***PEERS® for Preschoolers***

**WHAT:** PEERS® for Preschoolers (P4P) is a caregiver-assisted social skills group for young children with social skills difficulties between 4 to 6 years who are having difficulty making and/or keeping friends.

Our P4P study is a small-scale pilot study looking at the efficacy of the P4Pprogram. What that means is we are working to establish the effectiveness of this study in order to publish the treatment manual and establish this as an evidence based treatment. It has already been found to be effective in groups run through UCLA, and we have conducted groups at VT, and now in the greater Atlanta area to see if we can replicate those findings.

**THE GROUPS:** There are separate caregiver and child sessions that meet at the same time for 60-minute sessions, and then caregivers and children come together for the last 30 minutes of the group (i.e., 90-minute total session). Meetings are twice a week for 16 sessions (i.e., 8 weeks total) in the afternoon and on weekends. The groups focus on various social skills (e.g., appropriate play dates, behavior management strategies, turn-taking, sharing, joining play, good sportsmanship, teamwork, helping behaviors, and body boundaries).

Caregivers are taught how to help their children make and keep friends by acting as social coaches outside of the group. During the child sessions, children are presented with lessons using puppets and then practice the newly learned skills while playing a range of indoor or outdoor activities.

During the joint caregiver-child portion of the sessions, caregivers will practice coaching their child in play activities with other group members while receiving real-life feedback from the treatment team on their social coaching. Homework assignments are also given each week to make sure children are practicing the skills they are learning outside of the group.

Class time will be determined based on family availability. Because this group is being conducted for research, we are providing the sessions free of charge. Caregivers will be asked to complete a few measures for a number of weeks (either 3, 4, or 5) before beginning the group. There will also be an entry (i.e., eligibility) assessment, midpoint, exit and a 4-6 week follow up assessment.

**INCLUSION CRITERA:** ASD diagnosis (will be verified by Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, Second Edition (ADOS-2) and expert clinical opinion using DSM-5 criteria), children must be fluent in English, have a caregiver fluent in English and willing to participate, have an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) greater than 70 on the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (KBIT-2), be toilet trained, and able to tolerate a group setting, play preschool games, and sing songs

**EXCLUSION CRITERIA:** Presence of an active medical problem (e.g., unstable seizure disorder), severe mental health problems (e.g., psychosis, bipolar disorder), or physically aggressive towards adults or children

**Questions?** Contact Reina Factor: rfactor@vt.edu or (310) 490-7136