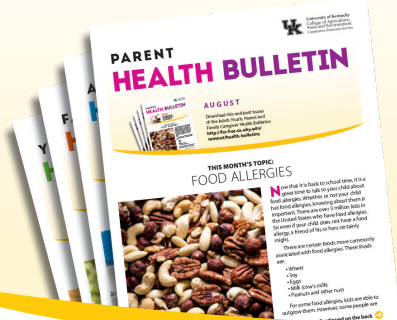




University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



DECEMBER 2021

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: HOW TO GUIDE YOUR CHILD TOWARD HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS



Friendships are important for both your child's happiness and health. Social interactions are key to childhood development because they not only strengthen kids' immune systems but they increase motivation and lower stress. As children grow, friendships take on new meaning.

Teens especially are responsive to peer groups and social influence. During the teen years, parents should keep in mind that many behaviors spread socially. Examples include how much a kid exercises, consumes alcohol, uses tobacco, and even what food they eat.

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Sign your child up for recreational activities, weekend hikes, or even take your kids' social group out to volunteer together.



→ Continued from page 1

As a parent, you can help navigate the social world with your child to guide them toward healthy relationships. Here are some ways to increase positive social experiences for your child:

Stay involved.

Talk with your child about their lives and activities. Talk about both positive and negative things in your day. Parents, who have open communication and active involvement with their children at an early age, set the tone for ongoing connection in their child's life.

Encourage kids to do healthy activities with friends.

Sign your child up for recreational sports or activities, explore and go for weekend hikes, or even take your kids' social group out to volunteer together. Encouraging a healthy activity can be as simple as saying, "When friends are over no screens." Encourage play and even getting outside.

Share your own experiences.

Remember kids are always watching, so model the behavior that you would like to see. Explain how you have made new friends and what activities you enjoy participating in with your social group. Consider sharing how you have resolved conflicts with friends.

Provide ways for kids to participate in social opportunities.

Because of changes in school and shifting parent schedules, many kids have not had the same social calendars as before the pandemic. Try setting up a virtual meeting or playdate, encourage writing letters to friends, and outdoor activities.

REFERENCE:

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/What-Parents-Can-Do-to-Support-Friendships.aspx>

**PARENT
HEALTH BULLETIN**

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