



EC489

Expanded Learning Opportunities: Youth to Youth Positive Interactions

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**A guide to help youth development
professionals direct youth in their
development of positive youth to youth
relationships**

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Nebraska School-Age and Youth Development Core Competencies

Core Knowledge Area: Relationships

- 1.3 Recognizes the principles that promote cooperative learning.
- 1.4 Assists youth in their efforts to communicate with others, express feelings, and attempts to get along with others.
- 1.7 Understands conflict resolution strategies.



Friends are vital to school-age youth's healthy development.

Friends are vital to school-age youth's healthy development. Friendships provide youth with more than just fun playmates. Friendships help them develop emotionally and morally. In interacting with friends, youth learn many social skills, such as how to communicate, cooperate, and solve problems. They practice controlling their emotions and responding to the emotions of others. They develop the ability to think through and negotiate different situations that arise in their relationships. Having friends even affects school performance. Youth tend to have better attitudes about school and learning when they have friends there. In short, youth benefit greatly from having friends, according to Ferrer-Chancy & Fugate, 2007.

Lesson Goal

School-age youth will develop skills to enhance peer relationships.

Learner Objectives

- Youth will identify characteristics of being a friend.
- Youth will demonstrate peaceful strategies to manage or resolve conflict.
- Youth will describe the importance of friends.
- Youth will state how their feelings and behaviors impact others.



Embedding Friendship Opportunities into the Daily Schedule

In the chart below is an example of a timeline of an after-school program schedule. Examples of how to create opportunities for positive youth peer to peer interaction are listed in the second column of the chart. For each time slot of the daily schedule, place ideas of how you might enhance opportunities to establish and maintain friendships in the third column.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Your Ideas</i>
Arrival	Greeter Buddy — Assign a youth to be the “greeter” who greets the youth by name as they arrive.	
Snack	Friendship Can — Use the Friendship Can — draw out a youth’s name. Have each youth in charge of different snack items. Youth have to ask each other for the snack items.	
Center/ Club Time	<p>Planting Seeds of Friendship, Board Games, Group Projects — Watch for friendly behavior, comment on it, and encourage it. Plan cooperative group projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach youth to play board games. • Planting Seeds of Friendship: Plant grass seed or annuals in small cans or containers. Have the youth care for them. When new youth come to the program/club, give them a Seeds of Friendship plant. Each “friendship can” has a welcome note that was made by the youth (along with their teacher). <p>To introduce this activity, tell the youth that you are all going to work together to make “seeds of friendship” so that new youth will feel welcome and be able to make new friends. Talk about how hard it can be to be the “new” child.</p>	
Homework Time	Study Buddy — Have youth work in pairs or small groups to complete homework.	

<i>Time</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>Your Ideas</i>
Indoor/ Outdoor	Team Building Games — Preselect cooperative use toys (balls, Frisbees®, etc.). Adults organize peer play (tag, other cooperative games).	
Free Time	<p>Friendship Journal, Friendship Quilt, Stories — Read books about friends (ideas for books listed on <i>Pages 9-10</i>). Discuss what friendship skills the characters in the book used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a classroom friendship book. Have youth design their own friendship journals. • Using photos or drawings on colored paper, create a friendship quilt. Label how each photo or drawing is an example of friendship. 	
Departure	Spider Web Compliments — Have a “spider web compliment” in which youth have a chance to give each other compliments as they pass around the yarn to form a spider web.	
Other Ideas:	<p>Super Friend Award, Positive Comments from Adults, Role Modeling, Compliment Tree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make certificates that say “Super Friend Award”. Hand youth a certificate when they demonstrate being a good friend. • Have youth make their own Super Friend Award certificates to give when they see others acting friendly. • See role modeling ideas on <i>Page 7</i>. • Make a big tree without leaves that can be displayed on a wall. Make leaves from construction paper stacked by the tree. As adults and youth notice others using friendship skills, write the skill that was used on a leaf and add it to the friendship tree. At the end of the day, celebrate the new leaves that were added to the tree. Describe the specific friendship skills used each day. This activity also can be used to create a compliment tree. 	

In one study (Layous, Neson, Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, Lyubomirsky, 2012), youth ages 9-11 who were asked to perform three acts of kindness during a four-week period experienced greater peer acceptance. Such acceptance has been linked to increased academic performance, positive social outcomes, and reduction of the likelihood of being bullied.

Activities to Help Youth Enhance Their Peer Relationships

This section includes ideas of activities that will enhance peer relationships. Each activity indicates the appropriate grade level, approximate amount of time needed to complete the activity, and supplies needed.

