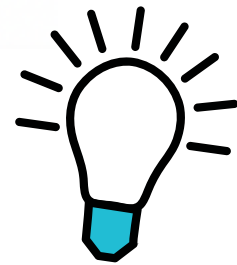


THE MOODERATORS

Teacher & Caregiver Guide:

HOW TO MAKE A FRIEND



**The Kids
Mental Health
Foundation™**

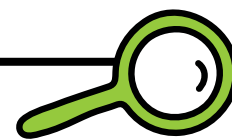
GoNoodle

For more information and learning resources visit [KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org](https://www.KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org).

Welcome to the Teacher Guide for The Mooderators.

This series is in partnership with The Kids Mental Health Foundation, created by the experts at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

The Kids Mental Health Foundation and GoNoodle are working together to bring elementary schools fun, engaging episodes on social and emotional wellness. We hope these guides can give you more insight into children's mental health and activities you can bring into the classroom.



**LOOKING FOR
THE CAREGIVER
CONTENT?**

Check out page 12!

Overview

We want our Mooderators episodes and guides to help you navigate mental and emotional concerns that young children face every day.

Each episode features a song from The Mooderators, Skylar and Clara. These songs feature four social-emotional goals: energize, focus, calm and support.

In this guide, we've included:

- **Insights** on the how and why behind each topic
- **In-class activities** to further engage students
- **Caregiver pages** that explain each topic and offer activity adaptations for home
- **Links** to further reading on [KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org](https://www.kidsmentalhealthfoundation.org)

What We'll Focus On

"How to Make a Friend" is an episode that supports children in building friendships with peers.

In this guide, we will:

- Name techniques for making new friends.
- Define characteristics of a good friend.
- Explain strategies for conflict management.

Challenges for Kids Today

“What’s your favorite color (blue)
What’s your favorite game
Those are questions we can ask
When we are making friends”

Friendships are an important relationship-building skill for children. The American Academy of Pediatrics notes, “making friends is one of the most important missions of middle childhood — a social skill that will endure throughout their lives.” Children who feel connected to others and have positive relationships tend to have better mental health.

Unfortunately, many children struggle with making friends. They may find that initial contact difficult and they may not know what to say to put things in motion. Or they may meet people and have trouble with next steps, especially how to maintain a friendship.

As adults, it can be difficult not to step in. We want our students to make friends with classmates, but we know it’s better they learn to build these relationships themselves.

Encourage, Don't Take Over

“ So many things in common
 So many things we share
 Some things we won't agree on but that's ok
 Getting to know each other
 Is what makes friendships great ”

There are steps we can take to help children form friendships, without taking over. We can help them build the attitude and skills they need to build peer relationships in our classroom.

NEXT STEPS IN THE CLASSROOM

Here are some ways you can encourage your students to make friends:

- **Build an inclusive classroom:** Making friends means embracing all kinds of differences.
 - Highlight your students' varied skills and backgrounds. Model an appreciation for these differences.
 - Point out what students share in common and how this might be a starting point for friendship. Check out pages 7-9 for a Bingo activity to help kids find other students that they share interests with.
- **Model social skills:** Talk about different approaches to making friends and model those skills through role play.
 - How to approach someone new: offer a compliment, bring a game to play, show interest in what they are doing, ask that person questions about themselves.
 - How to have a conversation: take turns, don't interrupt, respect the other person's opinion.
 - How to make plans: talk about how to keep the friendship going, follow up with parents/caregivers
- **Pair up students:** Consider paired or group work to help your students build up their social skills and meet new people. Working together teaches them how to cooperate on a common goal.

What Makes a Good Friend

“ So just know that when you’re down
I’ll be your friend without a doubt
Someone to count on
Someone to trust
To give you space when you need it
Cause that’s what friendship is all about ”

Once children establish a friendship, they may need direction on how to be a good friend.

NEXT STEPS IN THE CLASSROOM

Here are a few ways to teach your students how to be a good friend:

- **Empathy:** Encourage students to put themselves in a friend’s shoes. Discuss how to notice when someone might be feeling down and how to offer support.
- **Honesty and trust:** Talk about the importance of these two values in relationships. Successful relationships are built on honesty with each other and trust that friends will be there for each other.
- **Personal space:** A new friend can be exciting, and it can be tempting to want to hang out all the time. Encourage students to notice when friends might need some alone time. For example, some kids may want to be left alone for a few minutes when they feel angry about something. It doesn’t mean anything is wrong with the friendship, but may make them more excited to play later.

Handling Conflict

“ And if there are disagreements
Solutions we can find
As long as we’re ready to listen with an open mind ”

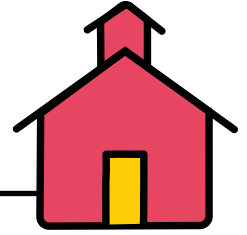
Whether it’s in the classroom or on the playground, conflict is a natural part of life. It’s not a totally bad thing either. Conflict helps children learn empathy and problem-solving skills.

