The Beliefs of Parents' and Teachers' in Regard to Enabling Relationships between Disabled and Typically Developing Preschool-Aged Children

Mohaned Ghazi Abed[1]

[1] Institute of Educational Graduate Studies, King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

Correspondence: Mohaned Ghazi Abed, Institute of Educational Graduate Studies, King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia.

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore and analyse ways in which parents and teachers view and help to develop friendships between disabled and typically developing preschool-aged children. Interviews were carried out with 18 parents and 10 teachers focusing on three main topics: description of relationships between special needs and typically developing children, and the significance of such; those methods used to foster these relationships, and any external impacting factors; and the nature of interactions between parents and teachers regarding these relationships. The children referenced in these interviews were of preschool age. Overall, it was found that parents in addition to teachers emphasised friendships between special needs and typically developing children, believing such relationships are emotionally beneficial to the children. Relationships were described as positive overall, with children enjoying each other's company, engaging in common interests, meeting each other's needs and expressing desires for each other's company. Friendships were facilitated in various ways, including establishing 'play dates' or sending children to the same centre. Conflict-resolution was also encouraged in such relationships. Awareness-raising methods for these friendships can be drawn from the research, as well as methods for facilitating these relationships.

Keywords: beliefs, friendships, preschool-age children, children with disabilities

1. Introduction

A review was carried out of existing literature and research focusing on childhood friendships, including studies regarding beliefs amongst parents as well as teachers on the topic of friendships in preschool-age children, and the methods used to encourage such relationships. According to the NRCIM (2000), success in academic and general life is improved by friendships starting at a young age. However, it is appeared that More studies are required in order to fully recognize the friendships development in early childhood. This is a crucial area for study, as evidence has repeatedly shown a link between childhood friendships and social adjustment later on in life. According to Asher, Parker & Walker (2001), the formation of early friendships is still relatively poorly understood, with preschool-aged children necessitating specific focus, as research hitherto has mostly been carried out amongst older children and adults. Friendships amongst special needs children have also been overlooked as an area of study. The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine has stated that, 'it is possible to detect problems in social interaction long before children enter school' (2000, p. 165). It is therefore conceivable that research in this area could lead to increased understanding of how to foster early friendships and thus prevent future challenges in social development. It has already been demonstrated that problems in developing friendships in early childhood are linked to later problems in peer relationships (Bukowski & Sandberg, 1999). Parker, Rubin, Price, & DeRosier (2006) posit that early problems in social development tend to become entrenched and thus negatively affect children throughout their lives.

2. Literature Review

Research indicates the Importance of Friendships and shows that early friendships have implications in several areas, including academic achievement and social development.

2.1 Friendships and Academic Achievement

Research seems to indicate that academic success is related to friendships formed at a young age. Children in kindergarten who make new friends early and keep these friends incline to achieve better at schools and have more positive perceptions of school (Ladd, 1990). Research from FAN focuses on social and emotional aspects of school performance, and seems to indicate that childhood friendships can help prevent failure in school, although the link is not yet fully understood (2001). Childhood friendships can help make life transitions easier, as children with friends tend to experience less stress in new situations. Even literacy is increased by childhood friendships, with student pairings of friends using higher levels of literate language (linked with educational literacy measures) than pairings of non-friend students (Pellegrini, Galda, Bartini & Charak, 1998). Childhood friendships have a significant positive overall effect on academic performance, including school transitions, grades, literacy and general outlook towards school.

2.2 Friendships and Social Development

In terms of social interaction, childhood friendships again are considered significant, providing an important stimulus for social development (Ladd & Coleman, 1993). When interacting with friends, children at preschool and school level engage in 'higher levels of vocal and social interaction, cooperation and positive affect' than when interacting with non-friends (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995).

A number of studies have been carried out, exploring links between childhood friendships and social interaction, including peer interactions, showing a correlation between number of friends and general sociability. One study of children in preschool noted higher numbers of interactions between best friends, as well as a general correlation between the numbers of friends and rates of interaction (Hinde, Titmus, Easton & Tamplin, 1985). Vaughn, Colvin, Azria, Caya & Krzysik (2000, 2001) completed two studies amongst Head Start children, finding that significantly more interactions were initiated amongst friends than amongst non-friends.

