



How To Be a Friend to Your Child and Still Be a Parent

Building a good relationship with your child is not as daunting of a task as it may seem. There seems to be a myth that you cannot be a good parent *and* friend to your child, but to be a good parent you must also develop many of the same attributes as a good friendship. Of course, a parent also has the responsibility for a child's health and safety, which requires rule setting and the discipline to enforce those rules, so there are differences between a parent-child friendship and a peer-peer friendship.

The bonds that you build with your child are what make it possible to be a strong influence in your child's decision-making process. They won't be making the right choices only because they know it is what you want, but because it is what they want and feel is right. This is how you set your child up for long-term success and help them use their spirit to become champions of their own lives.

STRATEGIES TO BUILD A PARENT-CHILD FRIENDSHIP

- Play together at least ten minutes every day: board games, sports, computer or video games, roughhousing, creative play, acting, watching TV, movies, or plays together, reading together, laughing together, water play, and more.
- Treat your child with respect, just as you expect him to treat you with respect.
- Know your child's interest and show interest in them.
- Teach your child skills and let them teach you.
- Avoid discouraging acts such as personality attacks, focusing on mistakes, showing a lack of confidence, expecting too much, and valuing your child only for her behavior.
- Learn to encourage by building on strengths, showing confidence, setting realistic goals, and valuing the child for herself.
- Say no when necessary, but avoid hard no's when possible and help the child find acceptable alternatives.
- Find something in your child that delights you!

No matter what you do, spending time with your kids shows them that you care and want to be around them.

To learn more about effective parenting skills, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help are available for parents of children of all ages. To access the Online Video Library, go to the [ACFC website](https://www.acfc.org), click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.

FREE LIFE-CHANGING ONLINE PARENTING COURSES

In these video-based, interactive classes—available 24/7—you'll learn a consistent, encouraging style of parenting that will benefit you and your children for a lifetime. With this self-study course, you have the option of when to participate based on your own schedule and at your convenience. Gain additional insight from your online group leaders as they provide support and feedback.

Choose from four available courses:

- **Active Parenting: First Five Years:**
For parents of children from birth to age 5
- **Active Parenting 4th ED:**
For parents of children ages 5 to 12
- **Active Parenting of Teens:**
For parents of preteens and teens
- **Crossroads of Parenting & Divorce:**
For divorced and divorcing parents

Continue your experience as an “active” parent by reviewing what you learn in the class in your accompanying parent guide. Each guide contains additional information, activities, and worksheets to help you practice what you learn.

Visit [ACFCcares.com](https://www.acfc.org) for more information and to start your Active Parenting journey today.