



Tip sheet 1 Friends

Emotional wellbeing - tips for helping your child with friendships

1. Talk about it:

- Does your child think there is a problem?
- Are they content with the friends they have?
- Would they like anything to be different and if so, what?
- Allow/ support children to come up with their own solutions and try them out
- Talk about how their experiences with this work out

<https://www.understood.org/articles/en/should-i-force-my-lonely-child-to-socialize-more>

2. Practice friendship skills at home

- Role play situations
 - How to behave when they arrive somewhere new
 - How to join in a game and take turns
 - What to say when they are at a playdate at someone else's house
 - How to end a conflict or disagreement
- Use social scripts
- Play turn taking games together
- Coach your child through friendship challenges and conflict rather than solving for them

<https://childmind.org/article/kids-who-need-a-little-help-to-make-friends/>

3. Open your home to your child's friends

- Greet the child visiting
- Start with a snack or drink
- Talk about what areas of the home they can use to play in
- Be available if your child needs help, but give them space to get along together
- If your child finds this hard, keep it short to start with
- Talk about the experience afterwards, with affirmative praise "you shared really well with your friend".

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/school-age/connecting-communicating/connecting/supporting-friendships>

4. Set up other opportunities to interact:

- At a communal location - the park or a club house
- Clubs (such as scouts) provide built in structure
- Respond positively to invitations
- Children and teens practice friendship skills in the situation.
- Built in structure (i.e. scouts) is good for kids who are shyer and struggle to engage more.
- For older children, agree boundaries but allow them to experiment with their social lives by going out

<https://www.understood.org/articles/en/should-i-force-my-lonely-child-to-socialize-more>



5. Get to know your child's friends:

If you aren't sure who your child's friends are, ask their teacher or watch the playground in the morning.

- Know who the important people in your child's life are
- Know who your child is talking about and their personalities
- Have an idea of the influence friends have on your child
- Understand how your child gets on with their friends
- Know who to invite to birthdays/ playdates
- Know other families of a similar age to your child

6. Provide strong role models:

- Help your child choose role models besides you as parents
- Encourage your child to watch these role models for how they handle social situations
- Let your child know it's OK to talk to another adult about how to manage social situations

<https://www.scmp.com/yp/discover/advice/personal-development/article/3069068/dr-michael-carr-gregg-tells-third-culture>

7. Be a good friendship model and teacher yourself:

DO:



Speak up for what is right

Model healthy friendships

Model forgiveness

Encourage perspective taking

Allow friendships to change and then change again, and again!

DON'T:



Gossip, plot, exclude, blame and shame other children - or friends

Hold grudges

Speak harsh judgements on your child's friends - or your own

Try to manage your child's friendships

8. Make friends with the parents of your child's friends (and enemies!)

- Or at least, be friendly
- Smile, engage in small talk
- Part of being a positive role model
- Having open lines of communication

<https://dailymom.com/nurture/childs-friends-parents-guide/>

9. It's OK to not be friends with everyone

Being kind is not the same thing as liking everyone.