

Fostering Friendships to Support Social-Emotional Learning in Early Childhood Programs

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+ Overheard...

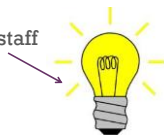


+ Participants will understand...



- **WHY** teaching friendship skills is important
- **WHAT** friendship skills to teach
- **HOW** to plan and teach friendship skills
- **WHEN** children are not friendly, how we can support them
- **WHERE** to start with supporting staff

Goal: Leave with 5 new ideas, resources, or activities to try



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POLL



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WHY is teaching friendship skills important?

- Belonging, security, safety, decreased stress
- Self-esteem & self-confidence
- Most other areas and contexts require these relationship skills:
 - Small group & team work
 - Sitting amongst peers at group time
 - Navigating outside play
 - Social problem solving
 - Empathy



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WHY is teaching friendship skills important?

Without social skills (**friendship skills, problem solving, emotions & self-regulation**), children are more likely to:

- have “challenging behavior,”
- be rejected by their peers,
- do poorly in school,
- be held back in the early grades
- drop out of high school.



+ **WHY** is teaching friendship skills important?



- By teaching these skills to **all** children:
 - We create a **common language**.
 - We create a **classroom culture of kindness**.

+ **WHAT** skills should we teach?



Think about a child you work with who is a "good friend."

What makes this person a good friend?

Jot down inner traits/characteristics on the inside of a "person."

Jot down skills the friend exhibits on the outside.

Which part was easier to jot down? Why?

What are the skills we need to teach?



+ **WHAT** skills should we teach?



- 6 friendship skills
 - Give a toy
 - Give friendly touches
 - Ask to play
 - Help a friend
 - Give a compliment
 - Give a play idea

■ What do these things have in common?

+ HOW do we teach friendship skills?

- How do you remember what to buy at the grocery store?
- How do you know there's a railroad crossing when you're driving?
- How do you build your IKEA furniture?



+ HOW do we teach friendship skills?



+ HOW do we teach friendship skills?



How do we teach a child to recognize the first letter of their name?



+ **HOW** do we teach friendship skills?

Planning Method 1

Plan social-emotional lessons that specifically target friendship skills.

Examples:

- Reading Eric Carle's *The Very Busy Spider* to illustrate giving a play idea
- Compliment cards



+ **HOW** do we teach friendship skills?

Planning Method 2

Embed social skill opportunities into your existing routines, activities, and lessons.

Examples:

- Partner patterns
- Marble box paintings
- Class jobs, such as giving each other child a napkin
- Tires or wagons on the playground



+ **HOW** do we teach friendship skills?

- Group affection activities
 - AKA affection training or group friendship activities
 - Songs or games that are modified to include friendly touches



- Staff development activity: Think of a song or game you currently use that doesn't include a friendship component. Modify it to make it into a group affection activity.

+ HOW do we teach friendship skills?



DAPPER

- Demonstrate
- Add picture
- Practice
- Plan
- Extend
- Reinforce

+ HOW do we teach friendship skills?



Give a Play Idea

Demonstrate: "Teacher Theatre" with blocks; a teacher suggests that they build a zoo.

Add picture:

Practice: Children each give an idea for blocks with stem of "We could build a"

Plan: Small group; pairs using play dough and giving a play idea. Take turns so both partners give idea and try it.

Extend: Outside; challenge children to give play ideas for sandbox

Reinforce: Notice play ideas & show visual. Have children share at PM group.



+ HOW do we teach friendship skills?



Have teachers bring a weekly lesson plan and have them:

- Highlight activities where children work together in **blue** (opportunities for incidental teaching)
- Highlight activities where the social skill is explicitly taught in **pink** (intentional, explicit teaching where the objectives are teaching and reinforcing this skill)
- Review the activities highlighted in blue. If children could choose to play alone or work alone during these activities, highlight them again with **yellow** so they turn **green**.



+ **HOW** do we teach friendship skills?



Review the plans and consider:

- For **green** items (opportunities to play together or alone), how can I encourage children to play together? How can I increase engagement so children will choose to play together? How can I offer activities that require teamwork?
- For **blue** items (incidental teaching moments), how can I reinforce these skills? What am I going to purposefully notice and comment on? How can I encourage children to reflect?
- Do you have **pink** items? Review with DAPPER to determine next steps and ideas.

