

Building Friendships

Summary

These four activities will provide students opportunities to enhance friendships.

Main Core Tie

Social Studies - Kindergarten

[Standard 2 Objective 1](#)

Materials

- [Getting to Know You](#)
- *Twinkle Friends*
CD player
Friendship story
Open space
- *26 Big Things Small Hands Can Do*
Conflict/Resolution story
Puppets
- [Conflict Resolution Topics for Young Children](#)
Art paper
Art supplies

Additional Resources

Books

- *26 Big Things Small Hands Can Do*
, Coleen Paratore; ISBN 1575421666
- *I Need A Friend*
, Sherry Kafka, big book; ISBN 0153002840
- *My Friend and I*
, Lisa Jahn-Clough: soft cover ISBN 0618391088/ hard cover ISBN 0395935458
- *Hands Are Not For Hitting*
, Martine Agassi; ISBN 1575420775
- *We Can Get Along, A Child's Book of Choices*
, Lauren Murphy Payne; ISBN 1575420139
- *A Leader's Guide to We Can Get Along, A Child's Book of Choices*
, Lauren Murphy Payne; ISBN 15754201407
- *Alicia's Best Friend*
, Lisa Jahn-Clough; ISBN 0618239510
- *Friends*
, Helme Meine; ISBN 0590737929
- *Do You Want To Be My Friend?*
, Eric Carle; ISBN 0590223224
- *Wanted: Best Friend*
, A. M. Monson; ISBN 0439077176
- *Will I Have a Friend?*
, Miriam Cohen; ISBN 0-590466348
- *Me First*
, Lynn Munsinger; ISBN 0395587069

- *Creative Experiences for Young Children*
, Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld; ISBN 032500367X
- *We Can Work It Out, Conflict Resolution for Children*
, Barbara K. Pollan; ISBN1582460299
- *Share and Take Turns*
, Cheri J. Meiners; ISBN 1575421240
- *Know and Follow Rules*
, Cheri J. Meiners; ISBN 1575421305
- *Talk and Work It Out*
, Cheri J. Meiners; ISBN 1575421763
- *Be Polite and Kind*
, Cheri J. Meiners; ISBN 1575421518
- *Listen and Learn*
, Cheri J. Meiners; ISBN 1575421232
- *Join and Play*
, Cheri J. Meiners; ISBN 1575421526
- *Beginning Readers, Character Education: K-3 Best Friends*
, Sandi Hill; ISBN 1574713329
- *A Great Attitude*
, Sandi Hill; ISBN 1574713418
- *How Can I Help*
, Christine Hood; ISBN 1574711245
- *We Can share At School*
, Roanne Lanczak Williams; ISBN 1574711253
- *Dare To Have Courage*
, Regina G. Burch; ISBN 157471-824X
- *Be a Friend*
; Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718274
- *Sharing Is Caring*
, Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718320
- *Working Together*
; Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718312
- *Telling the Truth*
, Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718266
- *Show You Understand*
, Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718355
- *Everyone Is Special and Unique*
, Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718347
- *Never Give Up*
, Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718282
- *Following the Rules*
, Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718290
- *Would It Be Right?*
, Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718258
- *Think Before You Act*
, Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718339

- *You Can Count On Me*
, Regina G. Burch; ISBN 1574718

Articles

- *How Children Build Friendships*
, by Carla Poole, Susan Miller, Ellen Booth; *Early Childhood Today*, 10701214, Oct. 2003, Vol. 18, Issue 2

Media

Dr. Jean, (2003) *Kiss Your Brain* [CD] [Recorded by Mark J. Dye]. drjean@drjean.org.

Background for Teachers

Objective:

Describe factors that influence relationships with family and friends.

Since building peer relationships and creating a caring classroom community is an ongoing process requiring daily opportunities to enhance friendships, this activity is comprised of four 15-minute activities that can be done separately or in combination and can be repeated often throughout the school year. Activity #1, *Getting to Know You*, is especially effective at the beginning of the school year as the children are learning names and faces of class members. The other activities can be introduced anytime, taught in any order, and repeated throughout the year using a variation of original activity. Activity #2, *Circle of Friendship*, works well to enhance relationships because circles are so inclusive. People face each other, creating a feeling of belonging. There is no front or back and no first or last. Everyone belongs. Avoid competition and games where people are tagged or cast out. Activity #3, *Conflict/ Resolution*, can be done as often as time and interest dictate. Most children respond well to puppets so using them to lead a discussion can be effective depending on the instructor's comfort level. If possible, try to use puppets representing a variety of ethnicities. Vary the story and discussion questions to fit different social issues that arise in class. Activity #4, *Buddy Art*, works well as an extension following any friendship story or activity. Have children work in pairs to create a piece of art. This requires communicating, negotiating and compromising. Give children freedom to choose whatever materials and theme they want. Be sure to celebrate all and avoid criticism and competition.

