

Coaching Your Child Toward Positive Peer Relationships

Promote the development of positive peer relationships skills

Let children know and practice how to express their thoughts and emotions in socially acceptable ways. Nurture social skills including anger management, fairness, and sensitivity. Encourage young people to take the perspective of others. Teach youth the importance of self-disclosure and responsive listening skills. Give opportunities for children to develop empathy. Discuss the differences between friendly teasing and hurtful teasing. Help youth develop the skills to resolve conflict and disagreements effectively. Set high standards for behavior at home. Children who know how to behave are more likely to make friends.

Help your child to develop social awareness

Know your child's conversational preference and utilize that for productive conversation. Ask questions about the laws of group life. Question assumptions about popularity. Highlight the differences between friendship and popularity. All children yearn for popularity, it is friendship that helps children survive and thrive. Talk about issues related to peer pressure and social media. Teach the difference between tattling and reporting. Listen to what they say without judgement.

Be clear about your role. Understand the impact of your childhood

Social cruelty among kids is one of the most difficult things that adults have to confront in raising or educating children. Examine your own feelings. Does the present conflict trigger off some of your own early experiences? Resolve your own history of teasing, being teased. Watch what you model.

You can't pick your child's friends but..

Help your child to find an ally and support them to be an ally for others. Encourage them to think carefully about their friends. Praise their good peer choices. Assist your child to find an area of competence. Steer your child toward similar and supportive friends.

Get the big picture

Know that all social interactions have many facets. Take your time to get perspective before intervening. Volunteer at lunch time, be present in hallways. Observe social interactions without your child's knowledge

Let your kids work things out as much as possible. Know when to intervene.

If best friends are quarreling, let them work it out themselves. If insults are involved, counsel the child on how to act. If children gang up on your child, call him names, or won't play with him spend more time talking to him about it, and talk to teachers. Make plans and try several solutions together. If your child is outnumbered, being scapegoated, or repeatedly subjected to cruelty, you must step in.

Resources:

Best Friends Worst Enemies by Michael Thompson
Jarvis Clutch Social Spy by Mel Levine and Jarvis Clutch
Getting to Calm by Laura Kastner and Jennifer Wyatt
Parent as Coach by Dana Haskins