

# Counseling Corner

## Whiteford Elementary School



## Healthy Friendships

### How you can support your child's positive friendships at home



Healthy and positive friendships play a vital role in children's emotional development. Friendships can help build a child's empathy, confidence, sense of belonging, and overall well-being. However, getting caught in negative or unhealthy friendships can lead to feelings of isolation, rejection, and loneliness and can also lead to low self-esteem.

The way we approach and discuss friendships with our children sets the tone. After all, our children are always watching and listening, and they learn from experience and exposure. As children grow, their ability to make and build friendships grows, too. They learn what they want and don't want in a friendship, but it can be challenging for them to remove themselves from unhealthy friendships that once started as a positive friendship. Our children can learn from us in so many ways. Continue reading to learn how!

### 1 Strong Relationship Skills

Having strong relationships skills begins at home. Some of these skills include empathy, cooperation, knowing when to apologize and forgive, curiosity, and regulating emotions. These skills are important for making and keeping friends, and the children who have and practice these skills regularly often have happier and more supportive long-term friendships.



### 2 Model Healthy Friendships

Whether or not your child shares their friendship struggles, it is still important to model appropriate and healthy relationships as an adult. Model what a healthy conversation looks like, and ask questions and be curious about others.

### 3 Open Communication

Consistently talking with your child about their day (including their social interactions) not only shows your interest, but it is also a great learning opportunity to understand how they are feeling about their relationships with others. You can have a better understanding of what they think about the people they surround themselves with, which in turn gives you a chance to support your child if they express any negative or unhealthy friendship patterns they are experiencing. It is important to be kind, open, and non-judgmental while offering advice or support.

To learn more about these skills, read relevant articles, or watch a video on how parents and caregivers can support their child's friendships, visit the Resources section in my Schoology group!

