Safe kids ☺ Healthy kids ☺ Happy kids

Kids with Positive Social Skills Make Good Friends

Parents want their child to have good friends. Making good friends requires *friend-making skills*. Parents are in the best position to teach and nurture these positive skills in their pre-school child.

Studies show that a child who is rejected by peers at an early age is at risk for anti-social behavior. They also show that at least one friend can help protect against aggression and rejection.

When a child starts kindergarten, he will be on his own as he tries to make friends. Having positive social skills will help. Kids like other kids who are kind and can share.

Prepare your child to make and keep good friends.

- **Talk about feelings – hers and others.** Use ***I*** statements to reflect your feelings. ***I*** *feel upset when … When you help your sister,* ***I*** *feel good*. Ask how your child feels.
- **Teach empathy.** Let your child see you help others in need. Deliver food or clothing, make get well cards, call someone who is sad. Discuss why someone cries or laughs.
- **Teach him to problem-solve trouble situations.** Did she misunderstand what happened? Maybe a friend stopped playing because he was tired. Observe your child at play. Does she display behaviors that others do not like? Use role plays to teach positive social skills and good behavior. Read the *Skilltime* booklet at www.parenthelpline.org.
- **Do not take rude or hurtful comments personally**. Preschoolers do not think about the power of words. Instead, calmly address this behavior. Do not allow your child to say hurtful words.
- **Be on the lookout for bullying behavior – from your child or against your child.** Whether a bully or a target of a bully, your child can learn positive skills to deal with these negative behaviors.
- **Monitor TV programs.** Many shows marketed for kids contain people and characters that display negative behaviors. Your child may imitate these behaviors.
- **Read aloud children's books about how to make and keep friends.** Search the Internet or go to www.parenthelpline.org – the books section.
- **Remain calm when your child is upset or out of control.** Ask how he feels. Help him put his feelings into words.

Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John's Children's Hospital

Parent Help Line

Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week
www.parenthelpline.org

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