

MY RELATIONSHIPS: WHAT IS A 'GOOD' FRIEND?



Lesson Objectives:

- Children will consider what qualities makes a good friend and what role they should play.
- Children will think about when friendships no longer work and what they can do to mend the situation.
- Children will understand that relationships need work.

Key Messages:

Managing relationships isn't easy. This session focuses on helping children to develop negotiating skills to help them manage their personal relationships but also to help them understand how healthy relationships should work. The children will think about what makes a good friend. What qualities are important and how friends should treat one another. There should always be balance in relationships.

Children will discuss various dilemmas within friendships and come up with ways to manage the situation. This will include discussions around 'good' and 'bad' secrets; using mobile technologies, social media and online friendships.

You should enjoy spending time with your friends. Real friends will help you feel good about yourself - not unhappy. Sometimes it might be necessary to challenge a friend if they are behaving in a way that leaves you feeling unhappy. Sometimes one of you is having fun, but the other doesn't take it as fun. Remember - Is my fun, fun for everyone.

Closing:

Today we have talked about what makes a good friend - it is important to have friends that make us feel good about ourselves, that share and respect each other. Sometime friendships will end or will need work - especially if they no longer make each other feel happy or safe.

Key Messages continued:

If children can learn these lessons, and start to develop and practice these skill now - it will stand them in good stead for when they get older. We know that picking positive friends when they move to high school can make a huge difference on their experience plus they are the same skills they will need to develop positive personal relationships with boyfriends and girlfriends as they move into their teenage years.



CARRYING ON THE CONVERSATION AT HOME:

Remember - you don't get to pick your child's friends for them. Regardless of who you would like them to hang around with - you simply don't get the choice. It is much better for you to help them develop skills to manage their relationships for themselves. Talk to your child about their friendships and ask them what they think a 'good' friend should be like. When you see examples on TV or in real life, make a point of highlighting positive behaviours that mirror healthy relationship. The more of these your child sees - the easier it is for them to copy these behaviours.

Equally, when you see examples of unhealthy relationships, talk to your child about these and highlight the power imbalances that exist.

All children will have issues within their friendship groups, where they may fall out or things go wrong. Help them to come up with their own solutions to manage the situation. Ask what they could do to mend the friendship or if they think people have behaved in a positive way. Again, you can do this with the characters in TV shows that you watch together.

Talk to your child about managing secrets - and the difference between good and bad secrets. Anything that makes them feel worried or scared about The best advice is

Safe and Unsafe Secrets:

Remind the children that secrets should never make you feel uneasy or need to be kept for a long time. If you are asked to keep a secret and you think that someone might get hurt or is unsafe you need to tell a trusted adult... Good friends keep each other safe.

Useful Links:

- check out the books in our library suggestions around friendships.

CARRYING ON THE CONVERSATION AT HOME:

also the most difficult to manage... so be warned. Have a chat with your child where you explain that you would much rather they tell you if they are worried about a friend or if something is going on. Promise that they will not be in trouble and you will help. You will simply be glad that they have confided in you. But here is the difficult bit... if they do tell you something (regardless of what it is!) you can't then get mad and tell them off - you need to uphold your side of the bargain. This is a help amnesty...

This is good practice for as your children get older and start going out by themselves. Would you rather they call and ask for help (even if they are somewhere they shouldn't be - doing something they ought not to be!) rather than scared to phone because they know they will get into trouble...?

But as forewarned, this does take a massive effort to stay calm in the face of what you may be told. Our view is that it is better to know and be able to support your child, than be left in the dark, happily unaware, but leaving your child to fend for themselves.



