Making & Keeping Friends

By Stephanie Garner
Agenda

- What is friendship?
- Play skills
- Assess Social Skills needs
- Teaching ideas
- Power of Play Dates
- References and resources
What is friendship?

+ Friends are important for all seasons of life.
  + Support each other emotionally
  + Are willing to see things from the other's point of view
  + Provide assistance and feedback when needed
  + Provide companionship for community and school activities
  + Help each other enjoy new experiences and appreciate life more fully.
  + Friends choose each other
Opportunity and Support

Opportunity

- Access to peers of differing abilities/greatest amount of inclusion
- Opportunities for peers to interact without the role of “helper” or “tutor”
- School activities, interest groups, play dates, church, challenger sports
Opportunities

+ [http://projectsunshinetamu.weebly.com/](http://projectsunshinetamu.weebly.com/) (Project Sunshine)
+ [http://arrowmoon.shac.org/units](http://arrowmoon.shac.org/units) (Boy Scouts)
+ [https://www.bcsgirls scouts.org/](https://www.bcsgirls scouts.org/) (Girl Scouts)
+ [http://www.centralbcs.org/ministries/special-needs/special-needs-ministries/](http://www.centralbcs.org/ministries/special-needs/special-needs-ministries/) (Central Baptist Church)
+ Friends Congregational Church, Grace Bible Church
+ [http://bvcil.org/](http://bvcil.org/) (Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living)
Support

+ Work toward greatest amount of inclusion and physical access
+ Teach the skills needed to both groups (more on that later)
+ Notice who your child is drawn to or enjoys and vice versa
+ Ask teachers and care providers
What are the skills?

Play Skills (checklist)

+ Imitation: needed at all levels
+ Joint attention
+ Communication
+ Social focus
+ Shifting focus
Social Skills

- **Entry Skills**: starting play, joining a group, welcoming others, making polite requests
- **Reciprocity and Sharing**: turns in play, conversation, play ideas and resources
- **Avoiding and Ending**: The appropriate behavior and comments to “maintain solitude” (I want to play alone) or end the interaction.
- **Personal Space**
- **Solving social problems**: compromise, turn taking instead of acting out with aggressive or emotional meltdown, being a good sport
Social Skills

+ **Assistance**: giving and seeking, leaving an uncomfortable situation and/or getting adult help

+ **Compliments**: giving compliments and responding to a friend's compliment

+ **Criticism**: Knowing what is appropriate, when to criticize and how to accept criticism

+ **Accepting Suggestions**: incorporating the ideas of others into the activity.

Monitoring and Listening:
- Regularly observing the other person to monitor interest in the activity by their contribution to the activity and body language.
- Be aware of how their own body language communicates interest to the other person.
- Working out what other people are thinking and feeling,
- Understanding facial expressions and body language, Be able to recognize when a playmate is unfair, bossy or aggressive

Flexibility: able to adjust to new social situations, shift focus to new activity

Empathy: responding appropriately to person’s circumstances and the positive and negative feelings of others
Teach Skills

+ Understanding friendship
  + Clear definitions

+ Role plays-adults and safe kids
  + Scripts
  + Switch roles

+ Social stories
  (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlIYYbVIPc)

+ Modeling-living out loud

+ Practice! Play dates
Safe friends do this....

- touch gently
- stop when friend says, "stop"
- smile at others
- work next to others
- take turns

- work so I have time to play
- use nice words & voice
- share toys
- keep hands and feet to self
- clap for others

Not safe friends do this...

- bite
- kick toys
- take from others
- hit others
- yell at others
- kick others
- run away from others
- tell others to go away!
- grab others
- pinch
Close Enough!

Personal Space

Personal Space Story
Me: “Do want to play?”
Friend: “Yes”

Me: “What do you want to do? I want to play monopoly. Do you like monopoly?”
Friend “Yes.”

Me: “Okay. I’ll go get it for us.”

Me: “Do you want to play?”
Friend: “No”

Me: “Okay. Maybe another time.” (walk away)
Me: “Do you want to play?”
Friend: “I can’t. My mom’s not home.”
Me: “Okay. When she comes home, maybe you can come over.”
Friend: “Maybe”
Me: “Okay. I hope you can come over. See you later!”
Me: “Do you want to play?”

Friend: “Sure.”

Me: “Do you want to play Monopoly?”

Friend: “I don’t like Monopoly”

Me: “Okay. Do you like Uno?”

Friend: “It’s okay. Do you have Battleship?”

Me: “Yes. I’ll get it.”
Script-Friend pushes you

Me: “Stop! I don’t like it when you push me.”

Other kid: “Move. You are in the way.”

Me: “I’m moving. Next time you can just ask me to move.”

Other kid: “Whatever.”

Me: walk away and play something else or go home

Me: “Stop! I don’t like it when you push me.”

Other kid: “Sorry! I didn’t mean to push you.”

Me: “Okay.” (keep playing)
Play Dates

- Play dates
  - Other parents and reciprocation
  - Play dates at a friend’s house
  - Educating about your child
Play Dates

- Fun, special activities, special treats (reinforce trying this new thing with your child)

- Activities that demand cooperation and communication: wooden blocks, creating with Legos, playing with cars on a track or outside in the dirt, making things with play-dough, fun board games.
Play dates are electronic free for younger ones (don’t break the ice, pop-up pirate, don’t spill the beans, monopoly, blokus, clue, checkers)

For olders, try half and half

Parallel play is okay. They may need a break from intense social interaction. Intervene if not back together after 15 minutes
Other considerations

+ Interest groups
+ Think about long term success - takes time
+ Talk to social skills teacher - what are they learning, tools using
  + Things to remember....
  + *it takes practice and trial and error over time
  + *skills aren’t mastered overnight, even if they seem easy to us
  + *allow failure and be there to encourage and reteach
  + *not everyone is meant to be your child’s friend
  +
References and Resources

+ [www.facetsbcs.org](http://www.facetsbcs.org)
References and Resources

+ http://m.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/disabilities_play_and_friendship.html
+ https://www.recreationtherapy.com/articles/lutfiyya.htm
+ https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/the-development-of-play-skills-from-birth-to-3
Coming up....

Next Purposeful Life
October 4th

Parenting on the Spectrum
Sept. 18th 6:30-7:30 PM