

Role Playing Friendships

Want to give your child confidence with his or her peers? Here are some helpful practice conversations and guidelines to help kids navigate everyday social situations.

■ Conversing with Others

- Help your child practice introducing him or herself: “Hi, my name is _____. What is your name?”
- Have them practice asking questions, answering questions, and keeping a conversation going: “What do you like to do for fun? Did you go to any camps or take any trips this summer?”

■ Setting and Respecting Boundaries

- Reflect together about how your child feels when they are in a challenging social situation. Example: “Someone is playing too close to you, what do you do?” Then, model kind but firm phrases in response: “Can you please give me some space?”
- If your child wants to be close to others, validate that desire and model how to respectfully enter someone’s personal space. For example: “Can I have a hug/high 5?” or “Can I join your game?”
- Encourage your child to ask for help from an adult if his or her boundaries aren’t being respected.

Suggested Resource:

“The Not so Friendly Friend” (book)

HELPFUL TIP

LOOK FOR THINGS YOU
HAVE IN COMMON
WITH SOMEONE AND
USE THOSE FACTS TO
CONNECT WITH THEM.

■ Learning to Apologize and Repair

- A child is most apt to apologize not when he or she has been forced to say “sorry,” but when he or she has experienced an apology themselves. Create an environment at home where even adults apologize when they mess up.
- Remind your child we can say “sorry” even if what happened was an accident and we meant no harm.
- “Repairing” means looking for how to help the person in the moment and how you can make changes in the future. Don’t just end with an apology, go further to ask “how can I help?”

“I’m so sorry I knocked your books off the desk, can I help you pick them up?” or “I’m sorry I ran into you, are you ok? Can I get you some water or ice?”