

Ready4K

Let's Build FRIENDSHIP SUPER SKILLS!



Friends are Good Listeners

It feels good to have a friend who is a great listener. Listening skills also help kids work together, follow directions in the classroom, and learn from others .

Practice listening with games.



You might try Simon Says. Give different prompts like, “Simon Says, tap your head. Simon Says, wiggle your toes.” Can your child listen closely and do each thing that “Simon Says”?

Encourage active listening.



Try getting right down to your child’s eye level when you’re telling them something important. Encourage them to keep their eyes on your eyes. Before you talk, you might say, “1, 2, 3, eyes and ears on me.”

Model listening.



Make sure to carve out time where you'll give your child all of your attention. Ask questions and build on what they say. "What's one fun thing you did today? What did you like about it? Want to hear about a fun thing I did today?"

Have lots of conversations.



You might try passing questions around the table at a meal. For example, you might invite everyone to share a high and a low from their day. Can your child repeat everyone's high and low?

Celebrate listening.



When your child is really listening to you, mention how it makes you feel. You might try, "When you listen to me, it makes me feel like what I'm saying is really important."

Friends Notice Feelings

Learning all about feelings helps kids build empathy and get along with others. Knowing all about feelings also helps kids communicate.

Talk about feelings.



You might wake your child up by asking, “How are you feeling today?” or “What’s one thing you feel excited about doing today?” Notice how your child is feeling through the day. Ask about it. You can start the conversation by saying what you see. “It looks like you might be feeling frustrated. Can you tell me about how you’re feeling?”

Play games all about feelings.



You might make a feeling face (happy, sad, surprised). Then challenge your child to guess the feeling. Games like this help your child learn to identify what feelings can “look like.”

Look for feelings in books.



As you read, pause to ask your child questions about feelings. You might say, “How do you think that character is feeling? Have you ever felt that way? What helped you get through it?”

Express feelings in lots of different ways.



Sometimes it’s hard to put feelings into words. Offer chances for your child to draw about feelings or show their feelings through movement, dance, or music. Join in! You can each draw how you are feeling. Then talk about how your feelings are similar or different.

Validate feelings.

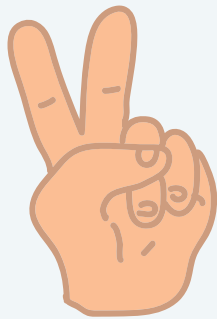


Let your child know that all feelings are okay. If they share about a hard feeling, tell them about a time you felt that way too. Maybe mention how a friend or family member helped you get through it.

Friends Work Together

When kids have lots of practice sharing, playing, pretending with others, and helping out, they get even better at forming friendships.

Try tasks that take 2.



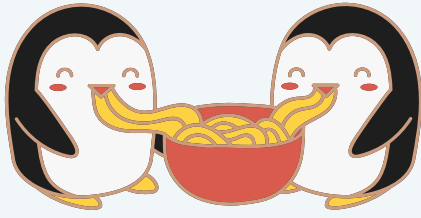
Lots of things are better and easier when we work together. Try taking on tasks that really highlight this. For example, you might have your child join you in cleaning up a room. You can each do half. Celebrate how much faster it is with two!

Take on community helping jobs.



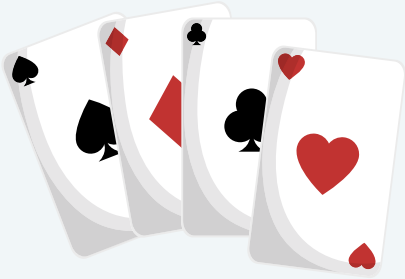
Try giving your child a job that helps out the whole family. Younger children might wipe down the table after a meal, and older children might take out the garbage, sweep the floor, or sort laundry. Mention how your child's hard work is helping the whole family.

Share it.



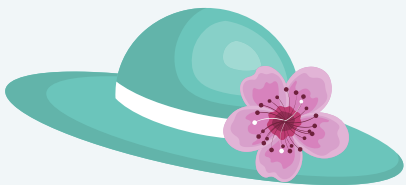
Sharing can be a tricky skill to master, but it's a big part of working and playing together with others. To build your child's sharing muscles, try group activities where you all share the same supplies. You might build together using a single set of blocks or draw as you share a few crayons.

Take turns.



Games with rules help kids learn to take turns and join in group activities. Card games like Go Fish are great for building patience and turn-taking skills. You might try physical games like tag or Follow the Leader. With older children, you might try inventing a game together. Come up with rules to ensure everyone gets a turn.

Practice with pretend.



Pretend play offers lots of opportunities to try out all different ways to work together. Follow your child's lead as they play. If they are pretending to work in a restaurant, you might offer to take orders or do the dishes. If they are playing store, you might jump in as the cashier.

Friends Appreciate Each Other

Friends often have lots in common. BUT our differences can bring us together, too. Differences also strengthen our friendships and grow our community.

Explore similarities & differences.



Read books about characters from different countries, families, races, cultures, and traditions. As you read, point out ways the characters are like your child. Mention ways they are different, too. Ask, “What’s one thing you’d like to learn about this character? What’s a question you might ask them? What’s one fun thing you might do together?”

Practice perspective-taking.



If your child is struggling with a peer, help them understand that person’s perspective. Ask questions like, “Why do you think they said or did that? What do you think they might have been feeling? What might have been happening to make them feel that way? Have you ever had anything like that happen to you?”

Notice acts of friendship.



As you sit with your child, share one way that someone helped you today. Then ask your child to share one way someone helped them. This will not only encourage them to appreciate others, it will also help them notice acts of kindness.

Explore what it means to be a good friend.

Encourage your child to draw a picture of a friend. Then ask, “What makes this person a good friend? What do they say? What do they do? How do they treat others?” Try writing these qualities all around the picture. Then ask your child, “Tell me about some things you can do to be a good friend?”

Talk about standing up for others.



Standing up for someone who is being treated unkindly or unfairly can be hard, but it’s a skill kids can build and practice. If your child shares about a peer being treated unkindly, ask about it. Try questions like, “What did you think/feel when you saw that happening? What did you do or say (or not do)? What did others do?” Practice phrases they might say such as, “I don’t like when you do that,” or “That’s unfair. That’s not okay.” You can also practice ways your child can ask an adult for help addressing the situation.