

How to Support Your Child with Friendship Skills



Friendships help your child...

- ✓ Learn social skills
- ✓ Learn and feel good about themselves
- ✓ Have supports in their lives

Developing Your Child's Friendship Skills

Celebrate when your child practices conversation skills

Involve your child in decisions about play dates

Model respectful behavior toward other adults, teachers, and children

Listen to your child talk about their friendships

How to Support Your Child's Friendships

Location	Activities	Playmates	Time
•Have a place in your house where your child can play with a friend.	•Help your child choose interactive activities (not video games or TV).	•Have several sources of playmates: school, team, church, scouts, neighborhood.	•Make sure to set aside time each week for play dates.

Tips for Your Child When Joining a Group

When & Where

- Children should try to join in when others are playing during lunchtime, or before or after school.
- Children shouldn't try to play with others when they are working or listening to the teacher.

How

- Children should watch the group and understand what they are doing and what the rules are to play.
- Children should congratulate the other kids who are playing.
- Children join a group by helping them play their game. Wait for a break to join.

Being Turned Down

- On average, children are told "no" 50% of the time when trying to join a group.
- If your child accepts being turned down gracefully, they will more likely be allowed into the group next time.
- Being turned down can be disappointing or confusing for your child. Help them come up with a plan if this occurs:
 - What could you tell yourself if this happens (ex: "That's alright, I'll try to play with them later.")?
 - What could you do next if this happens (ex: play a different game)?
- Successful group entry should only be done by the child. Attempts by parents to help can be unsuccessful.

PLAY DATE ACTIVITIES

- Building forts
- Playing imaginary games
- Playing with toys
- Playing catch
- Scavenger hunt
- Playing water games
- Playing cards
- Making up dances
- Looking for bugs
- Playing Hide and Seek
- Making up plays
- Going to the pool
- Listening to new music

TIPS FOR BEING A GOOD HOST

1. The friend gets to pick the games to play; try to compromise if there are disagreements.
2. Encourage your child to praise their friend's attempts at the game ("nice try," "great shot").
3. As a parent, do not referee when the children are playing.
4. If your child and their friend get bored, suggest a change in the activity.
5. Encourage your child and their friend to take turns.
6. If another child stops by your child can either invite them to play, or let them know that they are busy. Do not leave the original guest alone.