Childhood friendships also appear to be linked to prosocial behaviour, with a number of studies demonstrating a link between friendships and higher quality social interactions, including factors, such as complexity of conversation, mutual influence and empathy. The correlation between friendships and the complexity of social interactions—including conversation—was demonstrated in a number of studies. George & Krantz (1981) observed conversations between preschool children when playing with preferred and non-preferred partners. When playing with preferred partners, children spoke more in general, engaged in more complex conversations, gave more relevant responses, spoke more with a common visual focus, and exhibited more relevant behaviour linked to conversation. According to George & Krantz (1981, p.252), play partners 'shared information, sustained interest and influenced each other's behaviour more successfully'. In Slomkowski & Dunn's study (1996), social understanding amongst children was evaluated using factors such as false belief. Children were assessed twice, seven months apart; first alone and then with friends. Despite some variance in conversation length, overall, conversation between pairs of friends showed increased connectivity. The study by Howes (1983) was carried out in a community-based childcare programme and in an outpatient programme for children with ED, focusing on children both with and without emotional disturbances. Over a school year, interactions between friends were shown to be more complex than between non-friends—even in intermittent friendships. Mutual play and the exhibition of positive affect was amongst factors shown to be higher between friends. In both studies, the duration of friendship was seen to have a positive correlation with the quality of interaction. Some Studies have explored the evidence of empathy and sympathy between friends. Costin & Jones (1992) found that emotional responsiveness and prosocial behaviour were higher amongst children connected by friendship than amongst acquaintances. When faced with hypothetical scenarios involving other children in negative situations, sympathetic responses were higher for friends, as were suggestions for active interventions. Faver & Branstetter (1994) observed that children with friends, when seeing another child cry, were more likely to attempt to approach the crying child, comfort them or resolve their problems than those children without friends. According to Guralnick, Gottman & Hammond (1996), preschool-aged children with friends scored more highly in terms of prosocial behaviour than those without friends.

Friendship has also been found to be linked to conflict-resolution. Children with friends are better able to develop skills to resolve conflicts, as demonstrated in by several studies. When observing conflicts amongst preschool children, Hartup, Laursen, Stewart & Eastenson (1988) found that conflicts arising between friends tended to be less intense and more likely to end in disengagement and/or resolution, and that, following a

conflict, friends tended to continue to play together more often than non-friends. In The study by Vespo & Caplain (1993) showed that preschool children were found to be more likely to attempt to reconcile with friends following conflicts than with non-friends, and attempts at reconciliation tended to be more successful, again allowing continued interaction. Similarly, according to Pellegrini *et al.* (1998), children in kindergarten showed increased conflict-resolution skills during conflicts with friends than with non-friends.

In summary, the literature reviewed for this study tends to demonstrate that childhood friendships are important in social development. Although a causal relationship cannot be definitively established, links have been noted between early childhood friendships and prosocial behaviour, sympathetic peer responses and conflict resolution.

3. Research Objective

The aim of this research is developing understanding of early childhood friendships, with a specific focus on the views and practical support of friendships between special needs (SN) and typically developing (TD) children of preschool age, facilitated by parents and teachers, including divergences and similarities in these views and practices, as well as the nature of parents and teachers communication on the subject. Existing literature tends to be based on descriptive or correlational research. There is a dearth of research on specific causal relationships between early childhood friendships and later development (Ladd, LeSieur, & Profilet , 1993). This paper is intended to make a start in filling this gap in our knowledge in Saudi Arabia. In addition, this study aims at increasing understanding of possible methods of fostering early childhood friendships and the impact of various factors on the use of such methods. Moreover, researchers then will be able to correlate the use of these methods with child development.

Another crucial gap in existing research is the influence of teachers on the social development of children. Again, this study aims at setting a pattern for study that can lead to future research. The effects of parenting techniques on childhood social development are comparatively well documented; however, Katz & McClellan (1997) 'did not find any research data with regard to teacher influence' (p. 19). This study also examined interactions between teachers and parents relating to fostering friendships in preschool children, the first study of its kind. It is hoped that this research will help develop existing theories on this subject.

This study has recorded and analysed various methods and communication employed by parents and teachers in the friendships development in preschool-age children, which may be helpful to researchers and specialists in early childhood development. The lack of research focusing on specific methodologies for improving social and emotional development in preschool-aged children has been identified by Kowalski, Pretti-Frontczak & Johnson (2001). Future research may use this study as a starting point for the development of effective interventions aimed at initiating and nurturing friendships amongst young special needs and typically developing children.

