

HELPING CHILDREN MAKE AND KEEP FRIENDS

Enjoying healthy relationships has a tremendous impact on your child's wellbeing and their overall success at school. Many children who experience behavioural problems at school have difficulty interacting with their peers.

Coach your child in positive social skills

Children who develop healthy friendships generally have a definite set of social skills that help make them easy to like, easy to relate to and easy to play with. If your child is struggling to make friends consider coaching them using this three-pronged approach:

Be open: Some children close themselves off to forming new friendships, preferring to stick to one or two friends. Encourage your child to be open to forming friendships with a wide variety of children in and outside school and in doing so encircling themselves with many friendship groups

Be inclusive: Encourage your child to include a wide number of children in their games and activities rather than restricting the possibility of joining in to certain children. Healthy friendship groups are open and inclusive of others, while unhealthy relationships, such as cliques are restrictive, one-sided and full of gossip and criticism

Be aware: Encourage social awareness in your child. For instance, a socially-aware child would be discrete when giving out birthday party invitations at school, being protective and sensitive to the feeling of those not invited. This level of social awareness doesn't necessarily come naturally to all children, but it can be reinforced by parents and teachers

Encourage friendships with both genders

The primary school age is an ideal time for children to form friendships with both genders. This is particularly valid if your child has siblings of their own gender, or don't have siblings. It's through these early relationships that we gain the confidence to mix with different genders in later life.

Forming friends helps to break down the mystique that can form, when a 84.92 re1y11 of