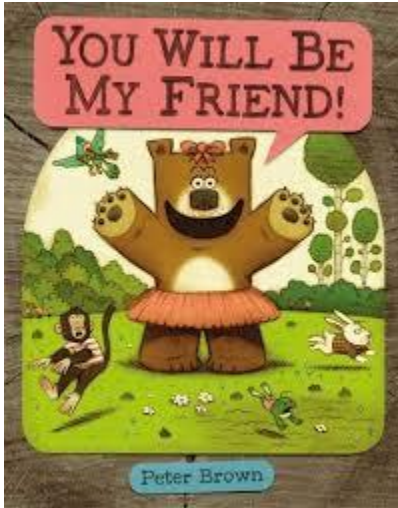


Children's Lit Kit

Supporting Social Emotional Development through Literature

BOOK SELECTION



You Will Be My Friend!

By Peter Brown

Little, Brown Books for Young Readers

You Will Be My Friend! is the story about Lucille “Lucy” Beatrice Bear’s quest to find a new friend. She wakes up one day and decides *today* is the day she will make a new friend. It should be easy, right? There are so many other critters in the forest who could be Lucy’s newest friend. She should be able to find one easily!

Lucy discovers, however, making a new friend isn’t as easy as she thought it would be. Her efforts fail time after time with each critter she meets throughout the day. Poor Lucy becomes frustrated to the point of feeling defeated. It seems as though no one wants to be her friend...no one, that is, until something special happens.

This story teaches children that making friends isn’t always easy, and sometimes whether we make a friend is dependent upon how we approach our peers. Lucy’s experience addresses relationship skills, self-awareness, and taking on others’ perspectives. The illustrations (particularly of facial expressions) and use of text bubbles make the story engaging and easy to follow. The book can be purchased on Amazon [here](#), or an e-book can be checked out for free [here](#).

BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER READING

Examples of activities that can be used before, during, and after reading *You Will Be My Friend!* to promote social and emotional development:

Before reading, ask children how they like to make friends. Ask for examples of a time they made a new friend. What happened? How did it feel to make a new friend? How do you show this friend you care about them? What qualities make a good friend?

While reading the story, highlight the facial expressions of the critters Lucy tries to befriend. Ask children what emotion they think these animals are feeling and ask why or how they know.

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While reading the story, ask children how they like to be approached to play, share, or interact with another person. Ask children how they approach others when they want to play, share, or interact with someone.

While reading, highlight the moment Lucy finds a critter who wants to be her friend. Ask children what was different about this time – what made this interaction have a better outcome? How did Lucy make this new friend?

While reading, highlight the time Lucy found some “critters” she knew she didn’t want to be friends with and ask children why Lucy didn’t want to be friends with them.

After reading, revisit Lucy’s failed attempts to make a friend with various forest critters. Have children identify what Lucy did to try to befriend the critter and recall the critter’s response. Turn these situations into scenarios for children to act out. Ask children to think of different ways Lucy could have approached each critter in a way that would have resulted in a positive outcome or a new friendship.

After reading, watch this [video](#) and have children identify the ways other children say they make friends or treat their friends nicely. Have children talk about the actions and emotions they saw in the pictures. Ask children for ways they show their friends they care about them. Ask children how it makes them feel to be kind to friends or when their friends are kind to them.

HOW WE APPROACH OUR PEERS

Whether we are trying to make a new friend, play a game, or just have a conversation, knowing how to approach and gain the attention of a peer is an important skill. The following activities will address skill development in this area.

Make-Believe: Show children this [video](#), which features three ways of initiating interaction or friendship: smile, compliment, and invite. Using puppets or other movable figures/figurines, have children (in pairs) act out scenarios where these three approaches are used.

Scenarios in Different Environments: In various settings/environments (e.g., playground, centers, cafeteria, carpet, etc.) ask children for ways friendships could be formed in each location then act them out. What would a friend do here? How would a friend respond here?

Game: Include brain breaks like the Name Game. In this game, students sit in a circle and practice getting the attention of a peer by calling the name of another child and rolling a ball to him/her. Encourage and reinforce the identifying of a peer by name and the gentle rolling of the ball to him/her. Add complexity to this game (as desired) by asking the student to share a

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compliment about the person he/she rolls the ball to in the circle. Find more information and modifications for these games [here](#) (pgs. 16-17).

Visual Cue Cards: Sometimes children need individualized support in learning how to gain the attention of their peers. Examples of cue cards for initiating communication or interaction can be found [here](#) (free to access, requires registration). Examples of cue cards for initiating play can be found [here](#). Cues for joining in, inviting others, and rules for games can be found [here](#). Show children through direct instruction how to use and/or respond to these cards and reinforce successful use through acknowledgment.

The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations also promotes use of visual cues to facilitate peer mediated skills and strategies. Steps for introducing these in your class and printable visuals can be found [here](#).

BEING A GOOD FRIEND

Art: Print out copies of these [coloring pages](#). While coloring, ask children to identify the emotions shown by different characters. Ask them how they know what the characters are feeling. Ask them when they have felt these emotions and what they did in response to them. Is Lucy being a good friend? How could she be a good friend?

Project: For a sustained project, have children create a "Making Friends One Day at a Time" book. The directions can be found [here](#), beginning on page "f." Facilitate conversations about the various friends and scenarios addressed in this book.

Game: Play the "Feelings Matching" game where students (individually or in groups) match the image of an emotive facial expression to a situation. When students match the expression to the situation, ask if this is something a good friend would do. If not, what would a good friend do instead? Find examples and directions for this game [here](#) on page 4.

Social Story: Create a social story that explains what it means to be a good friend. Include examples of behaviors that reflect friendship and pictures that show the positive emotions elicited from these behaviors. Get more information about creating social stories [here](#) on page 21.

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ENGAGING FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS

Families are a vital part of the relationship-building process. Share this [handout](#) from the American Academy of Pediatrics with parents and caregivers. Discuss the content and purpose of the information. The last page includes a bulleted list of ways children's friendship skills can be supported and developed at home.

This [article](#) from Education.com addresses the difficult situation parents can find themselves in if their child comes home from school and says he or she doesn't have any friends. Several ideas and suggestions for parental/caregiver support during this situation are provided in order to help students develop the social skills necessary to form meaningful relationships with their peers.

USING THE PYRAMID MODEL TO REFLECT

Friendship skills fall into the broader realm of social-emotional literacy, which is addressed in Tier 2 of the Early Childhood Pyramid Model. When Tier 1 features (Nurturing and Responsive Relationships, High Quality Supportive Environments) are in place with fidelity, early childhood professionals can make informed decisions about which students need additional, targeted social emotional supports. The following checklists can be used to reflect on practices implemented in your classroom to identify your strengths and possible areas for growth.

[Friendship & Problem-Solving Checklist](#)

[Practice Implementation Checklist: Social Emotional Teaching Strategies](#)

This Children's Lit Kit was assembled by Jess George.

