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PARENT CONNECTION

FEBRUARY 2022

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Did you make a health-related New Year's resolution in January? Did you know that nurturing friendships not only benefits your emotional health but your physical health as well?



Friendships: Enrich your life and improve your health

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Friendships can have a major impact on your health and well-being, but it's not always easy to build or maintain friendships. Understand the importance of friendships in your life and what you can do to develop and nurture friendships. What are the benefits of friendships?

Good friends are good for your health. Friends can help you celebrate good times and provide support during bad times. Friends prevent loneliness and give you a chance to offer needed companionship, too. Friends can also:

- Increase your sense of belonging and purpose
 - Boost your happiness and reduce your stress
 - Improve your self-confidence and self-worth
 - Help you cope with traumas, such as divorce, serious illness, job loss or the death of a loved one
 - Encourage you to change or avoid unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as excessive drinking or lack of exercise
- (continue reading with link...)

FEBRUARY EVENTS



Sock Gnome

Family Make and Take Craft Event

Saturday, Feb 5 10-11 a.m.

There was a high level of interest in this event in January, but low turnout, so we are offering it again!

FREE event! *Registration required.*

Sign up with the link below.

SIGN UP



Thursdays
9:30-11:00a.m.

Bring your little ones for a morning of active play, story time, and an art activity.
(click on theme to be directed to Facebook event for RSVP)

[Feb 3 Be My Valentine](#)
[Feb 10 No Play and Learn](#)
[Feb 17 Kindness](#)
[Feb 24 Smile!](#)

READ MORE

4

Ways to nurture your child's friendships:

1. Model friendship skills

- avoid gossip; express their value in your life

2. Encourage friendships that are important to your child

- for example, help coordinate playdates

3. Respect your child's personality

- Some kids are outgoing and love to have a lot of friends, others are happy having only a few close friendships

4. Be available to listen

- support your child by talking through difficult situations as they arise

From Article: "The Benefits of Early Childhood Friendships and 3 Tips for Helping Your Child Establish Meaningful Friendships"
exchangefamilycenter.org

READ MORE

Try it at Home

Kids - Create Valentines for friends!

20+ Non-Candy Valentine Ideas with FREE Printables

from The Savvy Sparrow



GET IDEAS

DID YOU KNOW?

February 7 is "Send a card to a friend" day!

Perhaps a simple way to show value to your friendships...

December/January Happenings



Stay connected with us to get all the details on what we're up to...

Follow us on and visit our website
familyconnectionsswwi.org

COMMUNITY CLOSET



Thanks to Pioneer Nutrition and Good Vibes Nutrition in Platteville for hosting a Giving Tree on our behalf. As a result, the community has generously re-stocked our Community Closet!

Thank you to the following agencies for their support:



CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board



platteville community fund

Platteville Thrift Shop



SUPPORTING CHILD WELL-BEING THROUGH STRENGTHENING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

MAY 2021

WHY WE CHOSE THIS TOPIC

Symptoms of emotional distress feel and look different for every youth. Having strong, positive, and consistent sources of social connection allows youth to talk about how they feel in a safe environment. Providing youth with positive childhood experiences (PCEs) can buffer symptoms of emotional distress. In general, PCEs include supportive relationships with adults and being socially connected with their peers, family, community and culture.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS^{1,2,3}

A study conducted using Wisconsin data evaluated the associations between PCEs and adult depression. It identified seven specific factors that protect children from emotional distress, reduce the harmful effects of trauma, and grow towards becoming a resilient child.

- 1** Ability to talk with family about feelings
- 2** Family is supportive in difficult times
- 3** Participation in family and community traditions
- 4** Feeling of belonging in high school
- 5** Feeling of being supported by friends
- 6** Having at least two non-parent adults who care
- 7** Feeling safe and protected by an adult at home

It is especially important for a teenager's physical and psychological health to be part of a social network beyond their family. As they develop their own identity, peers offer support and relief from depression, anxiety, and stress.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN WISCONSIN?



© 2018 Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board | Special thanks to the Michigan parents who created the hand concept.

Whether it's fostering positive peer relationships, educating parents about how to communicate effectively with their child, or promoting ways to become socially connected in the community, Wisconsin understands the importance of positive childhood experiences.

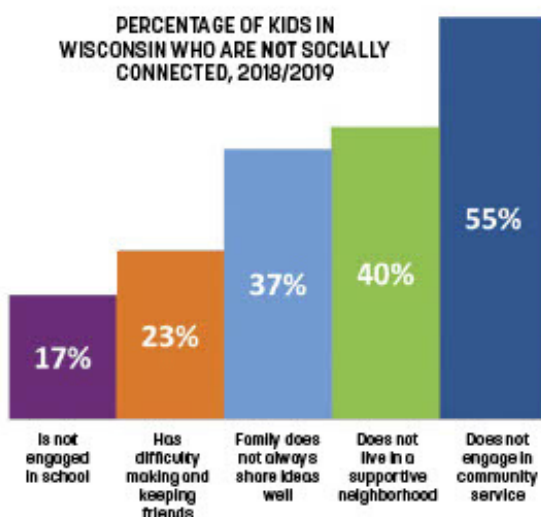
To assist families in building upon their strengths, the Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board identifies five essential attributes that help parents and caregivers develop better connections with children called "[Five for Families](#)."



- continued -

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SOCIALLY CONNECTED? 4-6

Kids are socially connected when they have enough relationships to make them feel like they belong, are cared for, valued, and supported. However, not all kids in Wisconsin are always supported well. Without the protective factor of social connectedness, they may have difficulty becoming resilient in challenging times.



One of the most meaningful activities a teen can do to strengthen relationships is to contribute to a shared goal. Volunteering helps a teen establish a sense of belonging and civic responsibility.

WHAT WE CAN DO⁷

➔ POLICY MAKERS:

- Incentivize initiatives and prioritize policies that encourage models of social connectedness such as integrated care, early intervention, and collaborative activities across sectors.
- Fund youth peer support groups so teens may connect with others and build relationships.

➔ SCHOOL:

- Promote mutual respect in the classroom by reducing any threats of a student being embarrassed or teased.
- Assign students classroom responsibilities that are developmentally appropriate.
- Form interdisciplinary teams of teachers who know, and are invested in, students' achievements.
- Include shared peer activities in a child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

➔ PROVIDERS:

- Identify protective factors to reduce the effects of chronic exposure to adversity.
- Refer families to support groups, and encourage utilization of libraries, and other low or no-cost options to connect with peers.
- Teach life skills to children so they learn how to be a good friend and maximize their opportunities to socialize.

➔ PARENTS:

- Seek out ways for your child to connect with peers early and often so children learn to foster relationships on their own.
- Ask who your child's friends are, especially in high school.
- Talk with your child about when to foster relationships, when to set boundaries, and when to end relationships.

REFERENCES:

¹ Bethell, C., Jones, J., et al. Positive Childhood Experiences and Adult Mental and Relational Health in a Statewide Sample: Associations Across Adverse Childhood Experiences Levels. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2019;173(11):e193007.

² Yang, C., Boen, C., et al. Social relationships and Physiological Functioning. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* Jan 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/early/2016/01/02/1511085112.full.pdf>

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⁵ Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2018-2019 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) data query. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent

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⁶ Forder, M.L., What Teens Gain When They Contribute to Their Social Groups. *Greater Good Magazine: Science-Based Insights for a Meaningful Life.* July 22, 2019. Retrieved from: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what_teens_gain_when_they_contribute_to_their_social_groups

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2009.