



# Knowing Your Child's Friends

**Childhood is a period of major growth and change.** Youth tend to be uncertain about themselves and how they “fit in” and at times they can feel overwhelmed by a need to please and impress their friends. These feelings can leave children open to peer pressure. Knowing your child's friends and peers helps parents improve communication, reduce conflict, and teach responsibility.

## You can help your child and increase your influence by

### Knowing your child's friends in the neighborhood and at school:

- Communicate with friends and their parents whenever possible.
- Go to school—observe school behavior and who your child spends time with.
- Observe behaviors, speech, and attitude and acknowledge and encourage positive behavior.

### Staying involved in your child's activities:

- Help your child understand his/her feelings.
- Discuss your child's new ideas.
- Be responsible for sex and drug information.
- Share your values and beliefs; it gives your child a base to work from.

### Talking to your child when a concern comes up, such as

- Spending time with friends you don't know
- Changes in speech and attitude
- Changes in schoolwork
- Lying and sneaking around

## Peer Influence

Youth do not always make wise choices in picking friends. Help them see what qualities they should value in friends—such as honesty, school involvement, respect.

### To decrease negative peer influence, spend time together and try these ideas:

- Play board/outdoor games.
- Read with your child or tell family stories.
- Encourage your child's interests (drawing, scientific curiosity, music, cooking...).
- Include your child in social/cultural events in the community.
- Include your child's friends in family activities.

## Extra Tips

- Keep lines of communication open.
- Be patient and observe; don't react—it may pass.