

# Strategies for Supporting the Development of Friendship Skills

- ▶ **Examine the physical environment** to ensure that there is enough space for infants, toddlers, and adults to engage in activities. Examples: comfy areas on the floor, rockers/gliders.
- ▶ **Evaluate the physical environment** for spaces for two or more children to enjoy side-by-side activity and for adults to be seated close by for supervision. Examples: lofts, rocking boats, block areas, climbing boxes or play house.
- ▶ **Evaluate the daily schedule** for multiple opportunities to develop play skills each day. Examples: indoor and outdoor play times.
- ▶ **Provide enough materials and equipment** that allow and encourage two or more children to interact. Examples: large mirrors, stacking toys, cars, dolls, puzzles, or other manipulative materials.



- ▶ **Encourage toddlers to help each other** and do routines together. Examples: handwashing, brushing teeth, cleaning up toys.
- ▶ **Provide positive guidance and verbal support** for playing together and helping each other. Examples: “Maria and Tasha, you are doing such a good job rolling out the play dough together.” “Tasha, please hand Maria her spoon.” “Gabriel, will you take this book to Benji?”
- ▶ **Read books** about friends, playing together, helping each other, etc.
- ▶ **Practice turn-taking and sharing.** Play turn-taking games.
- ▶ **Imitate what a child is doing.** For example, sit next to the child and stack blocks.
- ▶ **Describe one child’s activity to another out loud,** drawing the children to notice each other. For example, “Charles is lining the blocks up on the carpet. You are stacking the blocks up high.”