Prior to Activity #1, send home the *Getting To Know You* page to be filled out at home and returned, or complete at school if necessary. Children should bring their paper back with a picture and questions answered. Give them a reasonable deadline. Preassessment or kindergarten orientation is a good time to send this paper home with child and parent, to be returned the first week of kindergarten. At the beginning of each day collect the completed papers to be read and shared later in class. After each student has shared his paper, place it in a binder using sheet protectors to create a class book. This book can be a favorite! Keep it accessible all year for the children to browse through. Children never seem to tire of reading about themselves and their new friends.

Intended Learning Outcomes

2. Develop social skills and ethical responsibility.
3. Demonstrate responsible emotional and cognitive behaviors

Instructional Procedures

Invitation to Learn

Have the children return their Get To Know You paper (or can be filled out at school). The questions should be answered and a picture of self glued in the box. Place in the front of the room near a special chair to be read at a later time. Tell them we are creating a special friendship book and they are the authors. Show the children the binder that their papers will go into. Express your enthusiasm to read about everyone.

Getting To Know You (Part 1)

Read a friendship story; e.g. *I Need a Friend*, by Sherry Kafka

Discuss that school is a great place to get to know new friends. Tell the students we are going to do a friendship song and activity to help us meet everyone in our class.

Begin with music "Twinkle Friends" from Dr. Jean's Kiss Your Brain CD. If no CD available you can sing it. As the music plays, or is sung, demonstrate the actions with one child during the first verse. Invite four children to join in for the second verse. By the third verse have everyone choose a friend and do the actions. Change partners each verse. The children will learn words quickly and may join in singing. Repeat as time and interest permits.

Words and actions for "Twinkle Friends", from Dr Jean's *Kiss Your Brain* CD (2003)

(Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star")

Twinkle, twinkle little star (Children face partner and gently touch and wiggle fingertips)

What a special friend you are.

From your head to your toes. (Touch head then toes) We are special friends you know. (Hold hands and circle around.)

Twinkle, twinkle little star. (Children touch fingertips)

What a special friend you are. (Give partner a hug)

Now go find another friend, (Change partners)

And we'll twinkle once again.

(Repeat verse)

Other transitions between verses:

Now, take a little hike

Find another friend you like.

Now we'll sing one more time.

Won't you be a friend of mine?

Gather the children on rug with special chair in front. Choose a few children, one at a time, to share their *Getting To Know You* paper. Invite a child to sit in the Author's chair and share her paper with the class. Use microphone if available to increase motivation and engagement for the author and the class. Even a pretend microphone such as a wooden spoon wrapped in foil will add to the experience. Ask child if there is anything else about herself that she would like to share with the class. Have class repeat her name, possibly clapping the syllables in the author's name. Invite another child to share. When finished show the children the book that the class is helping to write. Encourage those who haven't returned their paper to bring it soon. Reassure those who are anxiously waiting for their page to be read that everyone will get a turn to share.

Circle of Friendship (Part 2)

Gather in an open space large enough for students to form a big circle. Push back tables and chairs, if needed.

Begin with children gathered close together as *26 Big Things Small Hands Can Do*, by Colene Paratore is read and discussed. If no book available, then discuss all the good things hands can do. (wave, shake, clap, write, color & draw, work, help, sign, raise for a question, explore, feed, applaud, etc.)

Have class hold hands and form a circle. Explain this is our Friendship Circle. We are all an important part of the circle. We are all friends. It is fun to be in a circle with friends and use our hands to communicate love and friendship. Shake hands with the people next to you. Continue with positive circle activities such as the following:

- Clap your hands. We are all special friends. We can applaud each other when we like something we do. Good job!

- Shake the hands of your friends next to you.
- Give them a "High 5". How about a "High 10" using both hands?
- Wave to the friends across from you. Waving is saying with your hands, "hi," or "good bye," or "it's nice to see you."
- Everyone stand up and hold hands, forming one big circle. Let's walk (sideway-slide position) around our friendship circle. Keep holding hands. Start slow. Gradually speed up until class is sliding sideways around the circle. (Let go of hands to give more freedom of movement while sliding) Slow down to a walk. Stop and change direction. Repeat.
- Let go of each other's hands. Now hold your own hands by placing palms together and lacing your fingers through. Wiggle your fingers. This is a good thing to do when you need to keep your hands to yourself during story or instruction time. It helps keep your fingers to yourself when they want to wiggle and touch others.
- Have everyone hold hands again. Walk carefully into the center. See how small of a circle can be created. Remind children to watch their space so they don't bump into anyone. When the class is in a small circle use a whisper voice and comment on the fun of being close together, such as: "I can whisper and you can all hear me. I can see all your eyes and bright smiles. It feels snuggly." Now make the circle as BIG as possible. Keep students holding hands while expanding the circle. Wow! We can be so big when we work together. Repeat.
- Have the students sit down and blow a kiss with their hands. Sign the phrase, "I love you." When we love and care about each other we are good friends. Remind students to use their hands in nice, friendly ways. Emphasis that hands are not for hurting. They are for working, playing and showing love and kindness.

