collaboration & Partnership
- ✚ Empowerment

# Child Skills Programming: Summer and School Year



The Early Risers Program traditionally begins with a Summer-based program focusing on Social Skills, Literature Appreciation and Creative Activities. These sessions are typically held over the course of 6 weeks, for half-days, but can be modified, with the assistance of University staff, to fit your school or agency's summer schedule.

During the Regular School Year, children enrolled in the Early Risers Program are invited to participate in small group sessions that may be offered during the school day, immediately after the school day, or during the evening/weekend hours. These small groups are also referred to as "Early Risers Friendship Groups"\*. Groups meet on a weekly basis throughout the school year for 2 one-hour sessions, or 1 two-hour session. Content focuses on social skills education and literature appreciation, building on lessons introduced during the Summer Program.

Working in small groups provides opportunities for more focused and intensive instruction accompanied by strategic peer affiliation activities that facilitate generalization of skill learning. Methods to enhance skill acquisition include:

- ✚ Modeling via videos, books, puppets and in-vivo demonstrations
- ✚ Behavioral Rehearsal
- ✚ Role playing
- ✚ Coaching
- ✚ Buddy System (dyadic peer collaboration activities)
- ✚ Reinforcement via public recognition

\*The Early Risers Friendship Groups can be integrated into an existent after school activities program that is offered at your school or community center. The expectation, however, is that the Friendship Groups will be delivered as an independent entity.



## The Monitoring and Mentoring Program

### *A Risk-adjusted Model of Student Engagement & Student Support*

- ✚ A systematic monitoring procedure to assess the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of individual students
- ✚ A complimentary process of mentoring—to create positive relationships with youth and between family and school; to promote regular school participation in learning; to keep reading progress a salient issues for students, parents and teachers
- ✚ Individualized classroom interventions—to assist teachers in identifying and employing classroom accommodations and behavioral management programs to meet the needs of individual students
- ✚ Home-based reading support—to build a bridge between school and home, relating to reading support and the reinforcement of the child's commitment to learning and education

# Family Skills Program

## Parent Education and Skills Training

Parents or guardians of children enrolled in the Early Risers Program are invited to participate in a small-group parent education and skills training program known as “Parents Excited About Kids” (PEAK). The PEAK program is offered during the evening or on Saturdays during the school year. PEAK is designed to inform and energize parents by giving them knowledge and skills to enhance their child’s development and their family relationships. PEAK groups meet on a bi-weekly basis for 5 ninety-minute sessions from October to March during the school year program, for a total of 10 sessions. Program content focuses on understanding normal child development, tips for common parenting challenges (e.g., bedtime, chores, homework, etc.), special topics (e.g., effects of internet on children, community involvement), parenting techniques to promote children’s behavioral, social emotional and academic development, as well as learning to manage stress and improve family relationships. Special “TIPS!” sheets are given to parents to keep.

Parent groups also provide a unique opportunity for parents to learn and receive support from other parents. Methods to enhance knowledge/skill acquisition and generalization include:

- ✚ Reading a user-friendly parenting manual
- ✚ Supportive group discussion with other parents
- ✚ Modeling via videos, books, and in vivo demonstrations
- ✚ Behavioral Rehearsal
- ✚ Role playing
- ✚ Coaching
- ✚ Easy homework assignments

The Early Risers PEAK program can be delivered in a school or community setting. If, for some reason, parents or guardians cannot participate in the parenting groups, then an abbreviated version of PEAK is provided on a one-to-one basis during Family Support Program home visits.



# Family Support Program

Family Support is an advocacy, consultation and empowerment intervention that is individually tailored to address parent, child and family needs. The program begins with a process of child and family needs and strengths assessment, initiates further strengths-building through goal setting and strategic planning and accesses formal and informal community resources and professional services through a negotiated contract with the participants. The incipient goal of Family Support is to reduce parent/family level risk by remedying the conditions that produce or perpetuate stress in the lives of families and adversely affect parents' capacity to nurture and support their child's health development.

## Levels of Family Support

### *Level 1: Promote Well-being*

Goal setting focuses on improvements in child, parent, and general family functioning (e.g., child's involvement in community activities, parent's weight reduction).

