

Friends and Their Influence

A Discussion Guide for Adults



4 Facts and Discussion Questions

Your child's friends will always influence him—and your child will always influence his friends. That means their best qualities will rub off on each other, and so will their worst. Use the questions below to talk with other adults about the effect your child and his friends have on each other.

Research Findings

1. Sixty-nine percent of kids say they care about other people's feelings.¹ Girls (81 percent) are much more likely to say this than boys (56 percent).²
2. As kids get older, they're more likely to have friends who drink alcohol. While 92 percent of 6th graders say that none of their friends drink alcohol, only 32 percent of 12th graders say the same.³
3. Two of Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets are focused on positive friendships.⁴ These are Asset 15: Positive Peer Influence and Asset 33: Interpersonal Competence.⁵
4. Seventy percent of kids say they are good at making and keeping friends. Girls (76 percent) are more likely to say this than boys (64 percent).⁶

Sources

1. Search Institute, *Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth, Executive Summary* (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 2005), Appendix A-9, unpublished report.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., Appendix A-17.
4. Peter L. Benson, *All Kids Are Our Kids: What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006).
5. Ibid.
6. Search Institute, Appendix A-10.

Take It Further

ParentFurther discussion guides are created to help you talk with your kids about tough topics. Visit www.ParentFurther.com for more discussion guides and additional resources.

Discussion Questions

- **Who was your best friend when you were growing up? What was it about that person that attracted you to him or her?**
- **How have friends been important in your life?**
- **What do you think is the main reason kids need friends?**
- **What do you worry about with kids and their friends today? Why?**
- **How can we influence kids to choose good friends?**
- **How do we keep kids from getting segregated so that the "good kids" don't only hang out with "good kids" and the "bad kids" only with other "bad kids"?**
- **How do we encourage kids to be open to a wider diversity of friends?**
- **How can we model positive friendships for kids?**
- **How can we be good role models in the way we deal with advertising?**

Even though it can be difficult for kids—and even adults—to specify why they like the friends that they do, it can be very beneficial to spend some time thinking about it. If you can show your child that positive qualities are part of what makes good friends, he will be more likely to build positive friendships.