

# Building Healthy Relationships with Peers

## For Moms

As your daughter gets older, her friends are becoming more important than ever before. She is gaining more independence and spending more time with them. Her friends might be changing too, as she becomes more involved in extra-curricular activities at school or in the community. Or she might still be making friends which is okay too.

It can be very difficult for girls this age to develop friends and feel like they fit in, especially when they are new to the U.S. and new to a school. In addition to navigating friendships, your daughter may also be learning English, focusing on her classes and doing her homework, and learning in a new environment. School and community or religious groups can be really great places for her to find good friendships with girls her age that help her learn about U.S. culture and help her navigate these new spaces.

Youth represent an ethnically diverse population in the U.S. and hold a variety of beliefs about religion, values, and education. You may notice this in the friends your daughter is making. It is also very common in the U.S. to have friends of the opposite sex that are not romantic relationships.

At this age, girls are often influenced by their friends. Your daughter likely feels pressure to do things she typically would not do or act in certain ways simply to fit in. Having a sense of belonging or feeling a part of a group is essential at any age. They may be tempted by peer pressure to do things just to feel like they belong. Therefore, encouraging your daughter to find good friends is important.



As your daughter's hormones change, she may also start developing crushes or romantic feelings for her friends. Her hormones at this age may cause her to have sexual feelings, thoughts, and temptations she has never felt before. This can leave her heart pounding and a flushed face when she is around her crush. For a young girl this new feeling can come as a surprise. But you remember that feeling—which is why you can be such a great resource!

Your daughter likely spends a lot of time interacting with her friends online through social media. This has become very common in the U.S. and is something parents everywhere are trying to figure out how to monitor. Try to establish open conversations with your daughter about how she interacts with social media. Have her show you how to use social media so you better understand what she is doing.

Bullying is also something to be aware of at this age. This is when kids tease other kids at school or online and it happens to kids of any color, shape, or personality type. It can be very harmful to those who are targets of bullying. No one deserves this treatment no matter how they look, talk, what their grades are, or how they perform in sports. Talk to your daughter about how to identify bullying and teach her how to stand up for herself and others if she sees it happening. Make sure she talks to you and her teachers if she experiences or sees bullying take place.



## Moms, think about it...

- \* Moving to the U.S. can be exciting, scary, and lonely all at the same time, especially during adolescence when so many physical and emotional changes are taking place. Do you check on her regularly to see how she is feeling? Is she doing well in school? Is she making new friends?
- \* Do you think your daughter has good friends? Do you think she is a good friend? As a parent, you may have a lot of experience finding good friends, but your daughter is just getting started. Help her identify good qualities she would want to have in a friend. Help her also identify qualities she wants to possess and give to others in a friendship.
- \* Have you met your daughter's friends and their parents? Consider inviting them to your home and talk to them at school or community events.
- \* Do you know how your daughter spends her time online? While this can be a great resource, there are also ways her safety can be at-risk. Set clear limits and expectations about internet use together.
- \* Teach your daughter to be kind to others and to herself. The words she uses to describe herself and her peers have so much power and influence. It is important to choose words wisely and you can be an example of this!

---

---

---

---

---



## For Daughters

As you get older, your friends become more important than ever. You are probably spending more quality time with them and developing more meaningful relationships with them. Your friends might be changing too, especially as you become more involved in sports, music or dance classes, or other extra-curricular activities at school or in the community. As a new student, you may still be in the process of finding friends.

It can feel very difficult to make good friends and feel like you fit in, especially as a new immigrant to the U.S. and as a new student. In addition to navigating friendships, you are also learning English, finding your classes, doing your homework, and learning a new environment at school. You are going through a lot!

School and cultural or religious groups are great places to find friends who can help you learn about U.S. culture and to have fun with.

At this age, you can also be very easily influenced by your friends. This is called 'peer pressure' and it is when you feel pressure to do something you wouldn't usually do because you want to fit in. Belonging and feeling a part of a group is important for girls of any age, but you don't have to do everything your friends do. It is a life long struggle to not be motivated by peer pressure, and to take actions based on your goals and values. This is usually easier to do when you have good friends. Keep this in mind as you spend more time with your friends.

Bullying is something to be aware of at your age. This is when kids tease other kids at school or online. It can be very hurtful to those who are targets of this kind of treatment. No one deserves to be bullied no matter how they look, talk, what their grades are, or how they perform in sports. If you see someone being bullied, stand up for them and if you are being bullied, stand up for yourself. If your friends are the ones bullying others, ask them to stop. Let your teachers and your parents know if you experience or see bullying taking place.



When you go through puberty your emotions can be strong and you might start developing crushes on your friends or people you see at school. These feelings can be confusing, but they are totally normal. Your face might get flushed or you might suddenly be at a loss for words when you are around someone you have a crush on. Your friends will start to develop crushes too. You might have crushes on the same people or they may spend more time with their crushes rather than you. This might make you feel left out or mad. It's important to talk to your mom or a trusted adult about your feelings. They can give you good advice for how to talk about this with your friends.

### **Daughters, think about it...**

- \* Right now, you're probably developing deeper friendships and experiencing aspects of adult life. This is exciting and scary! Take time to think about the people around you as you go through this journey. How are your friends supportive of you? How can you support them?
- \* What do you think it means to be a good friend? Do you have friends that you think are good friends or friends who are role models to you? How are you a good friend and a role model?
- \* Moving to the U.S. can be exciting, scary, and lonely all at the same time. It's okay to feel a range of emotions. Consider talking to your mom about your how you are feeling and about your friends. She has a lot of experience making friends and can be a good resource.

---

---

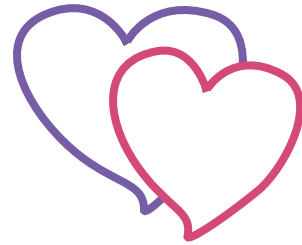
---

---

---



# Heart to Heart



## Ask your Daughter

- ◆ What are good qualities you want in a friend? What are good qualities you want to share with your friends?
- ◆ What do you like about your friends? Are there things about your friends you wish were different?
- ◆ Are there ever times you feel like you are pressured to do something you don't want to just to fit in?
- ◆ I would like to meet your friends. What if we invited them to dinner next week?

## Ask your Mom

- ◆ What are good qualities you have in your friends? What are good qualities you share with your friends?
- ◆ As an adult, are there ever times you feel like you are pressured to do something you don't want to just to fit in? How do you make good decisions?
- ◆ What was it like having friends in our country of origin? What is it like here in the U.S.?
- ◆ I think I have a crush on someone, but I don't know what to do about it. How do I know if they like me?

