



How to make friends

“If you want to find a friend, you need to be a friend.”

Friendships help kids develop emotionally and morally and boost social skills. Not only do kids learn how to communicate with others, but healthy friendships can be instrumental in helping them learn to control their emotions and express their feelings constructively.

However, some children struggle socially and have trouble making and keeping friends.

Kids with solid friendships learn how to resolve conflicts and build social competence.

Why friendships are important

Friendships help kids build self-esteem and confidence. Positive friendships also may provide a protective barrier against bullying.

Healthy friendships also can be empowering for kids, providing a sense of belonging and identity.

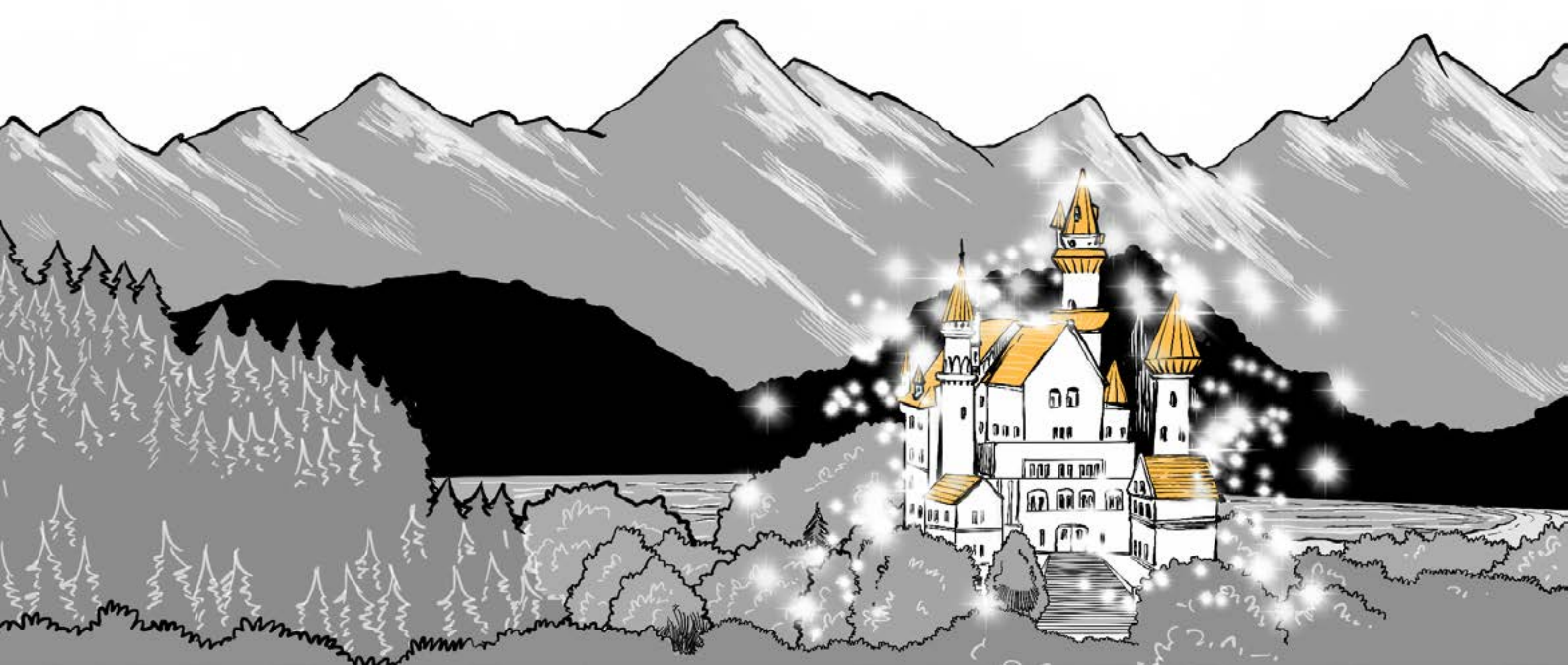


How you can help your child make friends

- ★ Accept the fact that not everyone is gifted at making friends – that’s ok.
- ★ Find out if your child is happy with the amount of friends they have or they feel stuck. If your child is comfortable with one or two friends, don’t push them to have more. It’s okay to have more or less. We’re all different.
- ★ If they feel stuck, perhaps they feel nervous about introducing themselves to kids on the playground or sitting at a new lunch table on the first day of school. Maybe they want to go up to the other kids, but are nervous about how they might be received.
- ★ If your child doesn’t have many friends, it could be simply because they aren’t around other children much. Look for ways to get involved in extra-curricular activities, especially ones that involve being in a group with other children. Of course, don’t overdo it and have them exhausted. Remember introverted children need time alone to recharge, while extroverted children recharge around other people.

What to do when making friends is hard

If your child continues to struggle with making friends, try observing what happens when your child interacts with other kids. Is your child too bossy, clingy, aggressive, aloof, touchy, or simply too shy to build friendships?



Practical things a parent can do...

1. If you're not sure if your child has friends at school, ask a teacher.
2. If you've identified your child feels stuck and doesn't know how to make a friend, build conversation skills.
 - Equip them with questions they can ask like "What do you do for fun?" or "Do you have any pets?"
 - Watch TV shows with your child and discuss how people have friendly conversations. What do they talk about?
 - Role play conversations with your child so they gain confidence.
3. Teach them how to listen. Showing compassion can start and grow a friendship. We often do this best by listening to and taking an interest in someone else's life. Role-play examples of listening and giving feedback.
4. Teach them how to be caring. They can do practical things like make a card for a friend who has a sick pet, or bake some cookies. But remember you don't want to teach your child to be a people-pleaser. They need to be authentic.
5. Search for friendship opportunities. When kids are engaged in groups or activities that are exciting or interesting to them, this reduces the pressure to meet and talk with other people. Not only are they doing something they enjoy, they are surrounded by other people who feel the same way they do. And, many times, the conversations can be about what they are doing or experiencing. For ideas visit the [VeryWellFamily Blog](#)

*Most of the content in this Character Sheet can be attributed to VeryWellFamily.
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