

Teach Your Toddler to Get Along with Others

Success and happiness depend on one's ability to form positive relationships with others. Making and keeping friends brings joy. Friends provide support and keep your child from getting lonely. Children are not born with the positive skills needed to make friends and get along with others. *They learn these traits from their parents, caregivers, other adults, and peers.*

Toddlers need to learn how to make friends. Parents teach their toddler through their own words and actions.

Teach your child to be loving and respectful to others.



- **Take care of daily needs.** Provide meals, clean clothes, bath time, and a regular bedtime. These routines will help your toddler feel secure and develop trust.
- **Discipline according to your child's needs.** All children are different. One parenting style may not work for every child. Being in tune to your child's needs will show her respect.
- **Be patient.** If you are impatient and show frustration and anger, your toddler will react with the same negative behavior. If your toddler gets frustrated, calmly help him find an answer to his problem.
- **Teach your child to appreciate the kindness of others.** Be thankful for what others do for you and your family. Say thank you. Remind your toddler to say thank you.
- **Help your child to be aware of how others feel.** Use words like, "I bet that really hurt when Sara kicked Joe." If you see someone crying or hurt, teach your child to help. For example, say to your toddler, "Let's see if we can make Mike feel better." Toddlers *can remember* being hurt or sad.
- **Teach your toddler how to forgive and ask others to forgive her.** She needs to learn to say, "I'm sorry." Children must learn to be responsible for their actions. They can learn at an early age that people make mistakes. Mistakes are OK, but we all need to learn to not make the same mistake too often.
- **Notice his new skills when he learns his ABC's, colors a picture, or tries to tie his shoes.** Use positive words like "Good job" or "I am so proud of how hard you have worked."
- **Give your toddler chores that he can handle and complete.** Picking up all the toys in a toddler's bedroom is too much. However, she could put her books in a stack while you pick up her other toys. When you are both done, praise her on a job well done.
- **Help your toddler learn to help himself.** Teach him to dress and tie his shoes. Give him positive words as he learns. As your child gets older, teach him to do more for himself.

Children *like* other children who say nice words and play without hitting. They *do not like* children who are mean. If your child does not treat others with care and respect, he will have trouble making and keeping friends.

Adults often lose patience with children who are mean and rude. As parents, you want others to like your child. Your child wants others to like her and spend time with her.

It will take time and patience to teach your child to treat others in a loving, respectful way. If you love your child, you will work with him *every day* to give him the skills to make and keep friends.

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital
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