

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

HELPING YOUR CHILD FORM MEANINGFUL FRIENDSHIPS



Research shows that friendships are very important for your health, both your body and your mind. When you have good friends, you feel happier and less stressed. Friends give you someone to talk to, laugh with, and share problems with. This can help lower feelings of sadness, worry, or loneliness. Being around friends can also make your brain feel safe and supported, which is good for your mental health. Friendships are also good for your body. Studies show that people with strong friendships often have lower blood pressure, get sick less often, and even live longer. That's because having people who care about you helps your body stay calm and healthy.

Making friends is an important part of growing up. You likely fondly remember some

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**Encourage your child
to join clubs, sports,
or group activities
where they can meet
kids with similar interests.**

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of your childhood friends and the memories that you made with them. When children have good friends, they feel happier and more confident. Friends give kids someone to talk to, play with, and share ideas and feelings with. Friendships also help children learn important life skills, such as how to listen, take turns, solve problems, and work in a team. These skills help them in school and life.

Parents play a big role in helping their children make and keep friends. One way to help is by teaching your child how to be kind and respectful. You can also talk to them about how to handle disagreements in a peaceful way. Invite other children over to your home so your child has chances to play and get to know others better. Encourage them to join clubs, sports, or group activities where they can meet kids with similar interests.

Sometimes, children feel shy or unsure about making friends. That's OK. Parents can help by listening, giving advice, and showing support. Let your child know it's normal to feel nervous and that making friends takes time. Praise their efforts, even small ones, such as saying hello or sharing toys, and inviting new kids to play. Over time, these little steps can grow into strong, healthy friendships.

It is also important for parents to prioritize friendship. Many activities require time and investment, such as jobs, school, sports, and community involvement. It is also important, though, for kids to have time to spend with their friends. Consider how allowing your kids to spend time with their friends can be beneficial for everyone's schedules. For instance, you could trade carpool duties with a parent of your child's friends so that they can ride together to events, or you could organize neighborhood playdates where parents can take turns supervising.

Friendships help children feel like they belong. They teach kindness, trust, and how to care for others. With your help and support, your child can build the kind of friendships that will help them grow into a caring and confident person.

REFERENCE:

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2023/06/cover-story-science-friendship>

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