

RELATIONSHIP builders

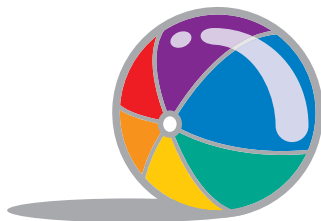


Great Job!

Catch your child doing something good and find a way to let him know you are proud of him! For example, you can have a special “great job!” plate that you only use on special occasions. Serve your child lunch or dinner on this special plate when he has done something to celebrate. Or keep special stickers that you put on him when he has done a good job at something. For example, if your son is playing very gently with the baby, say, **You are doing a great job playing gently with the baby. You get the “great job” plate for dinner tonight! Or I’m going to give you a “great job” sticker now!** Make sure you tell him what he did that was good – whether it is sharing, being kind, picking up the toys or writing his name.

Challenge: Let your child be the person who “catches” others doing a great job. Teach him how to tell others he appreciates things like their kindness, friendship, or skills.

Rewarding your child’s good behavior, or celebrating when he does a good job, helps your child learn about positive actions, and builds his confidence in his skills.



Use Your Words

There will be times when your child is frustrated or angry about something and hits or kicks to get attention. She must learn this is not okay. Tell your child not to hit, kick, or bite and ask her to “use her words.” Give her examples of how to talk about her feelings or what she wants. For example, **Katie, it is not okay to hit. You need to use your words instead. Are you angry? Say, “I’m angry.” Why are you angry, because you wanted that toy? Say, I want that toy and she took it away from me.** Talk together with your child and help her come to a solution (taking turns, finding a different toy).

Challenge: It may take several times for your child to understand that she needs to use her words, but you can show her by your example, and show her that she can find another solution by using words. When you see her using her words without a reminder from you, tell her how proud you are of her and think of a special way to encourage this good behavior.

Your child is learning how to get along with others and to use words that are okay instead of actions that are not.



Thank You!

The next time your child receives a gift from a friend or family member, help him make and send a thank you note. He can color a folded piece of paper to make a card. You can write his words on the inside or he can. Remind him to say **Thank You** and encourage him to tell the giver something he likes about the gift. Show him how you address the letter and let him put on the stamp.

Challenge: Have your child draw a picture of himself with the gift on the front of the card.

Your child is learning to say "Thank You" when someone does something nice for him.

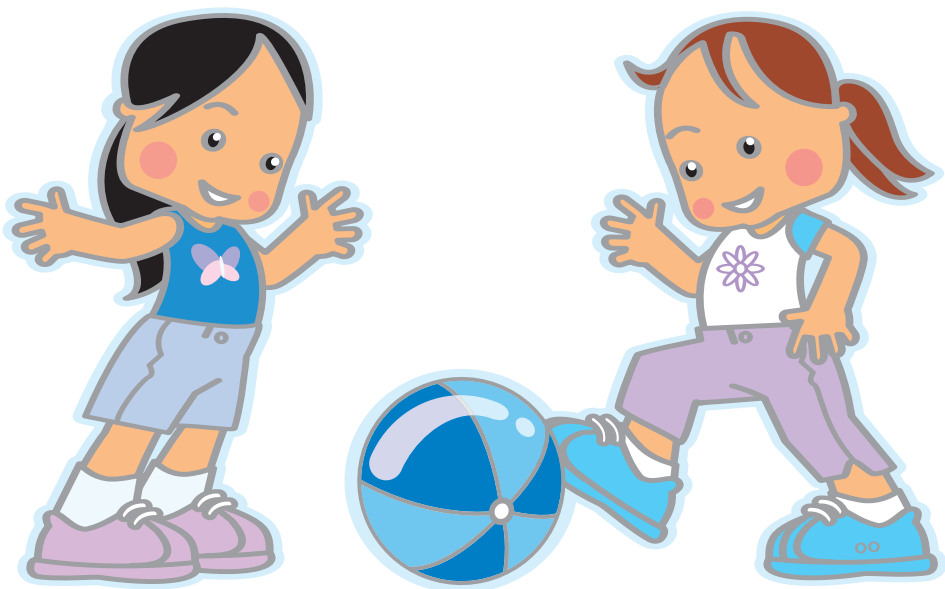


Play Date

Set a regular time each week or month for a “play date” between your child and one of her friends. Having a regular time to play will help to strengthen their friendship. Your child will begin to look forward to the regular meeting time!

Challenge: Have your child plan a game or activity for the play date.

Your child is learning to count on seeing a friend. She is learning to make plans to maintain her friendship, but may still need help getting along.



Hello?

The telephone and Internet are great ways to keep in touch with friends and family members. Encourage your child to share about the events in her life using these tools. You can say something like, **Would you like to call Grandma and tell her all about your day at the park? I know she would love to hear about it!** Have your child help you dial the phone number, say her name, and ask, **Is Grandma there?** Many people also have Internet access and an email address. You can type the words that your child wants to say. It is a great way to keep in touch!

Challenge: Set up a weekly or monthly time to make a call to a close friend or family member. Help your child keep a list of things to talk about.

Your child is learning the social skills of conversation, including listening, sharing information, and asking and answering questions.



A Memory Game

Take a kitchen tray or box lid that will hold several items in plain view. Find five toys or objects that your child is familiar with. For example, put onto the tray a crayon, keys, an apple, a toy car and a spoon. Show your child all of the toys, and tell her you are going to take one item away while she is not looking and have her guess which one you took away. Let her look at all of the toys on the tray for a minute. Then have her cover her eyes or look away while you remove one item. Hide the item behind your back and let her look at the tray again. See if she can guess which item you took away. You can make this game harder by starting with more items. Let your child put several items on the tray and play the game with you guessing which item she removed.

