



Helping Your Child Get Along with Others

Helping your child get along with others, make friends, behave in a positive way, express her thoughts and feelings, and handle her emotions will go a long way toward helping her succeed in school and throughout her life. As a parent, every day you can do simple things that will help your child relate well to others, learn self-control, feel good about herself, and be eager to learn to do new things.

BUILD TRUST

- Teach your baby that you will be there when she needs you. This will help her to trust her world and form relationships. Touch, hold and cuddle her often. Respond to her cries. Feed her when she is hungry. Pick her up when she needs to be held.
- Talk to your baby in a soothing voice. Sing, laugh and play with your baby. Tickle her if she likes it. Respond to her reactions. Repeat the things that make her smile and laugh.

TALK TO AND LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD

- Speak in a calm even voice. Listen to your child and let her know you care. Say please and thank you. Show her that you respect her. This will help her learn to respect others.
- Include your toddler in family conversations, such as at meals. This helps her learn to talk and to listen, and to take turns.
- Teach your child to use words instead of acting out. If she's screaming or whining, calmly say, "Use your speaking voice."

MEET NEW PEOPLE AND GO NEW PLACES

- Take your baby with you on errands (a trip to the store or to the post office) so she can learn to be around new sights, sounds and a variety of people.
- Allow family and friends to enjoy your baby. Their positive reactions will make her feel good about herself, and she will learn to trust others.
- Give your child chances to play safely with other children. Have rules for treating others with respect and kindness. As long as no one is getting hurt, allow children to work out their conflicts.

HELP YOUR CHILD BE INDEPENDENT

- Help her to learn to do new things and to take care of herself: Let her put on or take off some of her clothes, wash her hands, pick up toys off the floor, or do other things she can safely handle.
- Give your child a choice between two things whenever you can so she feels she has some control. For example, instead of saying, "It's time to stop playing and have your snack," you could say, "You can keep playing with your toy, or you can have a snack. Which one would you like to do?"

HAVE RULES

- Choose your battles—have a few rules about staying safe, being kind, and taking care of things. Be clear about your rules—remind your child what she can and cannot do in advance. Don't change the rules on your child.
- Be clear about how you expect her to behave—holding an adult's hand when crossing the street and looking both ways, not talking to strangers, taking proper care of toys, and sharing things.
- Praise your child throughout the day when she does something well.

SHOW SELF-CONTROL

- If you feel yourself getting mad or "losing it," close your eyes and count to ten before saying anything, take deep breaths, or go into another room and sit down if your child will be safe on her own for a few minutes. If possible, ask a friend or neighbor to watch your child so you can take a break.