► Kindness Counts

Grades: K-6

Time Needed: 30-45 minutes

Supplies: Paper, pencils, markers, 11-by-14-inch poster board.

Assign all the youth in your group the task of performing three acts of kindness each week. At the end of the week, have them report their acts of kindness. Youth can make posters to describe their small acts of kindness. Post in a prominent place.

► Friendship Card Game

Grades: K-6

Time Needed: 30-45 Minutes

Supplies: Cards with questions (or a beach ball)

Create a stack of cards using the questions below. Have youth draw a card from the stack and answer the question out loud, or the leader can draw a card, read the question out loud, and have youth give the answer if they know it.

Optional Way to Play: Write the questions on a beach ball. Have youth toss the ball around the group and have the youth with the ball answer one of the questions on the ball.

Questions/Statements on Cards

- Why is it important to have friends?
- What are some things you do with your friends to make them feel special and important?
- How can you encourage your friends?
- When were you helped by a friend?
- How can you be helpful to a friend?
- When was the last time you shared something with a friend?
- Why do you think it is a good idea to apologize when you have done something wrong or hurtful?
- How do you try to make someone feel better if that person is sad or upset?
- What makes you feel better?
- Your friend lost something (book, toy, jewelry, etc.). What are three things you could do to help?



Why is it important to have friends?

What makes you feel better?

What is another term for being generous?

- There is a new youth in school. What can you say/do to make the youth feel welcome or feel like she or he belongs?
- What are some examples of being generous? (Examples: You have a snack and your friend says she is hungry. You are playing with Legos® and a friend only has a few — how can you be generous?)
- What is another term for being generous? (sharing)

Reflection:

- What was easy or hard about answering the questions?
- What did you learn about your partner or yourself from this activity?
- How does talking about your feelings and thoughts help you be a better friend?

► Role Plays

Grades: K-6

Time Needed: 45-60 minutes

Supplies: List of role play ideas and debriefing questions

Sample Role Play Ideas

- Have youth role play their definition of encouragement.
- Have youth role play forgiving someone.
- Have youth role play being a good sport. For example, what does the youth do after getting tagged while playing tag? Example: Not arguing while playing the game.
- Have youth role play their response to getting pushed or hit.
- Have youth role play how to include everyone when playing in groups or doing group activities.

Reflection:

- What problem or situation did you just act out?
- How did you feel about the way you solved the problem or dealt with the situation?
- Discuss with youth:
 - ◆ What are some common signs of disrespect that you see in people here at our program/club? How do you feel about these?
 - ◆ What do you dislike most about the way people treat each other here? What do you like the most? Why do you feel that way?
 - ◆ Do you have to like a person to be respectful, or can you be respectful to someone even if you don't particularly care for him or her?



When was the last time you shared something with a friend?

What are the benefits of having friends who are different from us?

Do you think everybody is entitled to be treated with respect?

► Our Friendship Book

Grades: K-6

Time Needed: 45-60 minutes

Supplies: Paper, notebook to assemble each youth's pages, pencils or markers

Have youth make their individual pages for a group friendship book. Here is a suggested format for youth to use:

All About: _____.

I am _____ years old.

My favorite subject in school is _____.

My favorite food is _____.

My favorite animal is _____.

My favorite color is _____.

I can be a good friend because I _____.

_____.

What I want people to know about me:

_____.

_____.

_____.

_____.

Reflection:

- For K-1 youth, discuss three or four ways to make and keep friends. Assign youth a friendship strategy and have them illustrate a way to demonstrate that quality. After the lesson, put the pages in a notebook to create a Friendship Book.
- For youth in grades 2-6, discuss specific situations in which they can show friendship skills. Then, assign each youth a situation and have them write and illustrate how they would handle it. Create a reminder book out of their pages. Some situations you could have them illustrate include:
 - ◆ If someone was sitting all alone, I would:
 - ◆ If someone tripped and fell, I could:
 - ◆ If my best friend found a new friend to spend time with, I would:
 - ◆ If my friends were being mean to other youth, I would:

What are some things you do with your friends to make them feel special and important?

What would you do if someone was sitting all alone?

What would you do if your friend was being mean to someone else?

► Reading Books

Use reading to help teach or reinforce the concept of friendship. Below is a short list of books that can be used.

Books for Grades K-2

The Rainbow Fish, Marcus Pfister

Young youth's story about learning to share.

