

Developing Affiliation

For Parents

Direct and reinforce positive affiliations for your child in ever widening circles from home and family to neighborhood, community and nation.

For Very Young Children

- ❖ Family is a child's first affiliation. Encourage positive interactions with your extended family of grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for supervised play with other children, remembering that the youngest children will be more apt to play side-by-side than together.
- ❖ Practice social skills together: answering the phone, greeting guests, etc.
- ❖ Build success into the visits of very young children by keeping them brief.

For Older Elementary School Children

- ❖ Friends are the important affiliation at this age. Make every effort to know the children your own child considers friends.
- ❖ Discuss the qualities such as cooperation, trustworthiness, and loyalty.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for your children to participate in age-appropriate clubs and teams.
- ❖ Offer a welcome in your home to your child's friends, and after the visit talk about why they are friends.
- ❖ Be willing to chaperone or transport your child and a group of friends for school, club, team, or church activities.

For Middle Schoolers

- ❖ Be involved from afar in the affiliation choices your child makes. Offering to make popcorn at your house or drive to the movies gives you an opportunity to assess and guide their choices.
- ❖ Continue to support your child in developing good social skills and self regulation techniques.
- ❖ Affiliations are paramount at this age and a child with impulsive or immature behavior may find that others avoid them.
- ❖ Support your child in affiliating with something larger than home and neighborhood. National children's clubs such as Scouts, Junior Red Cross or 4-H may offer positive affiliations.
- ❖ Help your child prepare in advance for new social experiences.

For Teens

- ❖ Encourage and support your teen's participation in school-sponsored teams and clubs.
- ❖ Broaden your teen's sense of affiliation by volunteering together for national programs such as Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, or Search & Rescue.
- ❖ Continue to unobtrusively monitor the affiliations your teen makes by chaperoning events and making your home available for appropriate activities.
- ❖ If you sense that your teen is becoming isolated or not forming positive affiliations, do not hesitate to get help. Ask school counselors, doctors and/or ministers for referrals.