Neurofibromatosis Type 1 (NF1) is a common disorder with an estimated birth incidence of 1/2500 and a prevalence of 1/4000 (Ferner & O’Doherty, 2002). NF1 is an autosomal dominant disorder characterized by dermatological, skeletal, and ophthalmological abnormalities. It is a progressive disorder with extreme variability seen both between and within families. Clinical manifestations of the disease include physical manifestations and neurological manifestations. The neurological manifestations of the disease include deficits in visuospatial ability, visuoconstructional skills, executive functioning, attention skills, and language skills (North, Hyman, & Barton, 2002). Despite the fact that NF1 is one of the most common genetic disorders there have been few studies on the quality of friendship in children with NF1. This study undertook to examine the quality of friendships in children with NF1 using the modified Friendship Quality Questionnaire (FQQ) developed by Parker and Asher in 1993.

A total of 36 children and adolescents between the ages of 7 and 18 participated in this study. Children with NF1 who were more severely affected did not report a lower quality of friendship than children who were mildly affected. Boys did report a significantly lower quality of particular aspects of friendship, particularly caring and trust, conflict, and recreation. This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies. This study also suggests that parts of the FQQ, in particular conflict and betrayal, may not be valid for use among children with NF1. It is reassuring that children who are more severely affected with NF1 do not appear to suffer in the quality of their best friendship compared to children who are mildly affected with NF1.