Surprises According to Humphrey, Betty G. Birney

This could be used with lower elementary youth as they follow the life of a classroom hamster that helps his human classmates with problems such as bullying and hurt feelings.

Fly Guy Series, Tedd Arnold

Great story about the friendship between a boy and his pet fly. First- to second-grade reading level but fourth graders love it.

Enemy Pie, Derek Munson

Appropriate for lower elementary youth, this story tells about one boy deciding not to like another boy until he actually spends time with him and gets to know him. They become fast friends.

How Humans Make Friends, Loreen Leedy

How do people make friends? Dr. Tripork has just been to Earth to find out and is sharing his findings with his fellow aliens. He shows how humans meet and get to know each other, and what activities they enjoy together. This story is for youth K-4.

Big Al, Andrew Clements, Grades K-2

Big Al just wants to make friends. And in the whole sea you can't find a nicer fish. But because Big Al is large and scary-looking, the little fish are afraid to get to know him. What can he do? He tries everything he can think of — from disguising himself with seaweed to burrowing under the ocean floor so he'll look smaller. Something always goes wrong, and lonely Big Al wonders if he'll ever have a single friend. Then one frightening day, Big Al gets the chance to prove what a wonderful friend he can be.

Making Friends, Fred Rogers, Grades K-1

Making friends is one of the nicest experiences of growing up — but it's not always the easiest. Fred Rogers of PBS's "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" shows that learning to play and share with others can often bring up questions and feelings that need to be talked about. Many colorful illustrations are included.

Books for Grades 3-4

The Hundred Dresses, Eleanor Estes

Used with 4th graders, this chapter book teaches the value of not standing by and watching while someone else gets bullied. It teaches youth not to be followers.

Social and emotional learning is critical to young people's success in school, work, and life.

— *The Missing Piece: A Report for CASEL. Civic Enterprises*

Because of Winn-Dixie, Kate DeCamillo

Friendship comes in all shapes, sizes, and ages. Used with 4th graders.

Lions of Little Rock, Kristin Levin

This is a story of two girls of different races in Little Rock during 1959 and their struggles to keep their friendship strong. It is a very powerful book and very well written.

There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom, Louis Sachar

This is a great story that could be used with 3rd or 4th graders. Youth can learn valuable lessons about true friendship and acceptance.

The Sneetches and Other Stories, Dr. Seuss

This book teaches youth a valuable lesson as only Dr. Seuss can. It provides the message that race and ethnicity need not be dividing lines in a society, and that we can coexist peacefully, regardless of our external differences.

Books for Grades 5-6

Charlotte's Web, E.B. White

Friends come in all kinds of packages. This story shows what friends are willing to do for each other.

Wonder, R.J. Palacio

This is a story of a 5th grader with facial deformities and how his appearance affects his friendships with others. It is a chapter book.

The Outsiders, S.E. Hinton

This gives youth a look at the complexities of friendships within gangs. It is intended for upper elementary youth.

>> Games Played in Pairs or Small Groups

▶ People to People

Grades: K-6

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Supplies: None

Youth pair up with someone they don't know very well and discover what interests they have in common. The leader yells out "people to people" and the youth find new partners. The leader says "elbow to toe" and the new pair must do that, and then find out what interests they have in common. Sample questions: Where do you go to school? What is your favorite movie/color/food?

Social and emotional learning involves the processes of developing competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

— The Missing Piece: A Report for CASEL. Civic Enterprises

► Uniquely Me

Grades: K-6

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Supplies: None

One youth starts the game by standing up and stating “I like this” or “This is something unique about me”. Then another youth who has the same trait jumps up and they link arms. The second youth then states something she or he likes or that is unique about him/her, and the building of the chain continues.

► Trace Each Other’s Body

Grades: K-6

Time Needed: 30 minutes

Supplies: Markers, newsprint

Youth trace outlines of each other on a large sheet of paper and write what they like about that person on the body outline. Share and debrief.

► Friendship Fun Drawing

Grades: K-2

Time Needed: 30 minutes

Supplies: Paper, markers

Have youth draw a picture of a time when they had fun with a friend. Have them share the experience and tell why it was fun.

► Telephone Game

Grades: K-6

Time Needed: 30 minutes

Supplies: List of conversation starters

Have youth sit in a circle. Have one youth whisper — but not repeat — one of the conversation starters in the ear of the youth seated next to him or her. That youth whispers what she or he heard in the ear of the person seated next to her/him. This continues around the circle until the last person announces to everyone what she or he heard. Discuss: How is it that the last person heard “...” when the original was “...”? How often do messages change like this in everyday life? What rules of the game were responsible for the changes in the statement? (whispering, no repeating). When people are really paying attention to you, how do you know? What are some ways they sit/body language/talk? What does it feel like?



