

Stop, Look, & Listen

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How to Make New Friends and Why it Matters

Making new friends isn't the same as being popular. It's different than being liked and being accepted by someone or a group of people. To make friends and to be a good friend, the kind that inspires loyalty and dedication, you must be not only fun to be with but also capable of listening, being loyal, and supportive. Friends can be made easily:

- ◆ Ask a schoolmate to play on the playground at recess
- ◆ Ask a schoolmate to eat lunch with you
- ◆ Try to find something you have in common through talking with them
- ◆ Participate in activities you enjoy - you will find activities you have in common
- ◆ Be patient with schoolmates - they will appreciate it
- ◆ Sharing, being honest, and placing your schoolmate's needs ahead of your own

These are only a few things that can help students/children make and keep friends. It matters, as it helps create and maintain emotional/social skills that are important throughout a child's entire life. Even having one good friend makes a huge difference, let alone more. Additionally, having a schoolmate approach and make new friends is a skill that all children should learn. Students who are shy, feel alone, or are struggling with confidence will appreciate having a new friend.

Parents/guardians can help by asking students how their friendships are going and what it means to be a good friend. They can also encourage them to become active in activities they are interested in, encourage them to make new friends (see above), and model healthy friendships through their own actions.

Favorite Family Websites

With busy schedules, sometimes it's hard to find time for family. With computer education starting early at many schools, it's an activity that parents/guardians can do with their child at home. It not only helps the student become more familiar with computer use, but also brings the

family closer together. It strengthens family bonds, develops positive behaviors, and creates happy memories - both fun AND educational!

Here are some free family favorite websites you might want to consider:

- ◆ PBSKids.org
- ◆ www.sesamestreet.org
- ◆ www.starfall.com
- ◆ www.coolmath.com
- ◆ www.makemegenius.com
- ◆ www.timeforkids.com
- ◆ www.kids.nationalgeographic.com
- ◆ www.thekidzpage.com
- ◆ www.funbrain.com
- ◆ www.nickjr.com
- ◆ disneyjunior.disney.com

Be Kind

Kindness isn't taught, it's learned. In order to be kind, you have to experience it at school, activities, and home.

Here are some ways (but, of course, there are plenty more!) that help a child's understanding of the value of kindness:

The manner in which someone speaks to each other or responds to a child is a learned behavior. Children absorb this information and model the way they speak and treat others after both other children and adults.

Compassion and language go hand and hand with kindness. Understanding your child's feelings, explaining a different point of view to consider, and encouraging them to use "kind words" will help them learn and figure this out when it comes time to use them. For older children, you can ask them questions such as "How do you think it makes the other person feel?" or "How do you think it feels to be in their shoes?".

Encourage participation in good causes or going out of your way to help someone. Everyday kindness should be expected and will make your child feel good about themselves as well. This may be out of their comfort zone but will, eventually, become second nature. It will become part of their identity as they grow and mature.