



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmark of Quality Child Care

Build Trusting Relationships

Teach Children Skills for Making Friends

Have you ever wondered why some children make friends easily, and why it's harder for others? It turns out that there are several key skills we all need in order to make friends, and those who have these skills find it easier to make and keep friends.

Moreover, research has shown that children who gain these skills are not just successful in making friends, but they are also successful in school and in life. A child's ability to develop good relationships with peers lays the groundwork for her adult relationships, mental and physical health, her self-esteem, and overall well-being and happiness. Some researchers have called these skills one of the most important set of skills a child can learn.

The good news is that children can start to learn these key skills beginning at a young age – through their interactions with the important people in their life. Some of these foundational skills include:

- Listening
- Taking turns & waiting (part of learning to share)
- Cooperating (working together)
- Negotiating (compromise)
- Problem Solving & Conflict Resolution
- Reading social and emotional cues (interpreting intentions of others) and responding appropriately (e.g., showing empathy)

In this newsletter, we will discuss three recognized strategies that help children learn these foundational skills:

- Playing games together
- Increasing awareness of social and emotional cues
- Structuring the learning environment and daily activities



Playing Games Together

Whether it's an interactive game like "peek-a-boo" or a board game like "Candyland," when children play games with others, they gain important relationship building skills.

Here are examples of games to play with infants, toddlers and preschoolers:

- **Infants** – Play *listening games*: For example, during music time, carry the infant as you dance around to the beat of the music. Tiptoe quietly during the soft parts and stomp during the loud parts. Freeze when the music stops and continue to dance when the music starts again.
- **Toddlers** – Play *group games* such as *Doggy, Doggy Where is Your Bone?* Choose one child to be the "doggy" and ask her to pretend to be asleep. While the "doggy" is not looking, place a block (or other "bone" shaped object) and hide it behind a child's back. Then everyone recites together, "*Doggy, doggy where is your bone? Somebody took it from your home! Guess who?*" Have the "doggy" wake up and guess who took her bone. After she guesses, play again with a new "doggy."
- **Preschoolers** – Play *board games*, such as, *Memory games* (concentration), *Tic-tac-toe*, *Go Fish* or *Hoot Owl Hoot!* Make sure to also teach children how to win and lose graciously (e.g., by saying, "Good game!" and giving a high-five to the winner as well as losers).



Increasing Awareness of Social & Emotional Cues

Social and emotional cues are the ways in which we communicate without using words. Adults play an important role in helping children learn to read and respond to the social cues of others. Here are some ways in which you can heighten young children's awareness of social cues:

- **Infants** – A baby who wants to play might demonstrate cues such as making eye contact with you, smiling, or reaching her hands toward you. *Talk to her about her cues.* You can say, "I love your smile! Do you want to play?"
- **Toddlers** – When you see that a child is experiencing strong emotions (e.g., yelling or crying), give her words to describe the feeling. For example, you can say "You look angry." In addition, you can also show her how to respond to someone in distress by comforting them with a gentle touch or a little hug. Model and teach her comfort words, such as, "Are you okay?" By doing this she will learn important empathy skills.
- **Preschoolers** – As preschoolers engage in more peer interactions, use specific language to interpret social and emotional cues. For example, you might say to a child, "When you sat down next to David, he pushed the cars toward you so you could get some too. He's showing you he wants you to play too."

Structuring the Learning Environment & Daily Activities

Setting up a learning environment and activities that promotes children's friendships is a concrete strategy you can use. Here are some ideas:

- Provide equipment and materials that require two or more children to participate, or are likely to encourage social interactions, such as:
 - wooden boat rocker
 - kids' tandem tricycle
 - puppet theatre
 - dramatic play props like a pretend picnic set
 - building toys, such as *Bottle Clix*
 - animal toy figures
- Plan projects and activities that can be done as groups or in pairs, such as:
 - Encouraging children to work collaboratively to put a puzzle together.
 - Giving two children one large piece of paper to create a collage together.
 - Pairing children to do classroom jobs such as watering plants or passing out cups and napkins for snack.
- Offer diverse books of children and adults shaking hands, or otherwise enjoying each other's company.



- Promote/teach social interactions during routine activities, such as:
 - During meal times, use conversation starters such as "tell me one fun thing you did this weekend."
 - During circle time, use role playing or puppets to teach social skills. For example, one puppet goes up to another puppet and says, "You look lonely. Do you need a friend to play with? I can play with you."

Training Opportunity

Let's Play! Cooperative Games in Early Childhood Programs, by Suzanne Lyons, M.A.

This is a free online recorded Early Childhood Investigations webinar that gives an overview of cooperative game play and why it's essential for healthy child development. The training offers a free certificate for 1.5 training hours. Stay until the end to find out how to access your certificate.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6660143672164768268>

Featured Activity

Cereal Box Board Game



What you need:

- Recycled cereal box
- Markers
- Scissors
- Die, spinner, or deck of cards
- Game pieces (e.g., bottle caps, small figurines, erasers, etc.)

What to do:

1. Cut the cereal box open to create a flat game board.
2. On the blank side, draw a starting box with a curvy path to a finish line.
3. Segment the pathway by drawing boxes and numbering them.
4. Help the children come up with a theme (e.g., candy land or volcano land) and help decorate the board with obstacles (Volcano! Go back 3 spaces) or scenery.
5. Each child selects a game piece and places them at the start, then takes turns rolling the die.
6. Have each child count the number shown on the die, count the spaces, and place her piece where she lands.
7. Use phrases such as, "Oh no! You lost a turn. That's okay, you can go again after Maddie."



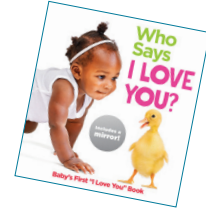
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Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the Hawai'i State Public Library www.librarieshawaii.org

Who Says I Love You by Highlights for Children Inc.

Infants and toddlers will love hearing and making the sounds of the animals pictured in this book. This book has repetitive text with the words I love you and a bonus mirror in the back.



I Can Share by Karen Katz

This book features simple, repetitive text and adorable illustrations of toddlers. This playful little book is the perfect way to introduce the magic of sharing.



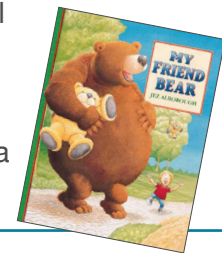
Plenty Saimin by Feng Feng Hutchins

It is Ah Kee's birthday! On his way to the market with Ma, he invites friend after friend to join him for noodles. Will Ma have enough to feed everyone he's invited? As the noodles are being prepared one by one each friend brings an ingredient to add to the pot.



My Friend Bear by Jez Alborough

Eddie is lonely – that is, until he meets an oversized bear who is lonely, too. Children will love this heartwarming tale about the beginning of a special friendship.



Citations

Gainsley, S. (2012). Building Friendships in Preschool. *High Scope Extensions*. <https://image.hightscope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/16053908/155.pdf>

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