

# Navigating Friendships

## Key Ideas from Dr. Michelle Parker

Experiencing how to “do” friendships and “build villages together” is how kids learn to define themselves and have healthy relationships.

Friendship dilemmas, and even drama, are to be expected.

Friendships and the associated dilemmas look different at different cognitive and developmental stages.

Helping kids learn how to navigate friendships/relationships is one of the most important things we do for them.

“Helping” often does not look like “solving.”

1. The key is to help children develop their own problem-solving skills.
2. The art of parenting is knowing when to go from “manager” to “consultant,” or when to lead and when to follow in the parent/child “dance.”
3. Helping requires well-timed, supportive assistance that facilitates a child’s own behavior.
4. Expect “more question marks than periods.”
5. Focus on tug-of-wars.

Parenting around friendship issues is often complicated by our own experiences.

As with everything in parenting, don’t forget to breathe!