4. Research Design

The research for this study was carried out using qualitative method; specifically, interviews of a semi-structured nature. Interviews were carried out amongst both teachers and parents. The interview questions were designed in an effort to reveal information on various areas, including the ways in which parents and teachers viewed friendships between SN and TD preschool children, the methods employed by parents and teachers to foster these friendships, ways in which the use of these methods was influenced or affected, the commonalities and divergences in views and methods, and the communication nature between parents and teachers regarding special needs and typically developing children friendships.

5. Participants

Individuals asked to participate in the current research were parents in addition to teachers of 10 preschool-age children (aged 3–6 years) involved in SN–TD friendships. For each friendship pairing, the researcher tried to include the teacher of the children, as were the parents of both children, giving a total of 18 parents' and 10 teachers' interviews. Geographically, the study focused on a major city in Saudi Arabia which is Jeddah. Friendship pairing was found in a four different childcare programme.

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants:

Table 1. Demographic information of parents (N = 18).

Variable		Frequency
Gender	Male	3
	Female	15
Having a child with SEN	Yes	10
	No	8
Education	Secondary	2
	Bachelor	11
	Master	0

Table 2. Demographic information of teachers (N = 10).

Variable		Frequency
Gender	Male	0
	Female	10
Teaching Experience	(0-5)	6
	(6-10)	3
	(11-20)	1
Education	Secondary	2
	Bachelor	8
	Master	0

6. Data Collection

Data will be gathered and organised in such a way so as to maintain the confidentiality of participants and to make analysis as simple as possible. Interviews were conducted in the place the participants prefer. Pseudonyms for each parent, teacher and child were used consistently throughout the study, and transcribed data were kept in secure computer files. Transcription was performed by the researcher, with the assistance of two postgraduate students. The researcher personally checked the quality of all transcriptions performed by the students so as to ensure accuracy.

7. Data Analysis

Analysis was carried out in a methodical way in an effort to bring to light significant elements in the research data, under the overarching purpose of examining methods and views amongst teachers and parents relating to friendships between SN and TD children of preschool age. Data generated were used to analyse in-depth research questions.

8. Results and Discussion

In this section, links between the literature and the current work's findings have been discussed in line with the research objectives.

8.1 The Beliefs of Parents and Teacher Concerning the Friendships

Teachers and parents are recognised as having comparable views in regard to the importance and value of friendships, with their beliefs seen to be in line with present literature (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006). The description of friendships, as highlighted by the participants, are often recognised through their expressions of affection, with the positive outcomes of such recognised as being in line with the underlying nature centred on two-way affection, which becomes a pivotal factor in defining friendship, where the research results provide further support for such a view (e.g., Dietrich, 2005). Moreover, the way in which friends are explained, as described by the participants, commonly included opting to be close to or interact with one another. Through establishing friendship characteristics, in line with the literature, the defining characteristics were seen to provide assistance in the selection of teacher and parent validation as the approach to establishing the friendship dyads applied in the research.

Despite the fact that conflict is described by the participants as well as it is apparent in the literature when examining the friendships of those of preschool age. Some of the literature provides insight into a greater prevalence of conflict amongst friends: the work of Vespo & Caplan (1993), for example, utilized a preschool

setting with the aim of examining conflict, with the recognition that conflicts were seen to be more prevalent in the case of friends than acquaintances owing to the greater amount of time spent with friends, which could be a contributory factor in the conflicted nature of friendships. Furthermore, the work of Criss, Pettit, Bates, Dodge & Lapp (2002) identified friendships in their earlier phases as acting as a safeguarding operation for those children recognised as being at greater risk, even when conflict was inherent in such friendships, as identified through the presence of aggression. A report made by 10 parents and 8 teachers suggested that friends who demonstrated much conflict in their early years subsequently enjoyed positive friendships and played nicely together, which is a view in line with the findings of Gottman (1983), who suggests improvement in conflict resolution skills as children get older. In fact, the majority of the literature in regard to friendships-related conflicts centre on the ability of friends to overcome problems (e.g., Vespo & Caplan, 1993). This study's findings are supported by the literature when considering that the majority of the friendships—even those recognised as harmonious—were not entirely lacking in conflict, and subjects emphasised that a number of the friends were able to overcome problems as and when they arose. Overall, despite the fact that a few of the friendships examined in the study were recognised as inconsistent and encompassing conflict, generally, the findings show that the friendships of the pre-schoolers could be characterised as positive and enjoyable, which is a view supported in the work of Dietrich (2005).

