### Al’s Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices

Al’s Pals is a school based prevention program that develops young children’s (SK/Grade 1) social-emotional skills, self-control, problem-solving abilities, and healthy decision-making. No child in the class is excluded from the program. Strong social-emotional skills are connected to improved academic performance.

Children are encouraged to use feeling words, to brainstorm, to problem-solve, etc. Once the AFS instructor has covered a lesson, the teacher is encouraged to actively implement Al’s Pals by leading lessons, conducting follow-up activities, and reinforcing the concepts throughout the week. ‘Al’s Place’ is a designated place in the classroom and is to be used by children to manage strong feelings. Al’s Pals posters and photographs are displayed; songs are incorporated into daily classroom activities.

- **Algoma Family Services Team members offer a supportive role to teachers in the Algoma District.**
- **Booster lessons are provided to train teachers in Grades 1 to 3.**
- **Algoma Family Services staff will provide consultation to the Boards as teachers are now being trained to deliver the Al’s Pals program in the schools on their own.**

### Building Bridges

The Building Bridges Program is an early intervention program for kindergarten and grade 1 students. The goal of this program is to maximize school adjustment because some children have difficulty adjusting to the school setting. When support is provided to the child, parent and the school, children develop skills that produce appropriate social behaviours. As a result, children feel more successful and have a positive outlook.

Building Bridges provides an opportunity for the children to experience a non-academic, structured time with their peers with the focus being to learn and maintain positive social behaviours.

The Program includes 16 students who meet weekly at school with trained AFS counsellors. Each session is 45 minutes, with group facilitators from Algoma Family Services.

Parents of children in this program are invited to attend “Open Houses”, which gives the children an opportunity to show off what they have learned. It also gives the family members a chance to have fun with their child. Some children may already be experiencing difficulties in the area of behavioural expectations. To these parents we will offer additional support from an Algoma Family Services social worker that is attached to the program.

An additional component of this program is that all parents/guardians of the children of S.K. and grade 1 will be able to attend parent education/support groups. These will be held throughout the remainder of the school year. Topics of interests will be chosen by parents and/or the facilitators.

- **Algoma Family Services continues to provide this program for both the Algoma District and Huron-Superior Boards of Education.**
- **To apply for this program, School Principals shall contact the Mental Health Leader of their respective Boards.**

### Taming Sneaky Fears

“Taming Sneaky Fears” is a therapeutic group program for children between the ages of 4 and 7 who struggle with symptoms of anxiety.

This program is also for parents/guardians of children who are referred to the Group.