

PROMOTING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT GROWING FRIENDSHIPS

Friendships develop along a continuum of age and experience. Support the children in your programs to form healthy and respectful friendships.

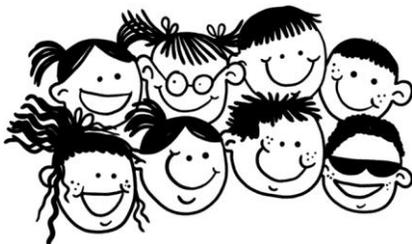
- Teach children to recognize their emotions and the emotions of others.
- Model empathy and create a community of respect and kindness in your program with clear expectations of acceptable behaviours for all.
- Promote disagreement as a natural and healthy part of life.
- Teach and model conflict resolution and collaboration to solve problems between peers.
- Discuss bullying and relational aggression.
- Plan engaging activities, buddy programs, and peer-leadership activities to engage diverse peers with each other.
- Agree to a definition of fairness that respects individual differences.
- Build a relationship of trust with each child to assist them with their challenges along the way.

Preschool: Momentary Playmates

- Play with other children doing what they are doing.
- Assume others think and feel as they do and can be upset by differences.
- Consistently prefer some peers without being consistently friendly to them.

Ages 5-9: One-Way Assistance

- Friendships now extend beyond current activity and are important.
- Define friendship by the nice things friends do for them, not by what they do for others.
- May offer to be a friend or threaten to not be a friend in exchange for getting their way.
- May put up with unkind behaviour to have a friend.



From Eileen Kennedy-Moore, Ph.D.
Children's Growing Friendships, Feb. 26, 2012

Ages 7-12: Two-Way, Fair Weather Cooperation

- Children are judgmental of themselves and others.
- They may form short-lived clubs with rules and discussion about who is and isn't a member.
- Fairness and reciprocity between friends is now important and expected.
- They are concerned about fitting in and evaluate themselves harshly.

Ages 8-15: Intimate, Mutually Shared Relationships

- Genuinely care about each other's happiness.
- Confide in each other and help each other solve problems.
- Know how to compromise.
- Are kind without keeping score.

12 years and up: Mature Friendship

- Put a high value on emotional closeness, trust and support.
- Accept and appreciated differences.
- Are less threatened by their friend's other relationships.
- Remain close over time, despite separations.