



Supporting Social Growth in the School Years

Making friends is an important part of childhood, especially during the early school years. While some children form friendships easily, others may need extra encouragement as they learn to navigate social situations. Positive friendships do more than provide playmates—they help children build confidence, develop empathy, strengthen communication skills and reduce feelings of loneliness. Active play with friends also supports physical and emotional well-being, creating a strong foundation for healthy relationships throughout life.

How Parents Can Encourage Healthy Friendships

Parents play an important role in helping friendships grow. Creating opportunities for children to connect with peers through playdates, extracurricular activities or community events can help them build meaningful relationships. Paying attention to your child's comfort level during social interactions and encouraging activities that match their interests can also make socializing feel more natural. When challenges arise, listening with empathy and helping your child identify their feelings and problem-solve together teaches valuable social and emotional skills.

Friendship Is a Lifelong Skill

The lessons children learn through friendship extend far beyond childhood. Early social experiences help develop resilience, kindness and emotional awareness while teaching children how to communicate, cooperate and resolve conflicts. By providing encouragement, modeling healthy relationships and creating a supportive home environment, parents can help children build the confidence and connection they need to thrive in school, future relationships and throughout adulthood. Even small moments of encouragement today can help your child develop the social confidence and relationship skills that will benefit them for years to come.

TELUS Health provides referrals to qualified mental health professionals that can help. Call TELUS Health at **800-245-1150** to speak to your designated Care Coordinator about your benefits and options for support.