

Peer Relationships

This book is a sweet story about a new friendship between two different friends. It shows how helping each other out can really make a difference.

CORE SKILL OBJECTIVES	INTENTIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES	
RELATE 	Children will:	Teachers will:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in and maintain positive interactions and relationships with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge Positive Peer Interactions

TEACHING TIP

As children grow, they begin to show interest in and awareness of their peers, a desire to play interactively with other children, and eventually develop preferences or close bonds with playmates. Preschoolers need your help to make and maintain friendships. One way you can do this is by explicitly teaching social skills using books that demonstrate positive social behaviors (e.g., acts of kindness, helping others). Discussions like this can help support young children’s positive interactions with one another and strengthen peer relationships.

1. INTRODUCE

- “Thumbs up if you have a friend! Friends can be really helpful when you need them and fun to spend time with. Today we’re going to read a story, *Little Elliot Big City*. It’s about making new friends and helping each other.”

2. READ THE BOOK

- Pause occasionally to label and describe character’s positive social interactions.
- Encourage children to describe why/how these are positive peer interactions. Acknowledge and affirm responses.

Acknowledge Positive Peer Interactions 		
<p>Read: “I can help!” Said Elliot.”</p> <p>Label: “I see Elliot lifting Mouse up.”</p> <p>Consider: “Why is Elliot doing that? How is Elliot being a friend to Mouse?”</p> <p>Acknowledge: “You think that Elliot is being a good friend because he is helping Mouse to get the food. That’s a kind thing for one friend to do for another friend.”</p>	<p>Read: “The next day, Mouse came with Elliot to the bakery.”</p> <p>Label: “I see Mouse holding money up.”</p> <p>Consider: “Why is Mouse doing that? How is Mouse being a friend to Elliot?”</p> <p>Acknowledge: “Yes! Mouse is being a kind friend. He’s helping Elliot. And you think that it’s to get something that Elliot really wants. I wonder what will happen?”</p>	<p>Read: “... and something even better.”</p> <p>Label: “I see Mouse and Elliot in the window.”</p> <p>Consider: “What’s happening? What is even better than a cupcake?”</p> <p>Acknowledge: “You said that now Mouse and Elliot are friends. It’s wonderful to have friends that are kind and that help you out. That’s something friends do for one another.”</p>

3. REVIEW

- “Elliot was feeling really small and things were hard for him until he saw Mouse, who was having an even harder time. They helped each other get what they wanted, and they became friends.”

4. KEEP IT GOING

- Focus children’s attention on positive peer interactions (e.g., “I saw you and (Peer) sharing the blocks. That was nice teamwork!”). Build routines into your day that highlight positive friendship behaviors. For example, a board where you add a note when a child helps a friend, certificates for how well they share, etc., or daily ‘kindness check-ins’ where you share stories of kindness. Remember that positive peer interactions can be more than a physical act – they can be words of encouragement, offering a solution to a problem, or offering to help others.