NEXT STEPS IN THE CLASSROOM

Here are a few ways to teach your students conflict management skills:

- **Reiterate that conflict is normal.** There’s nothing wrong with you if you get in an argument with someone. Conflict is a part of life. It’s how we handle conflict that’s important.
- **Emphasize empathy for others.** Remind students that thinking of others’ feelings helps us keep an open mind and resolve arguments faster.
 - Voicing our opinions in a kind, respectful manner and allowing others to voice theirs helps get everything out in the open and make compromise easier. Others may have different opinions, and that's ok.
 - Ask students to consider how the argument made them feel. Realize that the other person may feel differently about the argument. What are some feelings they might be having?
- **Role play different scenarios.** Discuss what conflicts frequently arise. Act out a typical conflict and have children work through solutions together. Check out page 10 for a Student Activity focused on conflict management.

Student Activities



The following two activities focus on helping children build friendships and manage conflict.

“Classroom Bingo” aims to teach children valuable social skills and conversation starters. “Conflict Escalator” focuses on typical disagreements children face and how to manage them.

Classroom Bingo

Materials: Classroom Bingo board

Objectives: This group activity is intended to help children meet and make new friends in the classroom.

- Gives children common interests and talking points to jump start friendships
- Emphasizes the many differences (and similarities) amongst classmates

DIRECTIONS

- Print out the Classroom Bingo boards for each student.
- Explain that students should try to match five boxes in a row, from five different people.
 - Ask questions based on each box, such as “Do you have an older brother or sister?” If the other student says yes, write their name in the box (only the student who owns that board may write in their boxes).
 - Students must also ask one follow-up question to check off that box. This encourages students to talk more and get to know their fellow classmates.
- Sample conversation starters for students to learn how to talk with potential friends:
 - First introduce yourself to your classmate. “Hi, my name is X. What is your name?”
 - Then, ask them a question about the box. For example, if the box says, “plays soccer,” ask, “Do you play soccer?” Most of the time, you can start your question with ‘Do you...?’

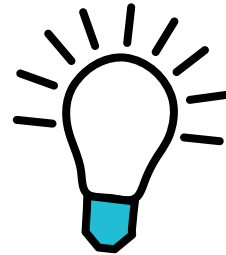
Student Activity: Classroom Bingo (Cont'd)

- Ask a follow-up question about their answer. Use the common interview technique of “Who, What, Where, When, Why?” Some possible questions include:
 - “How long have you been doing this?”
 - “Where do you do this?”
 - “What do you like about it?”
 - “Why do you do this?”
 - “Who do you do this with?”

REFLECTION

Encourage students to consider who on their bingo boards might be a good friend.

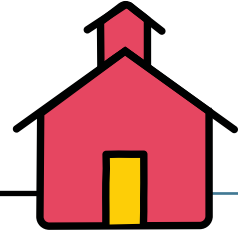
- Who are some classmates from your bingo boards that share similarities with you? What do you share in common?
- What are some things on your bingo board that you also like to do? Which of your classmates could you do those things with?
- What are next steps to making friends with some classmates? Could you ask them to play on the playground or even come on a playdate?



CLASSROOM Bingo

HAS AN OLDER BROTHER OR SISTER	HAS A PET CAT	LIKES MATH	LOVES PLAYING GAMES	LOVES DRAWING
LOVES DANCING	HAS VISITED ANOTHER STATE	LIKES TAKING WALKS	LOVES READING	CAN DO A CARTWHEEL
FAVORITE FOOD IS PIZZA	HAS A UNIQUE PET		LOVES SWIMMING	HAS A PET DOG
LOVES CHOCOLATE	LOVES LISTENING TO MUSIC	LIKES WRITING	IS THE YOUNGEST SIBLING	LIKES SCIENCE
LOVES MOVIES	LOVES SUMMER	HAS A SUMMER BIRTHDAY	IS AN ONLY CHILD	PLAYS A SPORT

Student Activities



Conflict Escalator

Objectives: This activity focuses on conflict management and helping children work through different conflict scenarios.