This study's findings are also recognised as in line with that of Rhodes (2002), who recognises that friendships are prioritised by the parents of preschool children, especially in consideration to any positive emotional outcomes, but also in direct consideration to social skills and their development. The study's findings are also seen to be supported through the research suggestions made by teachers, who hold the view that preschool students value friendships (Kowalski *et al.*, 2001). Teachers' and parents' perspectives suggested friendships as being fundamental to SN children, as indicated through questions centred on establishing the importance of friendships amongst SN and TD children. The results also provided some indication that parents and teachers hold the view that friends were pivotal in helping children to transition to their present preschool as well as to a primary school in the future.

8.2 Parent Practices to Support Friendships

In consideration to the literature review carried out and the findings of this research, parents participated highlighted the use of various approaches in mind of supporting friendships, including arranging playdates (Ladd, Profilet, & Hart, 2016) and supervising play (Parker *et al.*, 2002), as well as facilitating children playing together (Navaz & Ross, 1991). Various other approaches highlighted by the parents included laying a valuable foundation for friendships, such as through the selection of preschool (Rubin & Sloman, 2005), providing children with education and information about friendships, including helping friends to take turns and share (Rhodes, 2002). Importantly, it was disclosed by several parents that the inclusive preschool chosen for their children was done so on the basis of the therapy on offer for children with disabilities, as well as friendship-related benefits which was a main factor in the decision.

In supporting the various dyads, some parents were seen to be actively involved in specific areas, demonstrating a greater degree of intentional reflection as opposed to a more general approach. Parenting practices that provided opportunities for dyadic interactions were found to include arranging playdates with friends, encouraging friendships, and forming friendships for activities in the school environment. They also highlighted strategies that centred on overcoming conflicts, interacting through play with friends, and brainstorming over what or how to play. Generally speaking, the numerous friendship practices were varied, with parents' different techniques seen to be encouraging. Four of the dyads, recognised by teachers as friends, spent time beyond the school setting. It was stated by one parent that "playdates were an efficient way of facilitating friendships". These strategies were held by some of the SN parents, but notably not the TD parents as they are focused on the unique socialisation requirements of their SN children (Rhodes, 2002). Parents provided a number of reasons concerning the use of these practices, such as the following: friendships are valuable, children needed help with improving their friendship skills and in making social connections, techniques centred on focusing attention and avoiding disruptive behaviour, and teachers were not afforded with adequate support to facilitate friendships.

Importantly, When examining the findings across the research questions, it is noteworthy to highlight that most of the TD parents and some SN parents had not given any indication as to whether they used several, or any, friendship practices, despite the fact that these parents viewed friendships as either very important or important. The reasons behind the lack of the use of such approaches included busy schedules and the view that such friendships were school friendships, Nonetheless, although the study of Rhodes (2002) did not provide any support for the view that most parents hold the view that teachers are fundamental in facilitating the making of friends, some of the parents included in this research stated that teachers do not apply any techniques concerned with

facilitating such friendships, whereas others guessed that some were used, although most of them did not know which ones.

8.3 Teacher Practices to Support Friendships

Teachers participated in this research stated they adopt a number of different approaches in mind of supporting friendships, including reading friendship stories, assigning children specific play partners, implementing rules in terms of the number of children permitted to use certain areas, and demonstrating social skills (Sparkman, 2003). It was also stated that they use approaches such as the inclusion of free play time, with friendships encouraged through positive comments (Buysse, Goldman & Skinner, 2003).

In much the same way as parents, it was reported by teachers that a wealth of approaches were applied, ranging from general to passive and more active strategies centred on the target dyad. For teachers, such approaches included allowing children to choose their playmates and friends, discussing social skills and friendships overall, modelling social skills and friendships, and supervising children. There was general consensus amongst the teachers that friendship is a voluntary relationship (Asher *et al*., 2001) when considering their endorsement of allowing children to select their own friends. As highlighted in the work of Sparkman (2003), One teacher reported that

> "in order to establishing understanding of friendship as all children interacting and cooperating well in the class setting, I talk about all children as being friends, where children were required to play with one another, and separating any children when there was a disruption and the inability to play together".

It was promising to find that teachers showed inclination and willingness to support friendships through providing opportunities for the children to interact. Conversely, however, it was recognised that very few teachers highlighted the planning of favourite activities as a conscious activity. This has a number of consequences in terms of the practical, whereby teachers could be more frequently steered towards bringing friends together through making available certain pastimes and pursuits that will garner interest and accordingly deliver a sound basis for interactions. As suggested in the work of Buysse, Goldman, West & Hollingsworth (2008), carrying out events and activities that spark enthusiasm could prove pivotal in encouraging a child to join in with a child with mobility problems, although some teachers were seen to restrict themselves in terms of the adoption of techniques. In line with current works (Buysse *et al*., 2003), it has been stated by teachers that it was rare that they would help parents to arrange playdates outside of the school environment, with two teachers noting that contact details are shared with parents in mind of encouraging playdates.

