

Developmental Friendship Traits

Age	Friendship
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly and talkative • Love being with friends, although they may do more parallel play (playing near, rather than with, a friend) • Learning to work together and take turns
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love imaginative play • May struggle when friends want to do something differently from them; rarely see things from another's viewpoint • Eager to do things independently and seek adult approval
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care a great deal about friends and may have a best friend • Can be bossy and highly competitive over friendships • Enjoy working and playing in groups
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often have a best friend, although their best friend might change frequently • Prefer working and playing alone or with one friend • Can be moody and worry that others don't like them • Growing empathy for others • Still enjoy imaginary play, as well as small-group games (four square, jump rope)
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love to socialize (even when they should be working) • Love group activities and cooperative work • May prefer working with certain peers over others • Forming larger friendship groups • Seeking peer approval as much as adult approval
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing more individualistic • Like to work with a partner of their choice • Can be anxious and critical of self and others • Very competitive; group work can be challenging • Growing awareness of who is in and out of certain groups; cliques may be problematic

Age	Friendship
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly, cooperative, flexible • Enjoy all their peers and seek collaboration • Developing a more mature ability to manage conflict
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be moody and sensitive • Crave time to talk with their peers; heavy users of social media • Highly competitive; can sometimes be mean or aggressive • Worry more about who's in or out at this age than they have previously
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May make new friendships with classmates they haven't connected with before • Care more about peers' opinions than adult opinions • Able to work collaboratively with great success • More self-aware, tolerant, empathetic, and secure than at age 11
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay close attention to peers; feel and exert a lot of peer pressure • Moody and sensitive • Can be mean, often due to insecurity about being left out • Tend to focus on small, intense friendship groups • Heavy social media and video game use
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eager to work with other peers and be independent from adults • Able to work collaboratively, especially in small groups, with success • Enjoy working with a wide variety of classmates • Often loud and rambunctious • Ready to distance themselves from adults

Adapted from *Yardsticks* by Chip Wood (CRS, 2017) and "Gesell Theory" (Yale University, 2010). For more information, check out our [series of child and adolescent development articles](#), based on *Yardsticks*, as well as the [Yardsticks book and grade-level guides](#).