DIRECTIONS

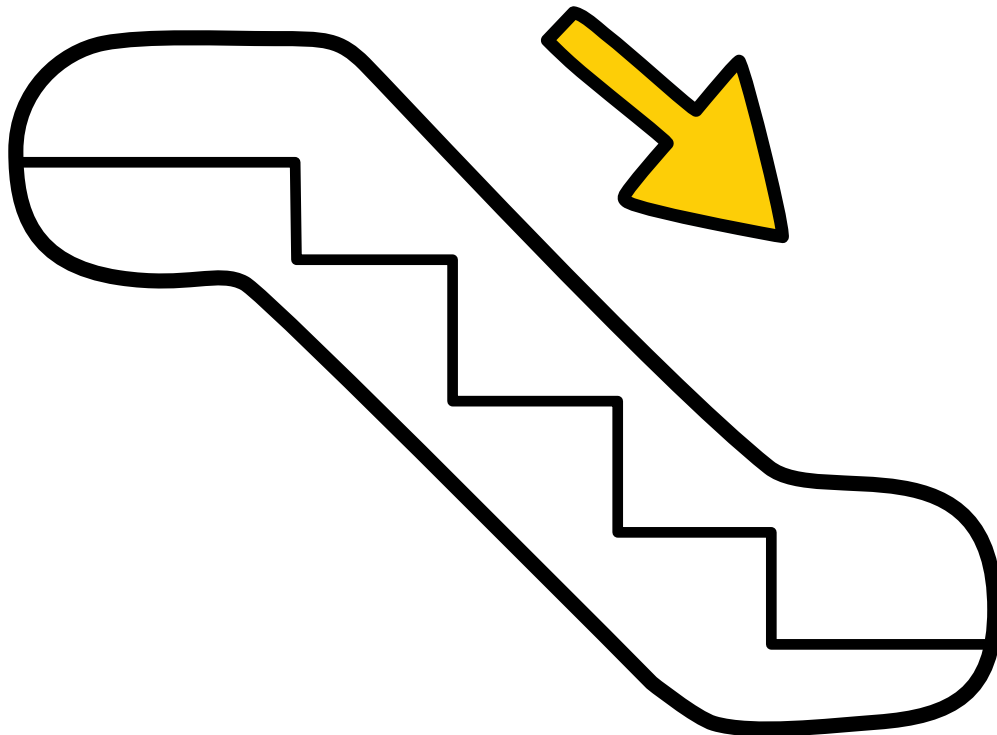
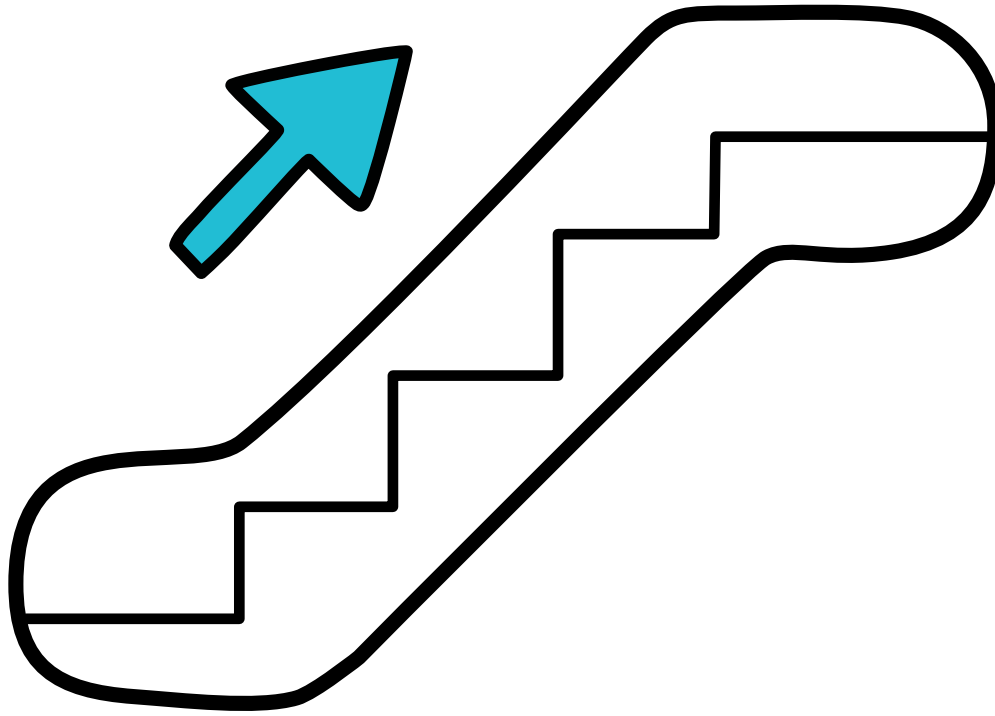
- This activity should take around 20-30 minutes.
- Have the students get in groups of 4.
- Each group will be given a typical “disagreement” that arises among this age group:
 - Person A wants to play a game this way, and Person B wants to do it another way.
 - Person A called Person B a mean name.
 - Both Person A and Person B can’t agree on a game.
 - Person A wants to play and Person B doesn’t.
- Ask each group to think of ways that would make the disagreement worse.
 - This could be words or actions done that make the situation worse.
 - Have groups come act out their scenarios.
 - With an escalating situation, show them the escalator visual going up.
- Then ask the groups to brainstorm ways to compromise or find a solution for the disagreement.
 - Have them act out these solutions.
 - Have the escalator visual go down to show a de-escalating situation.

