

# Helping children make friends

*Friendships are important for a child's happiness and wellbeing.* The majority of children learn their friendship skills by observing adults - parents, relatives, teachers, childcare professionals and other significant adults in their lives.

There are five positive social attributes that adults can model when they interact with children that will increase their ability to make friends. These attributes are:

*Acceptance:* When adults show tolerance for children's behaviours and personal idiosyncrasies they teach children to be accepting rather than critical of other children's actions, dress and habits.

*Attention:* The quality of the attention children receive when they are in our company influences the way children interact with others. By calling children by name, listening attentively, making eye contact and giving non-verbal signs that display interest you are modelling basic but essential relationship skills.

*Appreciation:* Give kids positive feedback, letting them know that you appreciate their behaviours

and their attitudes. If a child is to show appreciation to someone else he first must experience appreciation from those whom he respects.

*Affirmation:* Respond positively to your child's more desirable social behaviours, while ignoring or responding with less enthusiasm to unsociable behaviours.

*Affection:* When we show children kindness or compassion or tell them that we love them, not only do we model appropriate behaviours, but we let them know that they themselves are likeable.

As children grow and develop we can encourage a variety of friendships skills and talk with them about friendship difficulties that they may encounter. But it is the basic friendships skills that adults model for children that will have the most far-reaching affects.



## Quick Parenting Quiz

1. *What is the most common form of discipline or behaviour management for Australian primary aged children when they are less than perfect?*
  - a) Withdrawal of privileges
  - b) Fining
  - c) Timeout
  - d) Extra chores
2. *Encouraging responses to a child who wants to help at home would be:*
  - a) You will have to wait until you are older to make your bed.
  - b) You have a go and call me if you need some help.
  - c) Not now! I'm busy.
  - d) Thank you darling. It is great that you want to make me a cup of tea but maybe we could wait until it is light outside.

Answers: 1a) 2b) and d)

## Vitamins for parents

Three magic words that children can use to get what they want:

1. **Please** – a powerful word to gain another person's attention.
2. **Thanks** – guaranteed to win acceptance and approval.
3. **Christian name** – a person's name is their most valuable possession.

## Bright idea



### How to start up a conversation

Teach your child or young person how to start up a conversation with someone else. The easiest way to start a conversation is to ask about the other person and then listen.

## Wise & Witty Words

"You train people how to treat you by how you treat yourself."

**Martin Rutte**

"Literature is mostly about having sex and not much about having children: life is the other way around."

**David Lodge**