

# Friendship Skills: Teaching Your Child How to Make and Maintain Healthy Friendships

Mental Health Series



In this edition of our newsletter, we delve into the important topic of friendship skills and the role parents play in teaching and encouraging their children to make and maintain healthy friendships. Developing these skills is crucial for your child's social and emotional well-being, as friendships provide support, companionship, and opportunities for personal growth. Research shows that children with strong social connections experience better mental health, higher self-esteem, and improved academic performance. So, let's explore ways in which you can empower your child to build and nurture meaningful friendships.



## Teaching and Encouraging Friendship Skills

**1 - Model healthy friendships:** Be a positive role model for your child by demonstrating healthy friendships in your own life. Show them the value of empathy, respect, and good communication in your relationships with friends and family.

**2 - Encourage social interactions:** Provide opportunities for your child to engage in social activities such as playdates, extracurricular clubs, and community events. These experiences help them practice their social skills and build connections with peers.

**3 - Teach empathy and understanding:** Help your child develop empathy by encouraging them to see things from others' perspectives. Discuss different emotions and how they can affect people's behavior. This understanding will enable them to develop deeper and more meaningful relationships.

**4 - Promote active listening:** Teach your

child the importance of active listening. Encourage them to pay attention, maintain eye contact, and show interest in what their friends are saying. By actively listening, they will be better able to understand and support their friends.

**5 - Resolve conflicts peacefully:** Conflict is a natural part of any relationship, but it's important to teach your child healthy ways to resolve conflicts. Encourage them to express their feelings assertively, listen to others' viewpoints, and find compromises that satisfy everyone involved.

**6 - Develop social skills:** Help your child develop essential social skills such as initiating conversations, joining group activities, and maintaining appropriate boundaries. Role-play different social scenarios to build their confidence and competence in social interactions.



# Featured articles

## The Importance of Healthy Friendships:

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of healthy friendships on children's well-being. Here are a few compelling statistics:

- 1 A study published in the Journal of School Psychology found that children with strong friendships have a higher sense of belonging and greater satisfaction with their lives.
- 2 According to a research report by the University of Illinois, children who have healthy friendships demonstrate better emotional intelligence and are more likely to succeed academically.
- 3 The American Academy of Pediatrics emphasizes that strong friendships contribute to improved mental health outcomes, reducing the risk of anxiety and depression in children and adolescents.
- 4 A longitudinal study conducted by the University of Virginia discovered that individuals who had strong friendships in childhood were more likely to experience better physical and mental health outcomes throughout their lives.
- 5 The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development emphasizes that children who have positive peer relationships show higher self-esteem and are less prone to engaging in risky behaviors.
- 6 A study conducted by the University of Cambridge revealed that children with strong friendships exhibit higher levels of resilience and are better equipped to cope with stress and adversity. Having supportive friends can serve as a protective factor against the negative impact of challenging life events, helping children bounce back and maintain a positive outlook.



Encouraging your child to develop healthy friendships not only enhances their current happiness and well-being but also equips them with important skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Remember, building and maintaining friendships is a lifelong process, and your guidance and support play a crucial role in your child's social development. By nurturing their social skills and fostering a positive and inclusive environment, you provide them with the tools they need to navigate and cherish meaningful relationships.

We hope these insights and suggestions will help you support your child in their journey toward healthy friendships.



Join Dr. Paul Parkin for a captivating course on empathy, positive psychology, and relationship happiness. Through storytelling and scientific insights, he explores key relationship elements like reflexivity, empathy, adaptability, and love.

## R.E.A.L. Relationships



Paul Parkin, Ph.D.

### Need more support or info?

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