

**September/October
2014**

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Encouraging Healthy Friendships

Friendships are an important part of childhood. For some children, the ability to make and keep positive friendships comes naturally. For others, they may need some guidance to develop self-confidence and social skills.

There are many approaches that parents can take in order to assist their children in having healthy friendships. Research suggests that getting children involved in extracurricular activities provides them with many opportunities to build relationships with others outside their daily school setting.

Other helpful suggestions for children to gain healthy friendships are:

- Encourage individuality;
- Teach children what being a friend really means;
- Teach your child to have confidence in themselves;
- Respect themselves so that they can in turn respect others;
- Help children understand that they are not going to



always get along with everyone, but the most important part is to respect them as an individual.

Parents can assist their children in encouraging healthy friendships by opening your home to your child's friends. This will allow for the ability to redirect when issues arise during the play time.

Parents should have open communications with their children on a regular basis. Asking children questions about daily school activities and classmates can help parents have an understanding on what types of relationships their children are having with others.

Children learn by example and parents should show their children how to be a friend by the relationships they keep in their own adult lives.

Children may experience good and bad friendships. The best way parents can help their children be successful is by teaching them cooperation, communication, empathy, emotional control and responsibility. Childhood friendships are important part of a child's growth and development. Friends can enrich their lives and increase self-esteem and help them feel a sense of belonging in the world.

Helpful Tips

- ✦ Ask questions daily about school.
- ✦ Sit down together as family for dinner
- ✦ Invite your child's friends over to view relationships first hand.

Helpful Links

- ✦ <http://www.centergr.ove.k12.in.us/Page/5442>
- ✦ <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/family-health-12/child-make-friends>
- ✦ <http://bullying.about.com/od/Friendship/a/Prevent-Bullying-By-Helping-Kids-Develop-Friendships.htm>
- ✦ <http://familyshare.com/teach-your-children-how-to-have-good-friends>