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is not based on prescribed curricula; instead, it is an approach that reflects a set of teaching strategies and practices that are youth-centered.

— ACT Center for Youth Excellence

Conversation starter ideas:

- Mary Sue sipped soda by the side of the sofa.
- Manuel manages the market on Main Street at midnight.
- My favorite meal is crispy chicken, chick peas, chicken lips, and chicken feed.

► Trust Walk

Grades: K-6

Time Needed: 30-45 minutes

Supplies: Blindfolds, items for obstacle course

One youth is blindfolded and his or her partner/guide leads the youth through an obstacle course. Once the blindfolded youth is ready, the guide slowly spins that person around a few times so that she or he is unsure which direction he/she is headed. The partner then guides the blindfolded youth to the area with obstacles. From this point on, the guide should not touch the partner at all, but rely solely on verbal cues (e.g., “In approximately five steps ahead, there will be a tree branch. Go ahead and step over it slowly.”) Remember that the guide is solely responsible for his or her partner’s safety, and should try her/his best to steer the blindfolded partner away from obstacles. Valuable lessons can be learned about teamwork and unity. For example, the guide will learn about the challenge and responsibility of caring for another individual’s well-being, while the blindfolded partner learns to trust and rely on another person. The following are some sample questions to ask following the Trust Walk team-building activity:

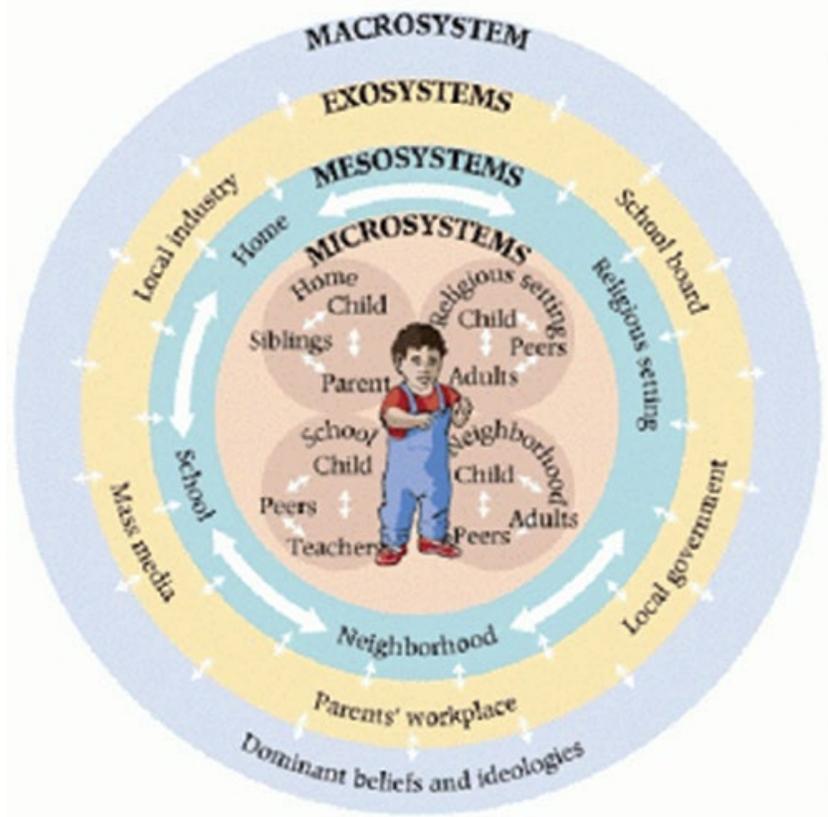
- What was it like to be the "guide," being fully responsible for the safety of your partner?
- Did you have any difficulty trusting your partner while blindfolded? Why or why not?
- Why is trusting your teammates important?
- How did it feel when you and your teammate successfully trusted each other to accomplish something challenging?
- How does this relate to _____ (here you can fill in the blank with the current scenario of the participants, such as class, a sports team, working together on a project, etc.)?

>> Conflict Resolution

Part of being a good friend is learning how to deal with conflict. If conflict resolution strategies are to be successful, the community approach as discussed in Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is necessary. The following are some strategies for after-school and out-of-school audiences for dealing with conflict.

