



EMPOWERING PARENTS TO RAISE
THEIR CHILDREN TO BE SUBSTANCE-FREE

Talk Early And Often About Alcohol, Tobacco And Other Drugs. Even When It Gets Tough



Know! Your Friends

Friendships are vital to a person's well-being, especially during the teenage years when key developmental changes are taking place. Friendships can help children grow morally and emotionally. They learn how to communicate, cooperate and solve problems in relationships, which will benefit them throughout life. Research shows that friendships can also help youth avoid delinquency, isolation and other negative characteristics that are many times associated with the teenage years.

There are several important factors here however. First, when we say "friends," we're not talking about the hundreds of "connections" students have online or something that can occur with the mere acceptance of a "friend request." We are talking about real-life relationships that require both time and effort. Second, we are talking healthy, positive relationships. Too often, children desire to be friends with a peer based on superficial reasons like popularity or wealth (he/she has a giant house, expensive clothes and all the cool gadgets). Friendships based solely on these factors are not likely to last, and may end painfully. The third factor to keep in mind is that the influence and impact of young friendships are powerful – for better or worse. It should not be about the number of friends a person has, but the quality of their friendships. Students must be able to recognize quality friendships, how they look and how they should feel.

While there is no official check-list in determining quality relationships, here are some common traits among tried and true friendships.

(Teacher to child) When you can say the other person...

- Is fun to be around, makes you smile and laughs with you
- Is adaptable and doesn't always have to have his/her way
- Is kind and has respect for you
- Is trustworthy with your secrets big and small
- Is honest with you, even when it is not what you want to hear
- Is loyal and dependable
- Listens attentively and cares about what you have to say
- Accepts you for who you are, even when you're not at your best
- Is happy for you when you reach your goal and is a shoulder to cry on when you don't

Talking regularly with kids about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using.

Know! urges you to encourage other parents to join Know!.

[Click here for the Know! Parent Tip Sign-Up Page.](#)

Know! is a program of:



**Lifetime Prevention
Lifetime Wellness**

Drug Free
Action Alliance
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- Is supportive of you and has your best interest in mind
- Does not ask you to compromise your morals or values
- Does not put you in harm's way or encourage you to engage in risky behaviors
- Does not put you down (to your face or behind your back) or purposely hurt your feelings

...then you have a real friend.”

Remind students that maintaining a friendship means being a good friend in return.

As a teacher, you are a strong influence in your students' lives. Be sure to keep the conversation going in the classroom by talking regularly with your students about healthy relationships, reminding them that real friends are uplifting and supportive, and make them feel good about themselves. While it is up to your students to pick their friends, it is up to you to use your teacher-power to help them choose wisely.

Sources: [ReachOut.com: What makes a good friend?](#) [Millie Ferrer and Anne Fugate - Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences \(IFAS\) University of Florida: The Importance of Friendship for School-Age Children.](#)



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