



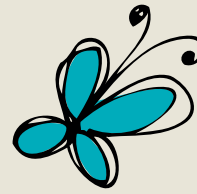
## 5 TIPS FOR PARENTS ABOUT FRIENDSHIP

### 1. Have friendly talks at home!

Parents are a child's most important role models. How we talk together at home shapes a child's understanding of what is and is not okay. When something is difficult or painful for your child, comfort and support him/her. Try to ask questions and dig deeper to find out what really happened. Do not speak negatively about other children, their parents, a teacher, or the school. Instead, any concerns should be brought directly to the kindergarten/school, parent representatives, or parent/teacher meetings.

### 2. Mix up who plays with whom!

When a child plays with children from other friendship groups, they take part in a form of play that gives rise to positive achievements, new learning experiences, and feelings of safety. They can try out new ways of thinking, being and playing, and, at the same time, more children can join in. We as adults can help make this kind of play happen.



### 3. Make sure everyone gets invited!

It can be hurtful to not be invited to a birthday or party. We must make sure no one is left out. Invite all the children in the kindergarten unit or class, or choose another inclusive grouping approach (for example, all the girls or all the boys). Talk about birthday rules at the parent meetings. How can we make everyone feel included? How can parents cooperate with the kindergarten and school to succeed with this? The best thing you can do for your own child is to do something for someone else's child as well.

### 4. Help children to be brave!

It takes courage, safety, and practice to stand up against bullying, to invite others to join in on your games, and to say if someone is being treated badly. Teach your child that it is important to not hurt people or leave them out, and that it is just as important to try to help or tell a grown-up if you see something bad happen. If more people did that, then less people would be left out or hurt.

### 5. Be open, positive, and listen!

It can be difficult to tell someone that your own child is alone and needs friends. It can also be difficult to be open about your own child being unkind or leaving someone out. Avoid using words like "bullying" and "victim". The situation is often less straightforward and more complicated than we might think at first. Show that you are open and understanding – that will make it easier for others to tell their side of the story, and for you to help. Bullying is a pattern of behaviour that can be changed with the support and help of grown-ups.

All children have the right to be happy and have a sense of belonging. Kindergartens and schools should provide children with a positive environment for playing and learning, and create a space for cooperation and friendship. All adults in a child's life, including the child's parents and anyone working at the child's kindergarten or school, have a big responsibility to make sure this happens. In this folder, we offer some tips for you as parents or guardians on how you can make a difference.

The best thing we can do to ensure our child's happiness in kindergarten and at school is to get involved! Get to know the other children and their parents, and take part in activities together. Talk about what is okay and not okay to say to others – face-to-face, on mobile phones, and online. Talk about what you

can do together to create a positive environment. Let your child's teacher know if you see or hear something that might be a sign that a child is having difficulties.

Bullying does not only concern the children who are directly involved, but has a negative impact on the whole group. That is why we all need to care about bullying, whether it occurs at kindergarten/school or outside school hours, via social media or mobile phones. Children need our help to understand the serious consequences bullying and exclusion can have. We have to show them how to treat others with respect, and teach them to appreciate differences between people. No child is the same, and that is a good thing!

