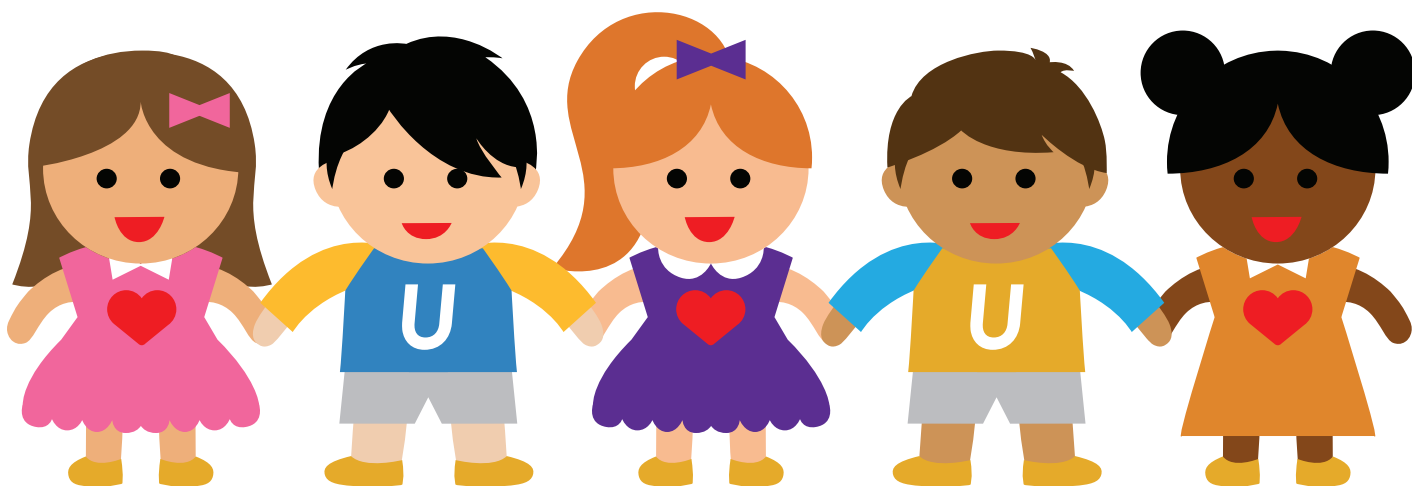


How do I help my child build friendships?



Making and maintaining friendships are critical to a child's social and emotional development. Developing healthy friendships early on can help children maintain positive influences and friendships throughout their lives.

Making the connection

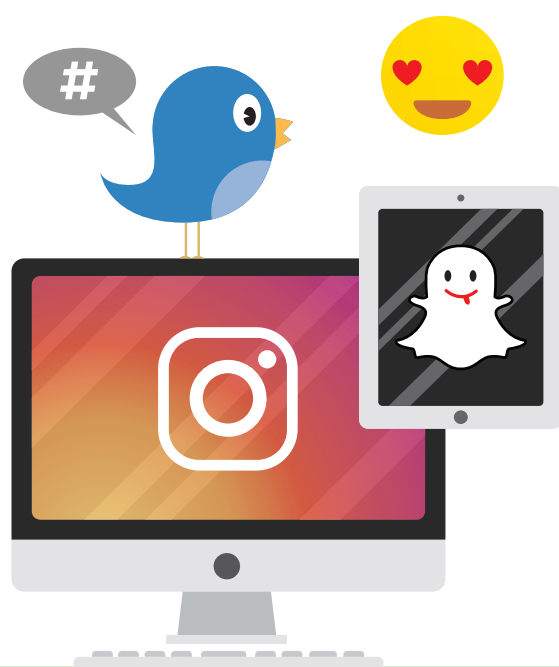
In elementary school, children begin selectively choosing their friends. Parents can encourage this process by asking about their child's playmates at school, networking with other parents and arranging one-on-one play dates.

Quality over quantity

Don't worry if your child doesn't have a long list of friends. Having just a few close friends is enough to help a child feel less lonely, isolated and dependent.

When to step in

If your child starts mimicking another child's offensive behavior, you should explain your concerns to your child and steer them away from that person before the friendship is formed.



How about social media?

Social media is a great way to maintain and enhance friendships by allowing children to build social networks and keep in touch with each other. Parents should set limits on social media use, however, as it does interfere with face-to-face interaction and can lead to cyber bullying.

Be involved



If you are concerned about your child's ability to connect with peers, reach out to his or her teacher to find out more about your child's day-to-day interactions.

Some children may also benefit from attending friendship classes with a parent to help them learn social skills and set personal goals for making friends.