



**Neurodiversity and Autism Transition Service (NATS)
EFFECT and PEERS Programs Information Sheet
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About the University of Maryland's EFFECT High School Program:

The EFFECT (Executive Function for Effective Cognitive Transformation) high school teen program focuses on fostering executive function skills essential for the success of high school students transitioning to college and beyond. Our program emphasizes skills such as planning, organization, time management, prioritization, and problem-solving, all within the context of project-based learning of the teen's choosing.

What Teens Can Expect:

Targeted Skill Development: Teens will receive weekly personalized guidance individually or in dyad sessions from EFFECT executive function coaches to address their specific needs while harnessing their unique strengths.

Project-Based Learning: The program centers around a motivating short-term project chosen by the teen, making the learning experience motivating, relevant and engaging.

Community and Support: During the six, 1-hour group time, teens will connect with other EFFECT peers who share their aspirations, fostering a supportive community of learners.

Program Highlights: The **spring program** runs 12 weeks (one, weekly 50-minute individual coaching session and 6 group sessions via Zoom). The **summer program** runs 6 weeks (two, weekly 50-minute individual coaching sessions and one, 60-minute group session all via Zoom¹).

Eligibility: To participate in the EFFECT Program, students must meet the following criteria:

- High school student
- Participants must be motivated to participate in the EFFECT program and have the academic capabilities to pursue higher education
- This program helps students build their executive function skills. However, teens should be capable of managing a project with interdependence (ability to work with a coach-SLP clinician with some degree of engagement), both during and outside of program sessions or be motivated to do so.

¹ Special consideration may be made for some high school students who would benefit from at least 1 in-person session rather than solely virtual sessions. Group will remain virtual.

About the University of Maryland's modified-PEERS High School Program:

This program is an evidence-based social skills intervention for motivated high school teens who are college-bound and interested in learning ways to help them make and keep friends. During each group session, teens are taught a variety of social interaction options and are given the opportunity to choose and practice these skills in teaching sessions during role-play and other activities.

Parents attend separate, concurrent, 2-hour sessions and are taught how to assist their high schoolers make and keep friends and help to expand their teen's social network. This will help increase opportunities that align with the teen's interests and provide feedback through coaching during weekly take home activities.

The PEERS program has been modified to remove the lessons that encourage high school teens to "mask" who they are; recent research has shown masking elevates anxiety and depression. New lessons have been added to teach the teens self-advocacy skills to include disclosure of needs and other supports.

Our fall semester is 1 high school + 1 parent concurrent group sessions run weekly for 13 weeks in-person at our College Park UMD campus. Our summer modified-PEERS program runs on a compressed hybrid (1/2 virtual and in-person) schedule twice weekly from the end of May to the 2nd week of July in the evenings after 5pm. Traditionally, Tuesdays and Thursdays have been used. In-person teen and parent groups are run concurrently for 2 hours located at the University of Maryland's Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences' Clinic in College Park, Maryland campus. Parking tags close to the building will be provided at no extra charge. A HIPAA-secure Zoom is used for the 2nd weekly group sessions (1 for teens and 1 for parents run concurrently).

Cost²³:

Spring Semester EFFECT \$2100 (12 individual/dyad sessions + 6 group sessions)

Summer Semester EFFECT \$2100 (12 individual/dyad sessions + 6 group sessions)

Fall Semester PEERS \$1800 (1 high school + 1 parent group session weekly for 13 weeks)

Summer Semester PEERS \$1800 (compressed in 7-week summer session; 13 high school + 13 parent group sessions)

Academic Year PEERS \$1800 (over entire college semester; 13 high school + 13 parent group sessions)

² As of January 3, 2025 and subject to change.

³ ASHA certified and licensed speech-language pathologists oversee both programs and some health insurance companies and the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS) have reimbursed for our services. Our UMD Hearing and Speech business office can complete a superbill with the codes if needed.