REFLECTION:

Ask students what they thought of the activity.

- Have you ever had disagreements like this? Did you use any of these ways to make things better?
- What’s the hardest thing to remember during a disagreement?
- What are the best ways to approach a disagreement?
- Calm, respectful attitude
- Open mind for other opinions

Conflict Escalator



Welcome to the Caregiver Guide for The Mooderators. This series is in partnership with The Kids Mental Health Foundation, created by the experts at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

The Kids Mental Health Foundation and GoNoodle are working together to bring caregivers fun, engaging episodes that cover various mental health topics. We hope these guides can give you more insight into children's mental health and activities you can bring into your home.

Objectives

"How to Make a Friend" is an episode that supports children in building friendships with peers.

In this guide, we will:

- Name techniques for making new friends.
- Define characteristics of a good friend.
- Explain strategies for conflict management.

Fostering Childhood Friendships: Making New Friends

It's hard to see your child struggle to make friends. Suddenly, you wonder... what did I do wrong? Is there something wrong with my child?

Many children find making friends to be challenging. Peer relationships are an important part of social development. Children who feel connected to others and have positive relationships tend to have better mental health.

With friendships, you want to help your child take ownership of the process, rather than have you direct it. Relationship-building is an important skill that will follow them throughout their lives, so you'll want to help them practice it when they're still young.

Here are a few ways to help your child make and maintain friendships:

- **Role play conversations.** Sometimes children need a little coaching on social skills. Model different scenarios with your child, whether that's meeting a new friend or resolving conflicts with an existing one. Here are a few skills they may need to learn:
 - **How to approach someone new:** offer a compliment, bring a game to play, show interest in what they are doing, ask that person questions about themselves
 - **How to have a conversation:** take turns, don't interrupt, respect the other person's opinion
 - **How to make plans:** talk about the importance of plans to keep the friendship going, discuss with the child the steps that are needed for making plans with friends and how to get the adults involved

- **Discuss qualities of a good friend.** Talk about what makes a good friend and how to be one. Discuss qualities such as:
 - **Honesty:** Talk about situations where friends need to be honest with one another. For example, if you are having a disagreement and need to be honest with your friend about your true feelings. Also spend some time talking to your child about how lying can break trust in a friendship.
 - **Kindness:** Discuss ways to show care for friends. These could be simple gestures such as a compliment or a helping hand when a friend needs assistance.
 - **Dependability:** Friends support one another, even when it may be difficult. Discuss sticking with friends and standing up for them if others are not treating them with respect.
 - **Personal space:** Some kids need time alone to refresh and recharge. Emphasize to your child that this doesn't mean the friendship is over, just that the other person needs some alone time.
- **Brainstorm solutions to conflicts.** Talk through different disagreements that may have come up between friends (or ones that often come up for kids these ages).
 - **Build empathy for others:** How did this argument make your child feel? How do they think the other child felt?
 - **Talk through solutions:** Discuss various ways to handle the disagreements. Think through possible solutions, and compromises.
 - **Discuss mindset for conflict management:** Resolving conflicts is a lot easier when everyone has an open mind and listening ear. Reiterate to your child the importance of truly listening during a disagreement. Encourage the child to remain firm but calm, not resorting to name calling or other personal attacks.

At-Home Activities

Friendship Plan

Materials: Pencil/pen, paper and On Our Sleeves Friendship Builder.

Objective: Is your child having trouble making friends? Use these ideas to help them think through ways to get started building friendships.

Scan to get
the Friendship
Builder



Directions:

Without overstepping, you can help your child brainstorm a plan for finding new friends.

- List out places your child may meet new friends. This may be a good time to encourage your child to join a new club or activity.
- Point out commonalities that your child may share with others. Remind your child that it's okay for friends to be different, too.
- Role play conversation starters with your child. What can your child say to another child to make a connection? Talk through making plans with a child, especially extending invitations beyond school and extracurriculars

Conflict Escalator

Objective: This activity focuses on conflict management and helping children work through different conflict scenarios.

Check out pages 10-11 for scenarios to role play on conflict management and kids. Consider acting out these situations with your child to practice working through disagreements.

Links to More:

Interested in learning more about childhood friendships? Learn more at [OnOurSleeves.org](https://www.OnOurSleeves.org).

<https://www.KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org/mental-health-resources/relationships>

<https://www.KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org/mental-wellness-tools-guides/belonging>