



# PEERS® or No Peers

## *Replication of Outcome Measures of UCLA PEERS®*

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### Introduction

PEERS® (Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills) is a manualized parent assisted social skills intervention program designed at UCLA. The goal of PEERS® is to “improve friendship quality and social skills among teens with Autism Spectrum Disorders” (Laugeson et al, 2009). PEERS® is one of the very few evidence based social skills programs available.

### Objectives

To utilize the PEERS® curriculum at Pivot Point Family Growth Centre Inc and to collect the same pre/post measures as published studies to determine if the the program can be as effective when presented in a typical clinical setting.

### Materials & Methods

The following assessments were used as pre/post measures. Assessments were completed by the parent attending or the adolescent as required.

- *Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales* (VABS)
- *Social Skills Improvement System* (SSiS)
- *Test of Adolescent Social Skills Knowledge* (TASSK)
- *Friendship Qualities Scale* (FQS)

The PEERS® course was completed as a 14-week program, using the PEERS® manual, there were no changes to the manual or teaching protocols. There were four instructors for the class: two with the parent group and two with the adolescents.

### Results

These assessment results were chosen for comparison as they are the reported measures from the 2009 article: “Parent-Assisted Social Skills Training to Improve Friendship in Teens with Autism Spectrum Disorders” printed in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disabilities*.

Pivot Point Mean Pre- and Post treatment Results				
	VABSSOC	SSiS	TASSK	FQS
<b>Pre</b>	73.8	82.8	11.3	13.5
<b>Post</b>	91.8	93.4	19.3	14.3

Pivot Point Family Growth Centre's pre- and post- treatment measures are consistent to those presented by UCLA further supporting the efficacy of their program. These clients made significant improvements in performance during the 14-week, parent participation program.

Two measures were available for youth who did not participate in the PEERS program: SSiS and Vineland-II Socialization scores. Examination of the scores of clients who did not participate in PEERS® from Year 1 to Year 2 of service yielded scores in the below average range of performance from one year to the next, indicating that although social skills programming is in place and the client is improving they remain delayed in comparison to their same age peers as there is no change in scores in either the SSiS or Vineland-II. During the 2013/2014 fiscal year, Pivot Point Family Growth Centre Inc will be adding the TAASK as an annual measure for PEERS® eligible clients.

### Conclusions

The 14-weeks PEERS® social skills training program can be utilized in typical clinical settings to develop social skills in children with ASD and yield significant gains on par with clients who participated in the program at UCLA. Clients who did not participate in PEERS®, made social skills gains (their SSiS an Vineland-II Socialization scores did not decrease between Year 1 and Year 2); however, the scores were consistently below average in comparison to their same age peers.

### References

Laugeson, E., Frankel, F., Mogil, C. & Dillon, A. (2009). Parent-assisted social skills training to improve friendships in teens with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 39, 596-606.

UCLA PEERS Mean Pre- and Post Treatment Results				
	VABSSOC	SSRS	TASSK	FQS
<b>Pre</b>	65.8	80.2	13.3	16.8
<b>Post</b>	Not given	89.7	19.6	17.2