

Questions & Answers

Q: My first grader is very shy and has a difficult time making friends. I'm worried that this will affect her in school. What can I do to help her come out of her shell?

A: Some children have lots of self-confidence and others do not. While you can't change your child's personality, you can help her feel more confident when speaking and working with others.

To help your child make friends:

- Role-play with her. Shy children don't always know what to say to another child. Say, "Let's pretend you're at recess. Isobel and Jack are playing a game that you'd like to join. What could you say?" At first, you might have your child pretend to be the other children. You can pretend to be her. But then change roles and give her a chance to play herself.
- Read books about friends together. Talk about what good friends do—and don't do. As your daughter thinks about what makes a good friend, she may start to look for children in her class who might be her friend.
- Build on your child's strengths. Use these as a way for her to meet other children who share her interests. Does she like music? Perhaps she could sing in a children's choir. Is she athletic? She might want to play on a soccer team. As your child practices the skills that she enjoys, she will develop self-confidence—which also may help her make friends!

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