+ **WHEN** children are not friendly...

That's not nice.

Use your words.

I'm not your friend.

Be a good friend.

I can't be your friend; you're a boy.

You can't come to my birthday party.

+ **WHEN** children are not friendly...



What we say...	What we mean...
"You can't come to my birthday party."	
"That's not nice."	
"I'm not your friend."	
"Use your words."	
"We're all friends."	
"I can't be your friend; you're X..."	

+ WHEN children are not friendly...

Things to consider when responding to these moments:

I CARE

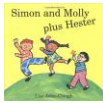
- I- intent (Analyze the intent)
- C- calm (How can you help the child regulate?)
- A- acknowledge (Acknowledge emotion, intent, desire)
- R- rewind (Re-try the situation using a friendship skill)
- E- echo (Echo back the situation, skill, and effects)



+ WHEN children are not friendly...

Common Child Beliefs about Friendship

- I can only have one friend- my BEST friend.
- My best friend cannot have other best friends.
- We have to do everything together to be friends.
- My friend likes everything that I like.
- A friend always says yes when I ask them to play.
- If a friend says no, they are no longer my friend.
- If my best friend is no longer my friend, I have no friends.



+ WHEN children are not friendly...

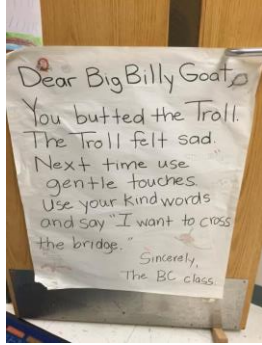
How can I help you feel better?

Hug	Handshake
Fist Bump	High 5
Something Else	



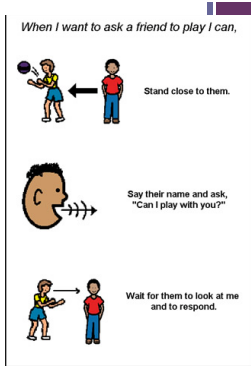
+ Reframing Activity

Have everyone bring a book or song that has moments that aren't "friendly." Work to reframe these stories, pairing them with a friendship skill. Brainstorm how you could use them to teach children. (E.g., Three Billy Goats Gruff, Little Bunny Foo Foo)





Positive, descriptive feedback + written documentation + sending it home



From Connectability.ca

+ Teacher and Family Resources:

- CSEFEL site teacher resources:
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html>
- Head Start Center for Inclusion teacher tools:
<http://headstartinclusion.org/teacher-tools>
- ConnectABILITY.ca tools for kids:
<http://connectability.ca/category/kids/articles-kids/>
- Resources for families about teaching friendship skills:
 - <http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/communities/families.htm>
 - <http://www.naeyc.org/tyc/backpack>

+ Children's Books:

- The Very Busy Spider by Eric Carle (give a play idea)
- A Visitor for Bear by Bonny Becker (compliments; asking for space)
- One Lonely Seahorse by Saxton Freymann (ask to play, help a friend, give a compliment– a great friendship skills review book)
- Fox Makes Friends by Adam Rolf (help a friend, ask to play)
- A House for Hermit Crab by Eric Carle (help a friend, give a compliment)
- Many of the Elephant & Piggie books by Mo Willems

+ Resources:

- Bringing Boys and Girls Together by Hillary Manaster & Maureen Jobe:
<https://www.naeyc.org/yc/files/yc/file/201211/Manaster.pdf>
- "I Won't Be Your Friend if You Don't!" Preventing and Responding to Relational Aggression in Preschool Classrooms by Tina Smith-Bonahue, Sondra Smith-Adcock, and Jennifer Harman Ehrentauf
<http://www.naeyc.org/yc/relational-aggression-classrooms>
- "You Got It!" Teaching Social and Emotional Skills by Lise Fox and Rochelle Harper Lentini
http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/do/resources/documents/yc_article_11_2006.pdf
- All Children Need Friends
https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/Publications/All_Children_Need_Friends.pdf

+ Contact Information



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