iTHRIVE KIDS™

EMOTION REGULATION AND RESILIENCE PROGRAM

by Dr. Leah Altemeier, PhD

What is iThrive Kids™?

iThrive Kids is an 8-week intervention program designed to help 9 to11-year-olds build critical emotion regulation and resilience skills prior to the teenage years. Grounded in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), iThrive Kids is appropriate for children who experience emotional intensity associated with being gifted, having anxiety, or have conditions such as ADHD, ASD, or learning disabilities. No diagnosis is needed to participate.

Why is Emotion Regulation Important?

Emotion regulation is the ability to manage the intensity, expression, and experience of emotions in order to respond effectively to life's challenges. When children develop emotion regulation skills early, they are more likely to thrive socially, academically, and emotionally and less likely to face serious mental health concerns later in development. iThrive Kids teaches emotion regulation and other *protective factors* for mental health, including: parent-child communication skills for a strong relationship, social-assertiveness skills, metacognitive strategies (for example, positive self-talk), and healthy daily habits and routines.

What Can My Child and I Expect During the Program?

iThrive Kids includes two main components:

1.*Weekly Children's Group* - ***In Office***

Your child will participate in a small group (led by Dr. Altemeier and a co-facilitator) that meets once a week for 90 minutes. Sessions take place after school and include stories, games, and engaging activities that make learning fun and practical. Each week, children are assigned Home Challenges to practice the skills at home.

2.Individualized Parent Coaching ***- Online***

Parents participate in weekly, individual coaching via Zoom at a mutually agreed-upon time. These sessions offer psychoeducation and strategies that align with what the children are learning each week. Parents practice their new skills at home while supporting their child in practicing theirs. The result is a synergistic approach designed to make maximum progress in a relatively short time.

What Skills Will My Child Learn?

During the iThrive Kids group, children learn to:

- Develop mindful awareness and pause before reacting;
- Identify and express feelings;
- Use calming and coping strategies;
- Resolve conflicts using social-assertiveness (rather than reacting passively or aggressively)
- Recognize and reframe unhelpful thought patterns;
- Set and pursue goals through positive challenges.

What Do Parents Learn?

Parent coaching sessions are designed to help you learn the following skills and provide individualized feedback as you implement them at home with your child:

- Staying calm and grounded during emotionally charged moments;
- Creating a safe space for your child to share vulnerable feelings with you;
- Using collaborative problem-solving to address challenges proactively;
- Reinforcing the coping and communication skills your child is learning;
- Adjust your parenting to match your child's level of emotional intensity;
- Establish predictable routines that reduce conflict, support development of frustration tolerance, and encourage age-appropriate independence.

Who is iThrive Kids Best For?

This program is designed for families with children who:

- Often have emotional meltdowns, outbursts, or self-critical thoughts at home;
- Experience remorse or shame afterward and have some level of motivation to change;
- Show mild-to-moderate emotional challenges, such as anxiety, low frustration tolerance, or difficulty
  coping with disappointment;
- Could benefit from building emotional resilience for middle school;
- Are able to participate in a small group without significant disruptive behavior.
- Children who are experiencing more severe challenges—such as frequent self-harm or intense physical aggression—may require a more individualized approach than this group-based program can provide.

What Commitment Is Required?

Children need to be able to attend all group sessions.

Parents/Caregivers:

- Attend all weekly parent coaching sessions (both parents/caregivers, if living in the same home);
- One parent Joins the final 15 minutes of each weekly children's group;
- Spend ~1 cumulative hour per week supporting their child's progress.

What Does It Cost?

The program cost is $2800. Dr. Altemeier provides parents with a superbill to submit to insurance for whatever amount their insurance plan covers. Billing codes are 90853 for the children's groups and 90846 for the parent sessions. HSA/FSA cards are accepted.

leahaltemeier.com/ithrivekids

iThrive Kids runs every fall and spring. **Apply here.**

Want to stay informed? **Click here.**

Dr. Leah Altemeier