Teacher approaches were found to be well aligned with the parent strategies regarding -facilitating interactions and overcoming problems, involvement in play, brainstorming ideas in regards play, and giving assistance and advice on social schools' use. It was highlighted by the Hestenes & Carroll (2000) that the teacher has a key role to play in setting the foundation for interactions of play between students—regardless of disabilities—which provides the suggestion that teacher support and presence are critical for enhancing inclusive interactions, and that teachers are required to direct keen attention to their own behaviours that can increase the levels of play and the interactions between children of all abilities.

As in the case of parents, it was found that the various friendship-related techniques detailed by teachers was encouraging. More specifically, a number of teachers highlighted the use of facilitative approaches. Also encouraging was the justification provided by teachers in regard to the application of facilitative practices, which showcased their understanding of the various socialisation needs of various Special Needs students. It was considered that children with special needs could be influential in those methods implemented by teachers in mind of providing friendships with support, as highlighted by Buysse *et al*. (2003). This hypothesis could be recognised as stemming from the data in the sense that all of the teachers stated that the disability of SN children affected their decision as to implemented one or more of the techniques.

Although the practices detailed in this work show alignment with the hierarchical framework, it remains that they have failed to highlight all of the particular approaches suggested by Brown, Odom, & McConnell (2007). At the very bottom level of the model, Brown *et al*. (2007) positions interventions across the classroom, including the inclusion of children with disabilities, developmentally appropriate practices and affective interventions; at the centre of the model is the inclusion of naturalistic interventions, such as friendship activities and incidental teaching; whilst the top of the model includes activities of social integration and training interventions centred on social skills.

8.4 Parent–Teacher Communication about Friendships

This research provides a valuable contribution in relation to the present literature in terms of highlighting teacher–parent communication in regard to preschool friendships in Saudi Arabia. Importantly, on the specific topic of home–school continuity, no prior research has been found. Most teachers and parents outlined communication in consideration to such friendships, and also reported satisfaction with the communication between the school and the home in this regard. Other views are considered later on in this paper. Most parents and teachers highlighted their communication as being most commonly through more informal means.

Some of the responses implied that information as provided by teachers in regard to the daily activities of the child overall, with the target friend not always mentioned. It was promising to recognise that some teachers highlighted the fact that parents were kept informed as to which children were friends, with parents provided with information concerning such friendships. The suggestion has been made by Buysse *et al*. (2003) that the sharing of such information in regard to the friendships created in the preschool environment could prove fundamental when SN children are involved, especially when considering those children who previously may have experienced problems in communicating this to their families. Without such communication between the parents and teachers, there may be a lack of insight into the situation relating to children's friendships, with parents unaware of the potential to build and maintain their child's friendships. Moreover, some parents reported asking about the conflicts between friends.

It was indicated throughout the course of the parent interviews that the parents of SN children showed a greater degree of communication with teachers. Generally speaking, it was indicated through the teacher interviews that teachers communicated in a similar way with TD and specially with SN parents in regard to providing information relating to friendships. Nonetheless, it was stated by some teachers that they conversed more so with the parents of children with special needs owing to the disability of the child. Accordingly, it may be that disability status has some degree of affect in encouraging teachers and SN parents to participate in home–school communicating relating to friendships.

It should be noted that there was a lack of responses surrounding the value teachers place on parents as good sources of information in consideration to friendships. Teachers did stated providing information and being asked to give information, but did not state that they themselves asked parents about friendships. In a similar vein, parents were not seen to consider themselves as good sources information sources in relation to friendships, except for in one case, where the parent stated their want to be recognised as such, as well as of an active member of their child's circle, further emphasising their want for more friendship-focused communication with teachers.

Nonetheless, the lack of responses acknowledging parents valuable information sources continues to be a problem. Families and teachers coming together in order to share information and make decisions in regards a child's goals has been highlighted as important through devising the most suitable practice guidelines for education throughout a child's early years (Kostelnik, Soderman & Whiren, 2015). In a comparable vein, it is held that practices relating to early childhood education and early intervention reiterate the need for family-oriented practices, including working together in mind of achieving outcomes recognised by the family as both valuable and important (Sandall & Hemmeter, 2006). In line with such guidelines, there is the suggestion that teachers need to place emphasis on working towards creating and maintaining relationships with families, with personnel preparation initiatives recognised as able to provide strategies and training that can aid teachers in helping to apply such family-oriented practices.