Challenge: Take away more than one item for your child to guess! See if she can remember two or three missing items at a time.

Your child is learning social skills when she learns to play a game with you, following rules and taking turns. When she guesses the right item that you took away, it builds her self-confidence.





Watch and Learn

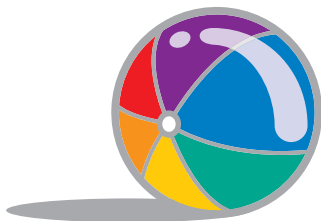
Remember that your child is learning about relationships by watching you interact with others. Try to model healthy behaviors when he is around you. Express the way you are feeling, even when you are upset. For example, you can say something like:

I am very angry that Bob is late. Even though I'm angry, he is still my friend. I am going to ask him to try and be on time next time.

If you are having trouble getting along with a member of your family, and can't seem to work it out, consider visiting a professional counselor for some ideas. For more information on free or low-cost services, you can call Info Link Orange County at 888-600-4357.

Challenge: The next time your child is angry, have him explain how he feels and come up with at least two solutions that would make him feel better.

Your child is learning that it is important to express his feelings and come up with solutions.



I'm Listening

When your child is talking to you, try and make eye-contact and show her that you are really listening to what she is saying. Ask her questions to help her tell her story, such as:

And then what happened? or

What did he say?

Let her know that you are interested in her ideas and that her feelings are important to you, by responding with statements like:

That must have hurt or

You seem excited about that!

Challenge: When your child tells a good story, ask her to repeat it for someone else. Set it up with a statement like, **That is such a great story! I think Mom would like to hear about this too!**

Your child is learning to express herself. She is also learning that she is a very important person with valuable ideas to share.



I Can Help

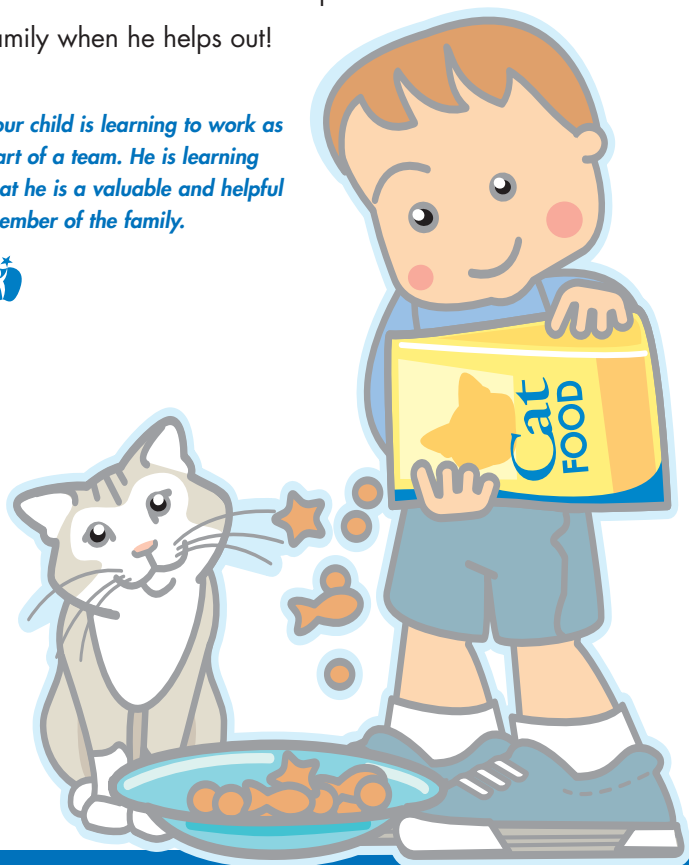
Find ways that your child can help you or others around you. Praise his work by saying something like, **You are so helpful! Thank you so much for...**

At this age, your child has many skills that are very useful! He is able to carry things, find things, clean up, set the table, and help with simple chores around the house.

Challenge: Think of some simple jobs that your child can have to help out around the house like feeding the cat, setting the table, or picking up the baby's toys.

Let him know how much it helps the family when he helps out!

Your child is learning to work as part of a team. He is learning that he is a valuable and helpful member of the family.

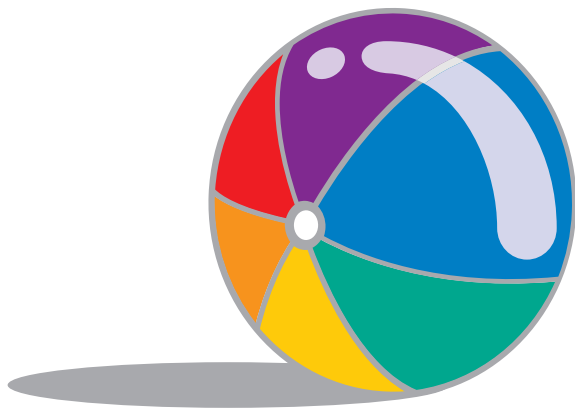


I am a Good Friend!

Talk to your child about what it means to be a good friend. Ask her what kinds of things good friends do, and how good friends act. Pay attention when she is playing with another child and recognize the times when she is a good friend. For example, say something like,
I saw you give Thomas your bucket to use.
You are a very good friend to share your toys!

Challenge: When your child is having trouble with another child, have her think of ways that she can be a good friend. Have her talk about what she doesn't like about how the other child is acting, and how she is going to handle it.

Your child is learning that being a good friend means acting in a kind and giving way. She is learning to think about how she is acting with other children.



Notes