

2026-2027 Parent Academy

WELCOME

1 Navigating Peer Conflict

2 Positive Friendship Skills

3 Executive Functioning

4 Scenarios

5 Open Q&A

Guiding Students to Build Positive Friendships & Navigate Peer Conflict

NOT OUR ROLE

**Solve every problem or
fight every battle**

Resist the urge to jump in
before your child has a
chance to learn

**THE GOAL:
Coach & Don't Take Over**

OUR ROLE

**Help children think,
practice, and try again**

Build Skills they can carry
into the next friendship
challenge

Before you respond: regulate, then relate

When our child is upset, our own emotions can take the lead.

1 PAUSE

Take a breath. Notice your own reaction.

2 LISTEN

Hear the story before deciding what it means.

3 COACH

Help your child choose a next step.

Try: "I'm glad you told me. Let's slow down and figure out what happened."

AVOID

Taking sides too quickly

USE

Curiosity before conclusions

STAY NEUTRAL

"I want to understand both sides."

Less of this. More of that.

TRY TO AVOID

- Assuming you know the whole story
- Immediately contacting another parent in anger
- Calling the other child “mean” or “bad”
- Giving a script without helping the child understand why

TRY INSTEAD

- Validate feelings and stay curious about facts
- Listen for your child’s part in the interaction or situation
- Practice a respectful boundary
- Support independence while staying available and neutral

It looks different at different ages...

Pre-K–4: rehearse concrete words and actions.

5–8: invite reflection and shared planning.

Building Positive Friendship Skills



LISTENING

Understand and hear others



BOUNDARIES

Clear, respectful limits



EMPATHY

Notice feelings and
impact on yourself and
others



PERSPECTIVE

More than one point of view
Expect others to feel differently
than you, and that's OK!

Three Core Executive Functioning Skills

.. that support building and maintaining positive peer relationships

Inhibition/ Stop

The ability to pause before acting or speaking

Examples:

Your child wants the magnet tile square that their peer is using. The student asks to use it when the peer is done instead of grabbing it.

Your child gets into an argument with a friend and wants to send an angry text but they exercise restraint and not respond immediately.

Working Memory

The ability to hold information in the mind and use it

Examples:

"You can't play with us today." The child remembers to stay calm, use respectful words, and talk it out instead of reacting angrily.

A friend makes a hurtful comment, and the student remembers the steps for handling conflict before responding.

Cognitive Flexibility

The ability to shift perspective, adapt, and consider alternatives

Examples:

A friend gets upset because they think the child cheated. The child considers their friend's perspective and agrees to restart the game.

A friend doesn't invite a student to hang out, and they assume it was intentional. They consider other possible reasons before reacting.

Cognitive Flexibility

TEACHING FLEXIBILITY: BEYOND ACADEMICS

Build resilience in ALL aspects of student life (A key start-of-year priority!)

Area of Flexibility & Goal	Example Student Challenges & Scenarios
 ROUTINES ADAPTING TO CHANGES	"The schedule changed."
 PEOPLE COLLABORATING WITH DIVERSE GROUPS/PARTNERS	"Your partner is absent."
 MATERIALS GOAL: MANAGING EQUIPMENT SETBACKS	 "The Chromebook isn't working."
 FEEDBACK GOAL: EMBRACING REVISIONS & GROWTH	 "Your teacher wants you to revise."
 SOCIAL SITUATIONS GOAL: NAVIGATING DISAGREEMENTS	 "Your friend doesn't agree with you."
 EMOTIONS GOAL: COPING WITH UNMET EXPECTATIONS	 "Things didn't go the way you expected."

✗ The INEFFECTIVE Response
"It's fine. Just deal with it."

**This sentence may dismiss student feelings and doesn't provide guidance.*

✓ The POWERFUL Response
"I know that's not what you expected?
What can we do now?"

**This sentence validates feelings AND models problem-solving.*

A simple coaching conversation

1

CONNECT

“That sounds hard. **Tell me more.**”

2

GET CURIOUS

“What happened **just before** that?”

3

WIDEN THE LENS

“What might the **other person** have been thinking or feeling?”

4

PLAN A NEXT STEP

“What could **you try** next time?”

Scenarios



Group Work



Reflection & Share

Grades: Pre-K-4

Scenario:

Your child comes home and seems distracted. You inquire about what is going on and they expressed that they want to befriend a group of peers but struggles to initiate interactions and navigate the group's social dynamics.

Questions:

- How could your child consider the group's perspective or interests when trying to join the group?
- What could you coach your child to say or do to start a conversation and join the group appropriately?
- What skills from today could help your child feel more confident when navigating the group's social dynamics?
- How would you respond as the parent to help your child work through this situation?

Grades 5-8

Scenario: Your child receives a hurtful message from a friend..

“Wow 😂 you actually thought that was a good idea? That was seriously embarrassing. I can’t believe you said that in front of everyone.”

..and immediately wants to respond angrily. They start typing a harsh response, and you can see they may regret sending it in the heat of the moment. What do you do?

Questions:

- How could your child consider their friend’s perspective before responding to the message?
- What could you coach your child to say or do before sending an angry response?
- Which executive functioning skills could be helpful to reteach or reinforce in this situation?
- How would you respond as the parent to help your child handle the situation?

Keys to Fostering Positive Friendships for Kids

- Initiating the Conversation
- Find something in common
- Invite the person to sit with you, play, talk, etc.
- Nurture it and give it space, let it grow.

Keys to Navigating Peer Conflicts

- **Don't assume** — Make sure you know what happened before jumping to conclusions.
- **Take a step back** — Give yourself space if you're feeling angry or overwhelmed.
- **Say what you mean** — Use clear, respectful words to explain how you feel.
- **Be flexible** — Remember that there may be more than one way to solve the problem.
- **Know when to walk away** — Not every disagreement needs to become an argument.

**“Do you want me to
listen, help you
think it through, or
practice what to
say?”**

Coach with boundaries.

Listen with empathy.

**Make room for another
perspective.**

**Trust children to practice and
grow through the process.**

Questions?

THANK YOU FOR COMING!