- ✚ Empathic listening
- ✚ Motivation building
- ✚ Alliance-building

### *Level 2: Acquire Basic Living Needs*

Goal setting focuses on acquisition of basic family needs (e.g., housing, employment, transportation, health insurance, clothing).

- ✚ Instrumental assistance to access basic needs
- ✚ Collaborative family problem-solving that facilitates the identification of solutions to family problems (empowerment)
- ✚ Identify informal systems of community support (e.g., faith centers, support groups)

### *Level 3: Crisis Intervention*

Goal setting focuses on resolution of immediate stressors or crises.

- ✚ Work with families to resolve crises
- ✚ Broker referrals to specialized mental health or community services providers
- ✚ Case Management

## EARLY RISERS Skills For Success Program Matrix: CHILD

	Program	Delivery Procedures	Content/Focus	Exposure	Activities/Curriculum
<b>C H I L D  C O M P O N E N T S</b>	CHILD: Summer Child Skills	Small Groups  Behavior Modification System  Home-School Notes  Buddy System  Family Involvement  Field Trips	Social Skills Training  Academic Achievement (Literature Appreciation, Classroom Behavior Skills)  Creative Activities/Recreation	72 hours per Summer  (6 weeks x 4 days per week)  Each day includes: 🚦 1 hr Social Skills 🚦 1 hr Literature 🚦 1 hr Creative Activities	Social Skills: 🚦 Early Risers Manual 🚦 SS Curriculum (e.g. PATHS)  Literature Appreciation: 🚦 Early Risers Curriculum  Creative Activities: 🚦 Early Risers Manual 🚦 Staff Developed Activities
	CHILD: School Year Skills	Small Groups  Behavior Modification System  Home-School Notes  Buddy System  Family Involvement  Community Activities	Social Skills Training  Academic Achievement (Literature Appreciation, Classroom Behavior Skills)	64 hours per school year  (32 weeks x 2 hours/week)  Each week includes:  🚦 1 hr Social Skills 🚦 1 hr Literature	Social Skills: 🚦 Early Risers Manual 🚦 PATHS  Literature Appreciation: 🚦 Early Risers Curriculum
	CHILD: Monitoring & Mentoring School Support	Individual Meetings  Ongoing Needs Assessment  Teacher Consultation  Parent/Teacher Meetings  Individual Mentoring  Parent Consultation	Monitoring Assessments  Tailored Mentoring, Including:  🚦 Behavior Modification Plans 🚦 Home-School Coordination 🚦 Emotion-Recognition 🚦 Tutoring 🚦 Referral	Level 1: 4 Monitoring Contacts per year  Level 2: 4 Monitoring Contacts per year plus 18 mentoring contacts (biweekly)  Level 3: 4 Monitoring Contacts per year, plus 32 mentoring contacts per year (weekly)	Early Risers Manualized Protocol

## EARLY RISERS Skills For Success Program Matrix: PARENT

	Program	Delivery Procedures	Content/Focus	Exposure	Activities/Curriculum
<b>F A M I L Y  C O M P O N E N T S</b>	FAMILY: Parenting Skills	Small Groups  Individuals  Training Methods: Discussion, modeling, roleplay  Foster parental support  TIPS! Sheets	Normal Child Development  Typical Parenting Challenges  Child Behavior Issues  Parent Stress Management  Family Stress Management	10 Sessions over 2 years: + 5 in Year 1 + 5 in Year 2  PEAK-Extended (PEAK-E)— Individually administered (or small group) intensive skill building	Early Risers Manual
	FAMILY: Family Support	Ongoing Assessment  Goal Setting & Attainment Home Visitation  Community Referral	Monitoring Assessments  Tailored intervention: + Goal Setting + Focus on Family, Child and/or Parent + Link to Community Resources + Referral to Mental Health Professionals	Level 1: Monitoring, 4 assessments per year Level 2: Mentoring, 4 assessments per year, plus 18-24 service visits per year  Level 3: Mentoring, 4 assessments per year, plus unlimited service visits per year	Early Risers Manual