Getting Along: Conflict/Resolution (Part 3)

Read a story dealing with a peer related conflict and resolution; e.g. *My Friend and I*, by Lisa Jahn-Clough

Discuss questions, e.g. "What caused the bunny to break apart?" "How do you think that made the new friend feel?" "Have you ever had a problem sharing with a friend?" "Tell us about it." "What did you do about it?" "Raise your hand if you like to play by yourself sometimes." "Raise your hand if you like to play with others." "When do you like to play alone?" "When do you like to play with friends?" Give children time to think and respond.

Explain and discuss what "getting along" means. Suggestions for dialogue: "When we play with others it is important we get along." "What does it mean to get along?" Responses. "Yes, it means we are kind and helpful. We share and take turns. We are not mean. We do not hit or fight. Sometimes we try to get along but there are still problems. What was the problem in the story? How did the children fix the problem?"

Introduce a child-like puppet. Dialogue could go something like: "This is our friend Sammy. He wants to be a nice friend but he has trouble with hitting. He doesn't know how to control his hands. When he gets angry or doesn't get his way, he hits. Is that right Sammy?" Puppet nods yes (or the puppet can whisper his answers into your ear then you tell the children what he said.) Ask Sammy what makes him want to hit? Let puppet respond. (e.g. sad, scared, jealous, angry,) Sammy can then ask the children what makes them want to hit? Interact with puppet at your comfort level.

Ask the children to give Sammy some ideas on how to be more kind and not to hit. Guide the discussion to include that hitting is never right and then suggest alternative behaviors.

Suggested lead questions: "Have you ever been angry? What do you do when you are angry?" Include the fact that it is normal to feel anger but we need to learn how to respond appropriately to that anger. Positive responses at home might include: throwing a ball, playing a drum, holding

a pillow, or going outside to scream. What about at school? Close your mouth then take a deep breath and count to 10, move to a different spot, play with someone else, write or color, squish some clay, and tell someone you are upset and want to talk."

As time and interest permits continue with other "friend puppets" each with a different social problem. Lead children in a discussion to give the puppet some ideas. If needed, refer to the discussion cards for topics and questions regarding conflicts and resolutions. The puppets can revisit the class throughout the year as needed.

Buddy Art (Part 4)

Direct the children to create a piece of art in self selected partnerships. Give each pair one large piece of art paper. Provide a variety of materials to choose from. Allow freedom to create a wide variety of art. Use the puppets to visit and talk with the children as they work on their friendship art. Celebrate all the art when finished. Then display their "buddy art" on a friendship wall.

Additional Friendship Activities

Nice Notes: Everyone loves a hand written note. Write each name on a paper and place in a basket, box, or whatever container available. Children pick a name and create a letter or card for that person. Can use words, pictures, designs, and even scribbles for younger children. They all send a message of friendship. Provide a mailbox system for delivery such as boxes, cubbies, or classroom slots. Post "nice words" for the children to use as a reference while they write their own messages. Nice words might include: like, love, cute, happy, cool, awesome, fun, wonderful, friend, etc. February is a great time to do this as they make valentines, but anytime is fun. Repeat often.

Friendship Riddles: Children love guessing games and here is a fun, easy one. It reinforces the positive and helps create good feelings.

Examples "I'm thinking about a helpful girl who is wearing a pink sweater with a kitty on the front. She has beautiful long brown braids with ribbons. If you know who she is, say her name then stand and turn around 3 times."

"I'm thinking about a boy who is a very good reader. He has curly black hair and a big smile. If you know who he is, say his name and give him a thumbs up."

Call and Response Chants & Rounds : Traditional rounds, such as "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" create opportunities for children to listen, sing together, and feel their importance with the whole group. It's beautiful to hear the harmony of different parts sung at the same time. Call and response chants have proven to be traditional favorites in all cultures around the world.

Buddy Works: Have children create works of art in pairs. Let them choose their own materials and themes. Clay is a good medium to use in groups. Divide in 12 or 14 then work together to create a whole. They learn cooperation and friendliness as they enjoy the exciting process.

Friend Ship: As a group, create a boat. Can use any art form or make out of scrounged objects. Work together. Into the boat put images of all the children. Add art, stories, songs, poems the children create for their friends in the Friend Ship. Illustrate and display.