Source: Center for Child and Community Development, <http://whatmakespeopletick.blogspot.com/2010/07/bronfenbrenners-ecological-systems.html>

Part of being a good friend is learning how to deal with conflict.



The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug Free School Program recommend four approaches for professionals to use as they deal with conflict resolution education. These strategies can be used in the classroom, out-of-school programs, child care facilities, and other youth development programs.

Four School-Based Conflict Resolution Strategies (Crawford & Bodine, 2001)

►Peer Mediation

Identified youth are trained as mediators to work with peers to resolve conflicts. This approach has reduced traditional disciplinary methods, supported problem-solving skills, reduced the need for the teacher to deal with conflicts, and improved the school environment.

►Process Curriculum

Educators teach a course, curriculum, or a daily lesson to address problem-solving skills.

►Peaceable Classroom

This approach involves adding conflict resolution skills into the curriculum, management of the traditional classroom, and discipline practices.

►Peaceable Schools

This approach incorporates the above strategies. Every member of the school community uses the strategies to promote a school climate for a nonviolent society.

Responsive Classroom Approach

The belief for this approach is: “Teaching how children learn to treat one another is as important as what they learn in reading, writing and arithmetic” (Denton and Kriete, April 2000). Youth are learning social skills such as cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.

1. Calming down (walk away, count to 10, etc.)
2. Explanation of the upset
3. Discussion and resolution
4. Some kind of acknowledgment (handshake, etc.)

Using “I” Statements

Before teaching these steps, however, youth must learn how to use “I” statements. If a youth has a conflict, the youth is required to compose an “I” statement (see example below).

I feel (name the feeling) _____,
(e.g., “I feel embarrassed ...”)

When (name the behavior) _____.
(e.g., “When I am called Junior in public.”)

I want (what would make you feel better) _____.
(e.g., “I want to be called by my first name.”)

After the youth writes the statement, the second youth will listen to the statement and then repeat her or his understanding of the message. This process will continue until the parties feel satisfied and an understanding has been reached.

Social and emotional learning gives youth the fundamental skills to achieve in school and succeed in life.

— *The Missing Piece: A Report for CASEL. Civic Enterprises*



► Conflict Management

Grades: K-1

Objectives:

- To learn fair methods for settling conflicts
- To practice these methods

Activity:

- Explain that a conflict occurs when two or more people cannot agree on something. Ask for volunteers to give examples of when they disagreed with someone.
- Explain the benefits of settling conflicts quickly and fairly: “From time to time we all have conflicts. We can’t always be the first one in line, play with our first choice of toys, or watch a certain program on TV if someone else wants to watch a different show. Sometimes so much time is spent fighting that none of us are able to do what we want.”
- Ask, “When the conflict is settled in a way that isn’t fair, how do people feel?” Discuss the fact that one person may feel pretty good, while the other may feel pretty bad.
- Explain that today the youth are going to talk about some ways to settle conflicts fairly. “When you and your friend both want to play with the same toy, how can you solve this conflict fairly?” Write down their ideas and discuss the fairness of each. Then discuss as many of the following methods as the youth’s concentration will allow:
 - ◆ Chance — “To solve a conflict, you can flip a coin or play the ‘rock, paper, scissors’ game.” Demonstrate how to play this game and have youth practice.
 - ◆ Taking turns — “Suppose you and your friend want to play with the same truck. To solve the conflict fairly, your friend could play with the truck first and then you could play with it.” Tell youth that they can use a timer to be fair.
 - ◆ Apologizing — “Sometimes we accidentally bump into another youth or do something else that hurts someone, but not on purpose. This kind of conflict can be solved by saying, ‘I’m sorry.’”
 - ◆ Sharing — Explain what sharing is and have the youth give examples of times a conflict could be solved by sharing.
- Have the youth brainstorm some examples of conflict. Then have them practice solving them with the methods above.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) nurtures social awareness, the ability to understand and empathize with others' points of view.

