

Friendship Skills – Recognizing Children’s Friendship Skills

Summary

What is Recognizing Children’s Friendship Skills, anyway?

- The encouragement and acknowledgment of children’s social skills as they learn to initiate, join in, and maintain positive interactions with their peers.

What’s the Point?

- Supports and nurtures children’s disposition of participation and promotes positive peer interactions.
- Positive feedback and encouragement increase children’s likelihood to engage in friendship behaviours with their peers.
- Positive feedback builds confidence and independence.
- Encourages citizenship when educators notice and name children’s efforts to express their play ideas and listen to others

How Do I Do This?

- Notice and name children's efforts to gain peers' attention and to initiate or join in play.
- Observe and comment on children working and playing together to support them to maintain and expand on their play.
- Provide positive descriptive feedback when children engage in friendship behaviours (e.g., sharing a toy or helping a friend zip up their jacket).
- Support children to have reflective conversations about their friendship skills (e.g., ask open ended questions and allow children to talk and share their thoughts and ideas).
- Ask families about how their child likes to be recognized and acknowledged at home.

How Will the Children Participate in This Practice?

- Children can offer each other compliments and kind words.
- Children can acknowledge peers use of friendship skills.
- Provide examples of peer use of friendship skills for educators to document

Checklist

Task	Complete?
Educators observe children's interactions and note their efforts to use friendship behaviours (e.g., gain a peer's attention, initiate play, use kind words, or offer help)	
Educator discusses their observations of children's friendship skills during group time. "I saw children pulling each other in wagons outside today, what a fun way to share a toy!"	
During story time, educators invite children to reflect on the story and brainstorm ideas around friendship skills, "How else can we help?"	
Educators give real life examples during story time of friendship skills they have seen. "Today I saw Jamie invite Adam to play in the blocks, just like Peppa Pig asked a new friend to play with her in our story today."	
Educators provide positive descriptive feedback to children exhibiting friendly behaviors in the moment (That was kind of you to pass the milk to Adam).	
Educator supports children to reflect on their interactions with their peers by asking open ended questions and allowing children to do most of the talking.	
Educators document and share stories that acknowledge children's efforts.	
Educators work with families as needed to support and recognize children's friendship skills at home.	

When you support children's social learning opportunities by facilitating each child's efforts to observe, share ideas, be heard, solve problems, and participate, you support their participation in play and learning.

Makovichuk, Hewes, Lirette & Thomas, 2014, p. 128

Flight: Alberta's early learning and care framework.

Retrieved from www.flightframework.ca

