Every Face Has a Place

Bucket Fillers

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”
Matthew 7:12

Jesus was a fantastic bucket filler

Everyone Needs a Friend

“Research suggests that mental health and wellbeing throughout life is more strongly related to how children get along with others than to their school grades or classroom behaviour.”

“Those kids at school are mean. I told them about this great game but they wouldn’t play it. They said I couldn’t play with them.” Rebecca, who is seven, plays happily at home with her four year-old sister Samantha. Samantha adores her big sister and will do anything she says. But with school friends it’s not so easy.

Rebecca’s mother wonders whether the other children really are mean or whether Rebecca may be too pushy. When children come over to visit it seems to go well as long as they are doing what Rebecca wants. But if the other child wants to do something different, Rebecca often sulks or goes off in a huff.

Children’s friendships often have their ups and downs. When friendships are going well they support children’s emotional wellbeing and confidence, as well as providing someone to play with. Positive friendships help children have fun, and also help them cope during periods of stress and change. This is why having friends at school is so important for children.
Helping Kids with the Ups and Downs of Friendships

It is not always easy for children to know how to manage friendships. Problems with friends can affect how children feel about themselves and their enthusiasm for activities that involve others. Parents and carers can help children learn the kinds of friendship skills they will need as they grow and develop.

Learning how to make and keep friends involves a number of skills. Children learn more and more complex social skills from those around them as they develop.

Home life has an effect on the development of social skills. A child who has an adoring little sister is likely to have more skills of leadership. A child who is the little sister may be more used to fitting in with what others want to do. These children are likely to react differently when they go to school and meet other children with different life experiences and different social skills.

**Friendship Skills for Children Include**

**Cooperation**
- How to share
- How to take turns
- How to work together towards a common goal.

**Communication**
- Using words to explain what you want and listening to others respectfully
- Paying attention to body language, e.g., making eye contact, smiling and being able to read others’ nonverbal reactions.

**Understanding and managing feelings**
- Being able to express feelings in ways that help others understand you.
- Recognising and responding to others’ feelings.

**Accepting and including others**
- Recognising others’ needs for respect and friendship.

**Solving Friendship Problems**

Children develop friendship skills through playing with other children. Because they are learning, they are sure to have times when things do not go as they would like. Sometimes they blame themselves for what has happened.

They may say: “Nobody likes me ‘coz I can’t run as fast as they can.” Sometimes they blame everyone else for the problem and, like Rebecca, say: “The kids are all mean to me.” Even though they blame the other kids they may still think of it as a problem they cannot change.
How Parents and Carers can Help

First and foremost you can help children by listening to them talk about the everyday joys and troubles that arise out of their friendships. Asking what might have led to others’ reactions can help the child, with your assistance, to think of possible solutions.

Try a Problem Solving Approach

When problems arise in friendships it is important not to blame children but to show them how to find a solution. A problem solving approach is often helpful.

1. Encourage the child to describe what has happened.
2. Ask about how they felt.
3. Ask them how they think the other person might see it and how they might be feeling.
4. Get them to think of ways they could do things differently next time.
5. Encourage them to try the new approach – get them to practise with you so they feel more confident.
6. Check back with your child to see how things turned out.

The following web pages may also be of interest:

- Headroom:  
- Friendship:  

If you would like to learn more about bucket filling, visit the Bucket Fillers website.  
www.bucketfillers101.com
Bucket Fillers offer a free weekly e-newsletter for parents and teachers.

The link below is to the KidsMatter enewsletter where you will find a number of other useful resources. Just press control click.

https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families/enewsletter