

Early Childhood Toolbox



The Importance of Teaching Friendship Skills

Welcome to the *Early Childhood Pyramid Toolbox*, a monthly e-newsletter for early childhood professionals focusing on **young children's social and emotional development**. Each issue is filled with descriptions of and handy hyperlinks to a teacher-friendly collection of resources including articles, lesson-plan ideas, videos, classroom activities, parent materials, children's book recommendations, and more.



Teaching Friendships Skills

Learning to make friends is an important part of children's social skill development, including the development of positive social relationships. Preschool classrooms provide many opportunities to learn and practice these skills. Teachers can and should set the stage for children to develop relationships and friendships with others. Teaching these skills can include: direct instruction, modeling appropriate behaviors, facilitating exchanges, and providing opportunities for children to practice. Several behaviors young children use during play are directly related to making friends.

Children who do more of the following are more likely to have friends; organizing play with others using "Let's" statements, "Let's make cookies"; sharing requests from one child to another, "Can I have some cars too?"; assisting others such as when a child tells or shows a friend how to do something, "See how to put the wheels on the bus"; and using statements to compliment, praise or show affection to another, "You did a great job".

Facilitating friendships between children can occur throughout the day when you focus on the opportunities provided by the class schedule and class activities.

Examples include:

Circle time - Teachers provide an opportunity for children to "pick a buddy" to dance in music and movement or read books about friends; discuss what friendship skills the characters in the book have.

Small Group - Teachers plan activities that provide small group opportunities for children to work together on a single project, e.g. painting a classroom mailbox

Center time - Teachers observe their children to facilitate conversations between children, promote and compliment positive behaviors demonstrating friendship.

Transitions - Teachers ask a child to select a friend to "go clean up" or "line up"

Outdoor play – Teachers provide a opportunity to pick a buddy for play outside.

FEATURED ARTICLES

[Recommended Practices
Identifying and Monitoring Outcomes
Related to Children's Social-Emotional
Development](#)

[Helping Children Play and Learn Together](#)

[You Got to Have Friends
https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Youve-got-to-have-friends_article.pdf](https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Youve-got-to-have-friends_article.pdf)

[Using Classroom Activities & Routines as
Opportunities to Support Peer Interaction](#)

CHILDREN'S BOOKS



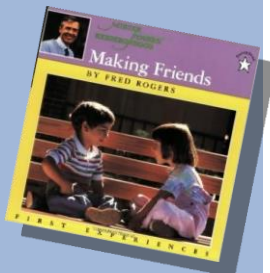
That's What a Friend Is

By P.K. Hallinan



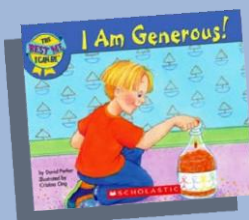
Making Friends

By Fred Rogers



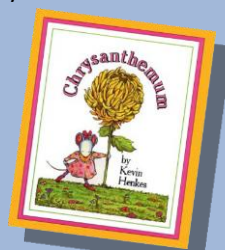
I am Generous!

By David Parker



Chrysanthemum

By Kevin Henkes



EFFECTIVE TEACHING



- ✓ Encourage children to work together
- ✓ Make positive and specific comments about children who are working together, helping each other, etc.
- ✓ Use a variety of strategies to specifically teach friendship skills (e.g., sharing, turn taking, helping others)
- ✓ Encourage peer partners/buddies (e.g. hold hands during transition, play partner, clean up buddy, etc.)
- ✓ Provide children with planned opportunities to practice friendship skills
- ✓ Model appropriate friendship skills in interactions with children and other adults
- ✓ Make a kindness paper chain that children can add links to when they demonstrate friendship skills

TRICKS OF IMPLEMENTATION

- [Inclusion of Young Children with Autism with their Typically Developing Peers](#)

[Friendship Art](#)

[How to be Super Friends](#)



PARENT RESOURCES

- [How to Help Your Child Learn to Share](#)
- [Supporting All Children Using the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards: A Guide for Families \(English and Spanish\)](#)
- [Taking a break: Using a calm down area at home \(English\) \(Spanish\)](#)



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This toolbox is funded by Innovative CoP on Parenting, Behavioral Concerns & Strategy
Awarded by the Association on University Centers on Disabilities Award Number - NU38OT000280-02-01