— ACT Center for Youth Excellence

Source: <http://www.ncpc.org/topics/conflict-resolution/activities-and-lesson-plans/conflict-management-grades-k-1>



► Conflict Management

Grades: 3-5

Supplies: Craft sticks (or frozen treat sticks), glue, aluminum foil, construction paper, scissors, straws

Activity:

- Ask the youth to give examples of when they need to cooperate — work together — with others. Accept a variety of answers, and stress that almost every job requires working with others.
- Explain that cooperating involves a number of things, like being patient and accepting differences. Ask the youth for other characteristics (communication, compromise). Explain that they are going to need to use these skills for the following activity.
- Have the youth work in pairs. Each pair receives the same amount of materials — 50 craft sticks, glue, one 2-inch-by-2-inch square of aluminum foil, one 8½-inch-by-11-inch piece of construction paper, one pair of scissors, and two straws.
- Ask the youth to make some kind of creation with the materials. (They don't have to use all of the materials.) Anything is acceptable, as long as each person in the pair contributes to the creativity.
- Allow 30 minutes for this part of the activity. Have youth walk around and look at the others' creations.
- Back in the large group, discuss what compromises, discussions, and skills were required during the activity:
 - ◆ Did you get angry or frustrated with your partner while doing this?
 - ◆ Did you like the way your project turned out?
 - ◆ What kind of voice did you use to tell your partner what to do?
 - ◆ What would you do differently next time?

Source: <http://www.ncpc.org/topics/conflict-resolution/activities-and-lesson-plans/conflict-management-grades-3-5>

► Strategies for Conflict Resolution

- When angry, separate yourself from the situation and take time to cool off.
- Attack the problem, not the person. Start with a compliment.
- Communicate your feelings assertively, NOT aggressively. Express them without blaming.
- Focus on the issue, NOT your position about the issue.
- Accept and respect that individual opinions may differ. Don't try to force compliance; work to develop common agreement.

Youth work professionals can help young people understand themselves better by providing feedback on how they appear to learn best, or by inviting youth to assess their own learning styles and personality types.

— ACT Center for Youth Excellence

Positive peer relationships are vital to a youth's development. Friendships help them develop emotionally and morally and help enable them to learn critical life skills.

- Do not view the situation as a competition in which one person has to win and one has to lose. Work toward a solution that will enable both parties to have some of their needs met.
- Focus on areas of common interest and agreement, instead of areas of disagreement and opposition.
- NEVER jump to conclusions or make assumptions about what another person is feeling or thinking.
- Listen without interrupting. Ask for feedback, if needed, to assure a clear understanding of the issue.
- Remember, when only one person's needs are satisfied in a conflict, it is NOT resolved and will continue.
- Forget the past and stay in the present.
- Build "power with" NOT "power over" others.
- Thank the person for listening.

Source: http://www.kdheks.gov/hcf/healthquest/download/resource_downloads/conflictresolution.pdf

► Books that Deal with Conflict Resolution

A Volcano in My Tummy: Helping Children to Handle Anger by Elaine Whitehouse & Warwick Pudney

Resource to use with the book: <http://flourishnthrive.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/volcano-in-my-tummy-excerpts.pdf>

The Grouchy Ladybug by Eric Carle

Stand in My Shoes: Kids Learning About Empathy by Bob Sornson

Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids by Carol McCloud

Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature (Grades K-2) by William J. Kreidler

The 7 Habits of Happy Kids by Sean Covey and Stacy Curtis

> > Summary

Positive peer relationships are vital to a youth's development. Friendships help them develop emotionally and morally and help enable them to learn critical life skills such as social skills, communication, cooperation, problem solving, and many more.

This publication has several ideas, strategies, and activities for youth development professionals to use in building peer relationships, dealing with conflict resolution, and assisting youth in understanding the causes and effects of their behaviors.

*Forget the past
and stay in the
present.*

*Build “power
with” NOT
“power over”
others.*

*Thank the
person for
listening.*

> > Resources

Crawford, D. K. and R. J. Bodine (2001). Conflict resolution: preparing youth for the future. *Juvenile Justice* 2001; VIII(1), NCJ 188158. www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/jjjournal_2001_6/jj3.html

Layous, K., S. Neson, E. Oberle, K. Schonert-Reichl, and S. Lyubomirsky (December, 2012). Kindness Counts: Prompting Prosocial Behavior in Preadolescents Boosts Peer Acceptance and Well-Being. *PLOS ONE*, Vol. 7, 1-3. Retrieved from www.plosone.org

Zones of Regulation — Nebraska State Department of Education recommends this program. Contact: Julane Hill, Coordinator of School Health, julane.hill@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4352

Ferrer-Chancy, M. and A. Fugate (2007). *The Importance of Friendship for School-Age Children*. FCS2207, Florida Cooperative Extension Service. <http://www.edutopia.org/sel-research-evidence-based-programs>

WINGS for Kids, Inc., www.wingsforkids.org

The National AfterSchool Association, <http://naaweb.org/>

<http://www.education.com/reference/article/teaching-students-how-make-friends/>

Check with your school to see what teachers are using to help youth maintain positive relationships.