

The importance of play and friendships in middle childhood

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Play and friendships are important, no matter what stage of life a person happens to be in, but they're absolutely pivotal in middle childhood. This is a period in which a person is away from his or her family for some of the first moments of their lives. This is a time in which children are learning to become more independent and figuring out who they are and what they enjoy. The benefits certainly don't stop here as it more or less takes the form of a domino effect that helps in setting up success down the road.

More often than not, children with behavioral and emotional issues generally have very little to no friendships, and they display extreme discomfort when social interactions occur. They don't know how to interact, how to feel and express emotions, or how to show an emotional attachment. Forming a friendship aids in developing the skills needed in life that will produce confidence, increased wisdom, and strengthen one's self-esteem. A child will also be able to comprehend what qualities a good friend will possess.

Children can learn how to build their own community with the friendships they create. They learn which individuals have similar interests with theirs, and they form their own community where they can play, learn, and explore together. Through their interactions with their newly formed friends, the child will learn not only what conflict is, but also how to deal with and manage conflict.

Early friendships are a time in which many learn to work with others and discover how to work as part of a team. They learn how to share, sacrifice, and build trust via keeping secrets, while also learning to trust someone when sharing their secrets as well. Through friendships, children will learn to

treat others the way they would want to be treated. When someone does something to them that they didn't like or appreciate, they will have a better understanding of how to communicate these feelings that arouse with the problem at hand.

When mingling and playing with other children for the first time, it's not uncommon for a child to overestimate their abilities in certain areas. A child who's only been around his or her family may think he or she is the best basketball player in the world, the fastest runner on the planet, or the smartest kid alive. Through play and interaction, the child may soon realize that's just not the case. These situations can turn out to be some of the best teaching moments for a child. This could influence the child to practice more, train harder, or study more. I have a niece who quickly learned she was well behind her peers when it came to reading. It wasn't until she was around children her age that this realization came to fruition. She was embarrassed at first, but instead of letting this eat away at her and drain her confidence, she instead chose to do something about it. With the help of one of her teacher's and her mother, my niece developed with intensive work to the top of her class.

Like Professor Swanson told us on the second day of class, if you've only lived in Lexington, Kentucky your entire life, then you really don't know what all is out there. I'm from an even smaller city of Maysville, Kentucky, and I surely didn't get out all that much when I was younger. I never realized what all was out there until I went away for college. This theory holds true when it comes to friendships and play in middle childhood. If you don't get out there

and meet new people, learn how to interact with others and develop social skills, you will never know what all's out there and always be a step behind in life. I learn a lot from reading books and watching the news. However, some of the best teaching moments of my life have come from my experiences through my social network.