

### Appendix 1:

#### Research study Exploring friendship in a group of young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Ireland.

##### Who am I and what is this study about?

My name is Caroline Casey and I am a Masters student at Trinity College Dublin. I am doing a research study exploring friendship in young children with ASD.

By hearing from the experiences of parents and their children with ASD I hope to learn about the different friendship experiences of young children with ASD. I hope this will help improve our understanding of how these friendships are developed and maintained and any barriers they may encounter in forming and continuing friendship.

##### How can I/my group help?

I hope to hear from a group of parents and their children about their friendship experiences. I plan to recruit parents and their children from Autism support groups in the Dublin region.

If you or your organisation consent, I will ask you to share the information about this research study at your next support group. I am looking to interview at least 5 parents and their children for this study.

##### Who do I want to speak to?

I wish to interview 5 parents and their children. Specifically, I want to speak to parents of children with a recognised diagnosis of ASD who are between the ages of 5 and 11 years of age.

##### What will agreeing to participate involve?

Anyone who agrees to participate will be interviewed by me for approximately 30 minutes. I will ask participants to meet with me at a time that is suitable for them and in a location that is comfortable for them. During this interview the participants will be invited to tell me about their child's experience of friendship and the children will be invited to tell me about their own experience of friendship.

In a small number of cases, where the participant has a lot more to say etc I may request a follow up interview.

I will provide a detailed information sheet to anyone willing to participate in the study and consent forms for all participants.

##### What happens to the information gathered from the interview?

This information will be used for my Master's thesis. All information will be used in the strictest of confidence. All participants will be provided with a fictional name to preserve anonymity. In accordance with the Data protection Act 1997 participants may access the data collected on them for this study at any time.

If this support group can help with the study what will I do next?

If you would like to help with this study or you have any further questions please e-mail me at [caseyc5@tcd.ie](mailto:caseyc5@tcd.ie).

Thank you for your time and interest!

Caroline Casey

## Appendix 2: Recruitment supporter consent form

Research study: Exploring friendship in a group of young children with ASD in Ireland

Please tick the boxes as appropriate and sign below to consent to supporting participant recruitment for this study

I have read and understood the attached information sheet

I have been able to ask questions and discuss the study with the researcher and I am happy with the answers I was given

I am happy to support recruitment for this study via this support group with parents and children with ASD

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time and participation!

Caroline Casey

## Appendix 3: Letter of invitation

Research study: Exploring friendship in a group of young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Ireland.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am conducting interviews as part of a research study exploring friendship in a group of young children with ASD. By hearing about the friendship experience of young children with ASD from the perspective of both the child and their parent(s) I hope to gain a better understanding of the friendship of young children with ASD and any barriers they may face in developing and maintaining their friendship.

If you take part in this study, I will interview you and your child for a period of 30 minutes each at a time and location of your choice. I am aware that some children will need accommodations during the interview process. I will incorporate play, visual aids, favourite toys, special interests and visual aids (e.g. photos or comic strip conversations) to ensure that your child has a positive experience during the interview process.

If you would like more information on this study or would like to take part please feel free to contact me at [caseyc5@tcd.ie](mailto:caseyc5@tcd.ie). I am happy to answer all questions!

Thank you for your time,

Caroline Casey

## Appendix 4. Participant Information Sheet

Research study: Exploring friendship in a group of young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Ireland.

### Who am I and what is this study about?

My name is Caroline Casey and I am a master's student at Trinity College Dublin. I am doing a research study exploring friendship in young children with ASD.

By hearing from the experiences of parents and their children with ASD I hope to learn about the different friendship experiences of young children with ASD. I hope this will help improve our understanding of how these friendships are developed and maintained and any barriers they may encounter in forming and continuing friendship.

### What happens if I decide to take part?

If you decide that you would like to take part in this study, I will interview you and your child for 30 minutes each. The interview will focus on the experience your child has had of friendship, how your child perceives friendship and how you perceive your child's friendship and any barriers that your child faces establishing and maintaining friendship.

With your permission your interview will be audio-recorded to keep track of what we say during the interview. After the interview I will type up what has been said during the interview. The audio-recording will be encrypted and stored on a locked computer. It will be stored for a period of up to 5 years. The written version of the interview will be anonymised and stored on a password protected computer.

### Will I be asked to do anything else if I agree to take part?

A follow up meeting may be requested to expand upon information given during the primary interview. This will be agreed upon after the first meeting.

**You DO NOT have to take part in a follow up meeting if you do not want to.**

### Where will the interview take place?

Interviews will take place in a private place that is most comfortable for you and your child. You can take time to decide upon the time and place that is most appropriate for the needs and comfort of you and your child.

### Are there any risks involved in participating in this research?

There are no known physical risks associated with participating in this research. I am aware that children taking part in this research may need special adaptations to take part. I will adapt the interview to suit your child's needs with movement breaks, using their favourite subject e.g. trains, cartoons etc, visual aids (such as photos, comic strip characters), and using favourite toys to ensure that your child is happy during the interview process.

- I will do my best to make sure the interview take place in a private comfortable location that suits you and your child's needs.

- If you or your child show any signs of upset or distress during the interview, I will offer you or your child a break during the interview. If you or your child continue to show signs of upset or distress, I will terminate the interview.

### Is what I say private?

Yes, what you say to me during the interview is **completely confidential**.

### What happens to the information gathered?

- Everything that we say during interviews will be typed out and all participants will be given a fictional name to ensure anonymity. The names of any places/people mentioned during the interviews will also be changed.
  - Soft copies of anonymised transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer.
  - I will store audio recordings of interviews on a password-protected computer; these will be deleted once I have been awarded my Masters.
  - Signed consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet in Trinity College Dublin.
  - All data (hard/soft copies of anonymised transcripts) and consent forms will be destroyed five years after I complete my Masters.
  - All information will be treated in the strictest confidence.
  - In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1997, you may access data collected for this study that relates to you at any time.

### Can I change my mind about participating?

Yes, if you or your child decide to change your mind (even during the interview process) that is no problem. You also have the right to stop the interview at any time during the interview process without giving a reason. You can withdraw permission to use the interview up to two weeks after the interview process.

### If I think I want to participate what do I do next?

If you would like to participate in this study or you have any further questions you would like to ask before deciding please contact me by email at [caseyc5@tcd.ie](mailto:caseyc5@tcd.ie).

**Thank you for your time and interest**

Caroline Casey

## Appendix 5: Participant consent form

### Research study: Exploring friendship in a group of young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Ireland.

I have read and understood the attached Information Sheet.

I have been able to ask questions and discuss the study with Caroline and I am happy with the answers I was given.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study before and during interviews, without giving a reason.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

I am happy to be interviewed by Caroline.

**I am happy for my child to be interviewed by Caroline**

I am happy for the interview to be audio recorded.

I understand that the recorded interview will be stored as an encrypted file on a password-protected computer until Caroline has been awarded her Masters.

I understand that the anonymised transcript and my signed consent form will be kept in a locked cabinet for five years from the time of completion of the study.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your time and participation**

**Caroline Casey**