Family Place Mats: Give the children plain sheets of paper to design place mats for their family members. Include the person's name and any pictures or designs that person would enjoy. Teach about symbols and add a symbol that represents that special person. Laminate and send home as a gift.

Friends Play Together: Don't forget that children need many opportunities to work and play together in non-threatening, non-competitive situations.

Adapted from *Creative Experiences for Young Children* by Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld

Additional Circle Activities

Sit in a circle to listen to story or sing a song. Lead children in actions that support the words.

Improvisation is fun.

Create different emotions. Make a happy circle. Show with your faces and bodies what a happy circle would look like. Now make a sad circle. Continue with different emotions.

How many ways can we move our circle (hop, skip, slide, walk backward, turn inside out, slide, etc.)? Choose a leader to be in middle. Everyone follows actions/movements of the leader. Let everyone who wants to have a turn. Do not force the hesitant child.

Create a quiet circle, a giggling circle, a noisy circle, a clapping circle, a singing circle. Add whatever kind you and your children think of.

Make funny faces at the people around or across from you.

Roll a ball to each child and ask a question. After answering the child rolls the ball back. This would be a good review activity, e.g. literacy or numerical skills or it would be fun to ask personal, getting to know you questions, e.g. "What is your favorite color?"

Form a Dance Circle. Put on music and let children dance freely inside the circle. African, Native American, or Caribbean music work well, or choose your favorite sounds and rhythms. The children will vary their movement to fit the various music styles.

Make a 10 speed circle. Begin walking slowly then gradually speed up until you are in the fast mode. Then gradually slow back down.

Pretend your circle is a balloon. Start holding hands and stand close together. Slowly spread apart as if blowing up a balloon. Take deep breaths and exaggerate your breathing. When as large as possible you could either pretend the balloon "pops" and the children let go of hands then fall to ground or carefully bring the children back in close together as if the air has gone out of the balloon.

Pass around an imaginary shape. The shape can change with each person. Try to guess what shape each child is holding.

Circles work well for a show-and-tell pass around; or for science when you have an interesting object, such as sea shell, for each child to hold and touch.

Circle ideas are limitless!! Think of your own and have fun!

Adapted from *Creative Experiences for Young Children* by Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld

Extensions

Curriculum Extensions/Adaptations/ Integration

Plan further discussion topics and/or role playing scenarios and appropriate friendship stories for extending these activities. Be guided by the individuals in your class and their particular social concerns and problems. The advanced student will likely offer more insightful comments and think beyond the obvious. The learning delayed student may comment in more simplistic terms.

Both are acceptable and work appropriately together.

Content I-3 role playing, drawing, painting, make believe, singing

Language Arts VIII writing original dialogue for role playing, dramatization, and stories.

Family Connections

Get to Know You page can be a home connection.

Send home an [outline of simple body shape](#) to be colored, decorated with fabric, yarn, etc. to look like the child. Bring back to school and display on wall, lined up as if holding hands. Be sure each child is represented in the display.

Send home character education beginning readers as book check outs.

Ask the parents to keep you informed of concerns they have about their child's friends at school.

Act on those concerns and address the issues. This can be done informally as parents come and go from school, addressed during a parent teacher conference, or by a questionnaire sent home for parents to fill out.

Assessment Plan

Assessments for these activities are by observation and listening. Observe who easily makes friends and who has trouble choosing a partner. Watch for the child who is uncomfortable in group activities or has trouble sharing. Intervene and assist when necessary to assist children who are timid and

hesitant. Show them how to ask someone to be their partner. Allow the shy child to observe if chooses. Invite him/her to join in when ready. Don't force. Listen to individual comments during discussions. The children will guide and direct you concerning their interpersonal relationships.

Bibliography

Brown, W., Odom, S.L., Conroy, M.A. (2001) *An intervention hierarchy for promoting young children's peer interactions in natural environments. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* 21 930 162-175.

Researchers developed a hierarchy for promoting young children's peer relationships in the classroom. The foundation is a solid base of developmentally appropriate practices that promote children's engagement with materials and peers (meaningful learning centers, cooperative play) within an inclusive classroom. Teachers build on that with affective interventions (prompts, encouragements) to influence attitudes. Children who have difficulty with peer interactions benefit from additional friendship activities, incidental teaching of social behaviors, social integration activities, and--if necessary--explicit teaching of social skills.

Bredenkamp, S. & Copple, C., (eds). (1997) *Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Programs* (rev.ed.). Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. 116, 168.

In order to create a community of caring within the classroom, young children need daily opportunities to interact with their classmates. They are capable of cooperative play with peers and forming friendships; however, the development of social skills is not automatic. Teachers need to supervise, coach and prompt their students in order to maintain appropriate behaviors. Children do not learn to control aggression by being harshly punished or shamed but rather by learning alternatives to aggression for resolving conflicts. They need to communicate their needs and feelings verbally.

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