



[Photo Caption]

HELPING YOUR CHILD MAKE NEW FRIENDS

"Friendships are very important when it comes to emotional health," explains Julia Cook, a former teacher and school counselor who authored "Making Friends Is an ART!" Continues Cook, "To a child, even having just one good friend can make a huge difference." While some children make friends with ease, others may need encouragement.

Here are some ways you can help your child make lasting friendships without putting too much pressure on them:

Talk About It:

Talk about or brainstorm a list of "friend qualities" with your child. Cook suggests using concepts such as: being friendly, being honest, laughing and having fun, willingness to share, being kind, and learning how to place others' needs ahead of their own.

Connecting Through Conversations:

Since being able to share thoughts and ideas is so important to any friendship, you can help your child understand how to build and maintain a conversation. "Remind kids to look for connections between what was just said and what they will say next," shares Barbara Boroson.

ORGANIZE PLAY DATES OR ACTIVITIES:

IF A CHILD CONTINUES TO STRUGGLE OR FEEL LESS THAN CONFIDENT IN THEIR FRIEND-MAKING SKILLS, BE PROACTIVE IN ORGANIZING PLAY DATES FOR KIDS.

BE REALISTIC:

AT THE SAME TIME, BE SURE TO NOT HAVE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF YOUR SHY OR SOCIALLY RESERVED CHILD. "SOME CHILDREN ARE MORE OUTGOING THAN OTHERS. IT'S JUST THEIR PERSONALITY. LASTLY, COOK ADVISES, "REMEMBER TO BE PATIENT. TEACHING FRIENDSHIP SKILLS WILL NEVER BE AS EASY AS IT SOUNDS, AND WE ARE ALL AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF LEARNING." IN THE END, CHILDREN WILL CONTINUE TO GROW SOCIALLY AS THEY PROGRESS THROUGH SCHOOL. WITH THE SUPPORT OF PARENTAL LOVE AND COACHING, CHILDREN WILL BETTER ENJOY THE JOURNEY TOWARD

MEANINGFUL READ MORE:

[HTTP://WWW.PBS.ORG/PARENTS/EDUCATION/GOING-TO-SCHOOL/SOCIAL/MAKE-NEW-FRIENDS/](http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/going-to-school/social/make-new-friends/) INFORMATION ABOUT MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR INSTRUCTION

KINDNESS- BEING NICE AND CONSIDERATE TOWARD OTHERS

YOLANDA TALLEY, SCHOOL COUNSELOR

JOHN C. HAINES SCHOOL

