



Friendships allow children to develop life skills and build their self-esteem. Encourage your child's friendships by getting to know them and maybe organise playdates. If your child is having problems with their friends, try to help by reminding them of social skills e.g. sharing, manners. If you are concerned about your child's friendships at school always speak to the class teacher.

My child struggles to make friends

If you find your child may be struggling to make friends, you may find these few tips helpful:

- Sometimes children need a little encouragement, model saying, "Hello, my name is..." when they meet a friend for the first time.

- Talk to your child about emotions, what are they? How do you feel? What physical signs happen to your body when you feel certain emotions?
- As children get older, it is important for them to be able to read body language and facial expressions. This in turn leads onto being empathetic.
- If your child is socially anxious, it is important to work on this so that your child becomes more confident.
- If your child struggles with anger it is important to teach them strategies to deal with this otherwise this will inevitably affect friendship.
- Holding a conversation is important when it comes to friendship, children need to know how to start a conversation, communicate, and understand what others are saying.
- Take time and observe how your child interacts with other children, it may be that they need encouragement to speak, interact, or take turns. You can help with this by role-playing with your child.
- Try not to compare your child to other children, all children are emotionally different, children like many friends others are happy with one or two. As long as they are happy, that is the important thing.

A few Games to encourage friendship

1. Would you rather?

This is a fun easy game to play. It allows the children to be creative, one person asks, “would you rather” questions e.g. would you rather have legs for arms or arms for legs? The children then have to answer why they have chosen that answer. Let them be as creative as they would like.

2. Who am I?

You will need some post it notes and pens. Each child writes the name of a famous person on a post it note and places it on another child’s forehead. The children then go around and ask yes or no questions to try to find out who has been written on the post it note on their forehead. This continues until the child guesses who is on their post it note.

3. The Malteaser game

All you need is a packet of Malteasers, bowls and straws. Each child has a bowl and straw. Start by placing the Malteasers in the middle of the table, each child will then use their straw to blow the Malteasers into their bowl. The winner is the child who collects the most Malteasers.

4. The good friend list

This is a simple activity, in which children ask to list what qualities make a good friend. For example, someone who shares toys, someone who does not yell, etc.

5. Alphabet hunt

The children write the letters of the alphabet in a column, they then have “x” amount of minutes to go around the house to find something for every letter of the alphabet e.g. Alexa, basket, cup etc... You can decide on the length of time they have depending on the age of the child.

There are plenty of games online to find too, also games you have indoors. It doesn't really matter what games they play it's about communication, turn taking, sharing and listening to name a few. I have included a link below for more game ideas.

[Kids Games And Activities \(activityvillage.co.uk\)](http://activityvillage.co.uk)