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Specialists



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# OH, Behave!



## Building Friendship Skills in the Classroom

### Tip of the Month:

**Be intentional about embedding friendship skills throughout the day!**

Check out **page 2** of this article which gives great examples on how to make this possible!

Click [here!](#)

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Open our latest public resource, a growing library shelf of virtual binders that include archived issues of the HSB newsletter, *Oh Behave!*, a collection of Disaster Response Resources, and a binder of scripted stories for classroom use! Click [here.](#)

Strong social skills are an important part of everyday life and the earlier a child begins to learn these skills, the better. Early in their lives, the children in your classroom will develop friendships with other children of different cultures, lifestyles, and abilities. It's up to you to teach and model kindness and friendship.

**Empathy** is a key ingredient in positive friendships and relationships. It reduces conflict and misunderstandings and leads to helping behavior, kindness, and even greater success in life in general. Like any skill, empathy can be taught and developed in children.

Using concrete examples, modeling, social stories, and activities that provide instances of these social skills can be powerful in teaching these skills.

There are many ways to

embed friendship skills in your daily schedule. It is important for children to be able to recognize the qualities of a good friend. Young children need to learn how a good friend acts and behaves and what is the right and wrong way to treat a friend.

Facilitating friendships between children can occur throughout the day when you focus on the opportunities provided by the class schedule and class activities. Examples include:

**Circle Time** - Teachers can provide an opportunity for children to "pick a buddy" to dance with to music and movement. Children can also read books about friends and discuss what friendship skills are being displayed by the characters in the books.

**Small Group** - Teachers

can plan activities that provide small group opportunities for children to work together on a single project such as painting a classroom mailbox.

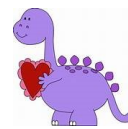
**Center Time** - Teachers can observe children facilitating conversations between one another. This communication can promote positive behaviors demonstrating friendship skills.

**Transitions** - Teachers can ask a child to select a friend to help "clean up" or "line up".

Friendship activities for preschoolers are important to their social growth as well as learning how to share and get along with others. Friendship activities for preschoolers are the building blocks of friendships and will strengthen the social skills the children will need throughout their lifetime.

**Classroom/group game on being a good friend:** Everybody sits in a circle and the first person starts out holding a ball of yarn. The first person rolls the ball of yarn to someone else and says something they like about that person or why they are a good friend. Then the next person goes, and so on. Pretty soon you end up with a web of yarn connecting everyone. As a rule, everyone had to be picked once so that nobody was excluded. Tip: Be ready with some suggestions for those kids who have a hard time thinking of a positive comment for their peer. It's very simple and a lot of fun, especially when you have to untangle yourself at the end. 😊





# Ask The Behavior Specialist!

In each issue you will find a new card to help you build your very own "Calming Choices" Card Set for your classroom.



When I am upset, I can...

## BUILD A TALL TOWER



For durability and repetitive use, print on cardstock paper and laminate.



**Question:** Throughout the school year, my co-teacher and I spend quite a bit of time teaching friendship skills. Some of these intentional activities are having two or more children work on a puzzle together, play a game of freeze tag outside, or having children buddy up to work on not only friendship, but other skills as well. Valentine's Day is right around the corner and even though we provide multiple opportunities for the kiddos to work on friendship skills intentionally, we were wondering if you could share a couple creative friendship activities that we could incorporate in our lesson plan. Thanks for all the help!

-Friendship Facilitator

**Answer:** Dear Friendship Facilitator ☺,

Intentional teaching of friendship skills is so important to children. The activity ideas that you shared are wonderful opportunities for children to work through the stages of learning friendship skills and to increase their ability to initiate play, problem solve, and work with others towards a common goal.

Two of my favorite friendship building activities are a Friendship/Kindness Chain and Friendship Treats. The Friendship/Kindness Chain is strips of paper that are cut out, decorated or wrote on by children or adults dictating acts of kindness or friendly interactions. Then the ends of the paper are glued or stapled together to make a ring. As more rings are made, they are connected together when sealing the ends of the strips of paper. The chain should be hung up around the classroom so that everyone can see! Check out this [Friendship Treats Activity](#) site.

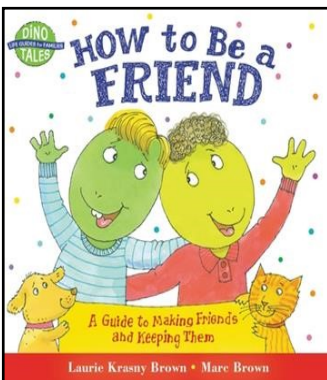
The Friendship Treats use rice crispies, the marshmallows of Lucky Charms cereal, and regular marshmallows. Teachers make a poster that visually describes a "Friendship Recipe". The recipe has a picture of each shape and what friendship characteristic it symbolizes. During either a large or small group, the teacher talks with children about the shapes and characteristics and lets the children give examples of each. Following these examples, the children have the opportunity to work together with a friend to make a "Friendship Treat" by adding what shapes they choose to a rice crispy treat. After cooking up this recipe, the friends are sure to enjoy the taste of friendship!

**Tip:** Some children may need a little encouragement to approach a new friend. Model appropriate ways to initiate friendships. A simple "Hello! Would you like to play?" is a great start. Once an invitation to play is offered, friendship seems to naturally begin!

Do you have a question you would like to see answered in our column? Feel free to email it to [AskTheBehaviorSpecialist@gmail.com](mailto:AskTheBehaviorSpecialist@gmail.com). We will keep your identity private. Your question is probably one someone else needs answering, so ask away! Your time is appreciated!



## Social/Emotional Book Nook



Designed primarily for children three to eight years of age, Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown help children learn how to show someone you would like to be a friend. Through fun, playful dinosaur characters, this book teaches young children all about friendship--the value of friends, how to make friends, and how to be a good friend, the best ways to be a friend and ways not to be a friend. The reviews are stellar on this book and it has been evaluated as a wonderful book for beginner friends!



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