



Visual Support Guide: Safe Friend Behaviors

What?

The friendship behaviors visual support shows examples of what a child can do to interact positively with a peer. The visual guide helps suggest ways for a child to initiate a friendly interaction with another child.

Why?

- The friendship behavior visuals can help children learn positive and safe skills to use when interacting with other children. Proactively teaching safe behaviors to use during social interactions can help children who need extra support to make and keep friends.
- You can use friendship behavior visuals in different ways.
 - As a visual reminder of safe and positive behaviors for all children in a classroom or group socialization space.
 - To help a child who needs extra support to learn and use safe and positive social skills and behaviors with other children.

How?

- Make friendship behavior visuals.
 - Print pictures. Translate the actions into all the languages spoken by the children in your program or make separate pictures for each language.
 - Use it as a portable “key ring” visual support.
 - Cut out individual cards and laminate them.
 - Punch a hole in the cards and put them on a ring so you can carry them easily with you to use as needed throughout the day.
 - Use it as chart.
 - Print the entire visual support grid and laminate or place in a sheet protector.
 - Post the choice board at children’s eye level in different areas of the environment where children interact with one another. Place the chart in a “friendship kit” or on a “peace wall.” Make sure the chart is easy to see and access.
- Make friendship behavior visuals.
 - Explain that there are rules and expectations about how friends treat each other in the learning environment.
 - Talk to children about what makes a safe friend. Ask them what makes them feel happy and safe when they are playing with their friends.
 - Engage with families to learn about friendship expectations in their community. Make additional cards as needed.
 - Describe the pictures and talk about the strategies with children during large or small group time.
 - Clearly explain the behaviors, when to use them and why. You can say, “If you notice a friend is sad, ask if you can give a gentle hug. You will

help them feel better” or “If a friend looks lost, you can take them by the hand and go play together in the block area.”

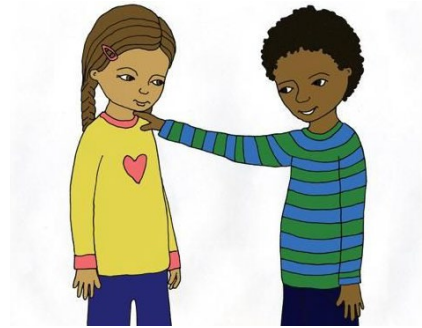
- Talk about friendship skills and practice the behaviors when children are feeling calm. It will be easier for them to engage and use the strategies. Don't wait until children are having a conflict to introduce the strategies and visuals.
- Describe the friendship behaviors, model the behavior, and have children practice it.
- Show children where they can find the visuals when they need them.
 - Create a special friendship kit with the safe friend visuals and different items to support friendship behaviors.
 - Alternatively, create a peace wall with different problem solving and regulation strategy visuals posted at child level. Teach children that they can go there to find and try strategies if there is a problem or a conflict.
 - Be ready to provide additional support as needed to an individual child. For example, show a child the friendship visual supports before times when they are likely to get dysregulated and use unsafe behaviors. Provide intentional positive feedback when you notice a child using the positive friendship behaviors with other children.

Safe Friend Behaviors

Share



Hand on Shoulder



Take a Friend by the Hand



Ask a Friend to Play



Tell a Friend Good Job



Gentle Hug



Safe Friend Behaviors

High Five



Give a Friend a Thumbs-up

