



Listen to Children School Counselor Steps for LTC Participation

- 1. School Counselor and teachers select children to participate in the program.** You can choose students yourself based on child studies, parent requests, and your knowledge of children's issues. You can also discuss LTC program criteria at staff and team leader meetings to request teacher recommendations. Please inform teachers and Administration that LTC *is not for academic tutoring* nor is schoolwork done during the 30 minute meetings. Listener time is neither a reward nor a punishment. What the child shares with the Listener is confidential (unless the child is at risk) so teachers should not request information.
- 2. School Counselor obtains signed parental consent.** Once you've screened the teacher referrals and selected students, speak with the children to tell them that the program is fun and not a punishment. Let them read the consent form if they wish. Tell them they will have a special adult friend to talk and play with for a half hour each week. (You may want to offer an incentive like a sticker or pencil for returning the signed consent.) Next, talk with the caretaker explaining why you think the child will benefit. Mention that LTC is a first-come, first-served program and encourage immediate return. All parents will not sign and return the forms, so it is better to identify more children and send more forms than anticipated listening spots. If a child moves away or withdraws from the program, you can start a new child immediately. **The key to getting initial parental consent is personal contact – simply sending the slip home usually does not work!** Print the consent form on colored paper so it doesn't get lost in the backpack. Permission slips are available in Spanish and Creole as well as English.
- 3. Once signed consent is obtained, School Counselor creates a schedule agreeable to teachers and Listeners.** Meetings last 30 minutes and are held on the same day and time each week.
- 4. School Counselor contacts and plans to meet the Listener.** Show new volunteers around the school and possible locations where the weekly visits will take place. Introduce the Listener to office staff and explain the use of the pony. Answer the volunteer's questions and let him/her know if you have books/games you are willing to share. Give the Listener a thumbnail sketch of each child and a schedule of children, times and room numbers. It is common to just introduce the children to their new Listener on that day, but you may let them meet for 30 minutes if you wish. We want the Listeners to enjoy the program so they will want to return the following year so please be careful with referrals. *Children with severe behavioral issues are not good candidates.*
- 5. School Counselor scans and e-mails required information to helen@mhasefl.org.** This includes: signed consents with demographic info and teacher name and teacher pre-surveys for each participating student. Some Listeners see only a few students and others may see several per week. Make sure copies are dark and legible. You may fax to 954 746-6373 or pony COPIES to Banyan: LTC Program.
- 6. Listener Monthly Contact Log needs to be signed at the end of each month.** It is the Listener's job to get a signature from the office person or School Counselor and send it to MHA.
- 7. School Counselor ensures the completion of the pre and post surveys.** In addition to pre-survey, teachers must do posts after a minimum of 12 meetings.
- 8. School Counselor completes a Feedback Survey** at the end of the year. Input helps us monitor LTC and gives us ideas for improvement. Your sharing of success stories is always appreciated.

Contact Helen Leitch with questions or concerns. Email: helen@mhasefl.org Phone: 754-216-2070



Listen to Children Listen to Children Referrals

WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM PROVIDE FOR A CHILD?

- A positive relationship with a caring, non-judgmental adult
- Quality time with one-on-one attention
- Consistency (weekly visits with the Listener)
- Increased self-esteem and a healthier self-image
- Support with coping skills
- Improvement in communication and decision-making skills
- Feeling of accomplishment (child and Listener explore ways of solving problems and making good decisions)
- Feeling of uniqueness because the child has his/her own Listener

WHICH CHILDREN ARE APPROPRIATE?

A child who:

- Has low self-esteem
- Is shy or has problems making and keeping friends
- Needs help adapting to a life change (i.e. relocation, birth of a sibling, divorce, remarriage, death of a loved one, etc.)
- Shows lack of interest in school and learning
- Has poor peer relations or social skills
- Is isolated, withdrawn, often appears sad or depressed
- Exhibits somatic problems such as headaches, stomach aches, weight changes, etc.
- Is needy of one-on-one attention from a caring, non-judgmental adult

Since Listeners are not therapists with clinical training, children with serious emotional disabilities are not appropriate candidates. Please don't assign 'runners' either.