

Friends and Their Influence

A Discussion Guide for Parents and Kids



5 Discussion Points and Tips for Talking

As a parent, it's important that you do what you can to encourage your child's relationships with her friends to be positive ones. Use the tips below to talk with your child about the effect he and his friends have on each other.

Discussion Points

1. Talk with your child about her friends. Ask what she likes most about them, how they handle conflicts, and if they bring out the best in her.
2. Ask your child to think about why he has the friends he does. This can help your child see what type of friend is best for him.
3. Find out how your child influences her friends. Has she gotten her friends interested in new activities? In working harder at school? Explain how your child has the ability to influence her friends.
4. Point out how your child's friends also influence him. Talk about how your friends influenced you (both positively and negatively) when you were young.
5. Ask your child what she values in a friendship, and tell her what you value. You may find that your priorities in finding friends are very different.

Take It Further

ParentFurther discussion guides are created to help you talk with your kids about tough topics. Visit www.ParentFurther.com for more discussion guides and additional resources.

Tips for Talking

- **Pay attention to your reactions to your child's friends, and ask your child questions to help him make sense of his friendships. For example, if your child has a friend you dislike because that friend doesn't have any rules at home, say, "I notice your friend's family doesn't have many rules. What do you like about spending time at your friend's house?"**
- **Talk to your child about the friendships you've had—why certain ones have lasted a long time, why others didn't work out, and what you like about your friends.**
- **Some kids today have more diversity in their friend groups than their parents did when they were growing up. These kids are more open to differences, and they often talk about these differences. This can be stressful to a parent who feels that a friend may have more negative qualities than positive ones. Keep asking questions and work to understand what your child sees in his friends.**

No matter how old your kids are, keep talking to them about their friends and taking advantage of opportunities to encourage them to build positive relationships. These are lessons that will prove beneficial to your child throughout his entire life.