



Making Friends!

Children's Social-Emotional Development
California Kindergarten Association



All students need friends. The quality of children's friendships in early childhood predicts their later success in intellectual growth, self-esteem, mental health, and school performance.

You help your students develop socially and emotionally with choices you make in classroom environment, books you share, and projects children work on. Some schools host a before-school party in a near-by park so everyone gets acquainted (plus it helps the parent-teacher group raise money through food sales)!

This Curricular Focus is on Social-Emotional Development: Making Friends. It is chock-full of ideas to help you help your students to become more socially adept and experience personal success and fulfillment. There are:

- research articles
- lesson plans and activities linked to Preschool Foundations and Common Core Standards
- interventions for children with special needs
- children's and professional books and videos on making friends
- letter to parents about the importance of having friends and being a friend
- and so much more!

Following this eBLAST will be a new Curricular Focus on Social-Emotional Development: Anti-Bullying.

Developmentally Appropriate Guiding Principal #7: *Children develop best when they have secure, consistent relationships with responsive adults and opportunities for positive*

relationships with peers.

The quality of children's friendships in early childhood predicts their later success in intellectual growth, self-esteem, mental health, and school performance

(W.M. Bukowski & L.K Sippola, 1996).

Developmental Stages – [Click here](#) for a chart on children's stages of play – it develops gradually as children play with friends and classmates.

Research

- [What is Social Competence?](#) – In North American society, a high level of social competence generally means that a person exhibits responsible, independent, friendly, cooperative, purposeful, and self-controlled behavior (Knopczyk & Rodes, 1996).
- [Early years matter.](#) – Children with secure attachments by 12 months of age are more compliant with adults as toddlers, get in fewer fights as preschoolers and grade-schoolers, and undergo greater intellectual development in the early years.
- [Friendships are important.](#) – Preschool-aged friends are more skilled, competent, and deal with conflict better when dealing with a friend than a non-friend. This does not mean children should only interact with friends.
- [Some children have difficulty making friends.](#) Children with disabilities tend to have fewer friendships than others in their early care and education programs. Ideas to help deal with this are shown below.
- [Cultural appropriateness is important.](#) Social behaviors have different meanings in different social groups and cultures.
- [“Reading, Writing, Talking, Thinking, and Caring in the Kindergarten Classroom”](#) by J. Shefelbine, C. Litman, & M. Wilson

[Lesson Plans and Activities](#) – Some may think it takes too much time to include social-emotional activities. CKA holds that teachers cannot afford to **not** do so. Including opportunities to make friends can be part of the academic curriculum, especially in choices of books read to and by children. Choices that teachers make for room arrangements and scheduling time can also affect children's opportunities to make friends. See Resources for more information.

Resources

- **Foundations** – The California Department of Education (CDE) issued the [Preschool Learning Foundations, Vol. 1](#) that includes social-emotional development.
- [Preschool Curriculum Framework, Vol. 1](#) – CDE issued guiding principles and information social-emotional development.
- [Transitional Kindergarten Social Emotional Standards](#) – developed by Elk Grove USD.
- [Roles that Teachers Play to Help Children Make Friends](#)
- [High/Scope Resource: Supporting Social and Emotional Development](#)

- [Getting Off to a Good Start in Child Care](#)
- [Friend-Making Interventions for Children with Special Needs](#)
- [Literature Sharing](#)
- [Letter to Families](#)
- [Print & Media Resources](#)
- [Books & Technology for Children](#)

Videos

- Emotional intelligence must be developed in children before any other learning can effectively take place. This Edutopia video shows children of various ages and what educators are trying to do with social-emotional education. It is found at <http://www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning-introduction-video>.
- Music and Social-Emotional Development – What happens in your brain when you hear music and how does that affect you socially and emotionally? Go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIPWy8-15z0> for the YouTube video.
- See how a mom helped her child make friends in kindergarten at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXFZtxh5JSL>.



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