



## CONTENT

1

FRIENDSHIPS AND OUR  
KIDS

# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY, 2019

## FRIENDSHIPS AND OUR KIDS

What is the importance of a friend in your life? Can you imagine a life without your best friend? I most definitely can't! It may be surprising, but take a minute to think about it. How much do you rely on your friend for social and emotional support? It is your friend who you can share all your fears, successes and secrets with. It is your friend who motivates you, pushes you forward, and helps you to keep going. A friend can aid you in ways that can't be iterated. There you go! That's how important a friend is in your life! Now, think about how you established this bond with your friend. When was the first time you met that person. Was it way back in school, or in college, it could have been at a party or even at work. When and where did you make this bond?

Emotional connections and bonds are something we learn to develop very early on in life. As babies, we innately respond with a huge social smile or by laughing out loud, to a significant adult's voice or smile. As we grow older our responses and actions change. As toddlers we use simple greetings towards our peers, while as preschoolers striking a friendship may involve us exchanging various ideas and words. On the other hand as teenagers, adolescents and adults most often it is long conversation that marks the beginning of a solid friendships.

But, what is that one thing that helped you'll connect with your friend? What led to the development of your bond in friendship? Like I said earlier, sometimes connections can be made just through simple gestures and facial expressions. At other times expressive words and back-forth conversations are required. To make a friend, the first thing you need to do is put yourself out there; this ability is called Social participation. Being in a social setting gives



you the opportunity to use your skills to initiate and make that friend. But, sustaining this friendship is altogether a different game.

Let's backtrack a little and think about all the basic skills that we need to lay down the foundation of a long lasting friendship. Efficient social participation demands, understanding and practicing various social skills such as:

- Understanding facial expressions, body language and gestures,
- Conversation making,
- Managing emotions,

- Responding to the feelings of others,
- Negotiating, cooperating and problem solving.

These skills come to us almost automatically; we learn them independently through trial and error with life experiences. We may have probably failed a couple of times early on, but we learned from our mistakes, made amends and hence made those reliable friends.

But, these skills don't come as easy to most of our children. It is difficult for them to make those important long lasting bonds on their own. Although, this doesn't mean that they can't. All they need is a guided channelized way wherein we can teach them these skills. As parents and professionals analyze - What are your child's strengths and weakness? Where is your child at? Which are the social skills that need to be broken down and taught to your child?

Work with your Occupational therapists to find answers for all of these questions. Encourage your child to put himself/herself out there more often, but in the beginning ensure that he/she is in a supportive environment with controlled opportunities. Building on them slightly and gradually as your child progresses is crucial, to avoid overwhelming your child.

But, it is extremely important for us to provide our children with the resourceful skills that they require to make friends, as early on in life as possible. This will impact their life in many ways. It is their friends who will give them the emotional security, confidence and boost their self esteem, while leading to their overall social and emotional skills development required for effective learning.

If you are interested to know more about the same come join us for a workshop that we will be conducting in March, at the center, which will help walk you through the process of building social communication and conversation skills to help your child bridge their bonds.



*“It is extremely important for us to provide our children with the resourceful skills that they require to make friends, as early on in life as possible.”*



For any question or concerns regarding the newsletter please write to us on: [reachtherapycenterforchildren@gmail.com](mailto:reachtherapycenterforchildren@gmail.com)

- Simoni Parikh  
Occupational therapist  
Reach Therapy Center for Children

Special thank you to Onissia Rebello, Occupational therapist, for her ideas, inputs and proof reading.