The last finding relating to home–school communicating in the particular area of friendship related to the fact that some teachers and parents had faced obstacles to communication, with various reasons for this. Some parents held the view that communication pertaining to a particular friendship was not necessary unless there were problems, with some teachers recognising that friendship-related concerns were not widely voiced. Accordingly, it is suggested that teachers need to find ways of communicating about friendship on a regular and consistent basis in an effort to ensure parents understand the value of such friendships.

8.5 Implications for Practice

The majority of teachers and parents involved in the research held the view that particular friendships were fundamental to the child's wellbeing and development. Various practices have been recommended by Virginia, Barbara, & Martie (2001) aimed at providing friendships with support, and notably so doing through classroom-wide actions centred on establishing an environment useful in regards friendships, their development and maintenance, through to individualised interventions. Moreover, the present work provides a valuable contribution through explaining the reported use of approaches by both teachers and parents.

Moreover, it is important that preparation programmes centre on ensuring the increased awareness of family-oriented practices, whilst providing teachers with the necessary tools and experiences to enable home–school education relating to friendships to be communicated without delay. The need to ensure family involvement has been emphasized by several studies, and also the need for families to be involved across all aspects of personnel preparation, such as in field experiences, for example (Stayton, 2004). Future teachers could be made aware of the considerations recognised as fundamental to the families of those children with special needs, such as the friendships of their children, through field experiences; one example is the family mentorship project detailed in the work of Stayton (2004).

References

Asher, S. R., Parker, J. G., & Walker, D. L. (2001). Distinguishing friendship from acceptance: Implications for intervention and assessment. In W. F. Bukowski, A. F. Newcomb & W. W. Hartup (Eds.), *The company they keep: Friendship in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 366-405). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Breadekamp, S., & Copple, C. (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs: In early childhood programs*. Washington, D.C: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Brown, W. H., Odom, S.L., & McConnell S.R. (2007). *Social competence of young children: Risk, disability, and evidence-based practices*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.Bukowski, W. M., & Sandberg, D. (1999). Peer relationships and quality of life. *Acta Paediatrica Supplements, 428*, 108-109. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1651-2227.1999.tb14365.x

Buysse, V., Goldman, B. D., & Skinner, M. L. (2003). Friendship formation in inclusive early childhood classrooms: what is the teacher's role?. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 18*(4), 485-501. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2003.09.007

Buysse, V., Goldman, B.D., West, T., & Hollingsworth, H. (2008). Friendships in early childhood: Implications for early education and intervention. In W. H. Brown, S. L. Odom & S. R. McConnell (Eds.), *Social competence of young children: Risk, disability, and intervention* (pp. 77-97). Baltimore: Brookes.

Child Mental Health Foundations and Agencies Network [FAN]. (2001). *A good beginning: Sending America's children to school with the social and emotional competence they need to succeed*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.

Costin, S. E., & Jones, D. C. (1992). Friendship as a facilitator of emotional responsiveness and prosocial interventions among young children. *Developmental Psychology, 28*, 941-947. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.28.5.941

Criss, M. M., Pettit, G. S., Bates, J. E., Dodge, K. A., & Lapp, A. L. (2002). Family Adversity, Positive Peer Relationships, and Children's Externalizing Behavior: A Longitudinal Perspective on Risk and Resilience. *Child Development, 73*(4), 1220-1237.Dietrich, S. L. (2005). A look at friendships between preschool-aged children with and without disabilities in two inclusive classrooms. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 3*(2), 193-216. https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X05053933

Farver, J. M., & Branstetter, W. H. (1994). Preschoolers' prosocial responses to their peers' distress. *Developmental Psychology*, *30*, 334-341. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.30.3.334

George, S. W., & Krantz, M. (1981). The effects of preferred play partnership on communication adequacy [Electronic version]. *The Journal of Psychology*, *109*, 245-253. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1981.9915312

Gottman, J. M., & Graziano, W. G. (1983). *How children become friends*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Guralnick, M. J., Gottman, J. M., & Hammond, M. A. (1996). Effects of social setting on the friendship formation of young children differing in developmental status. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *17*, 625-651. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0193-3973(96)90019-2

Hartup, W. W., Laursen, B., Stewart, M. I., & Eastenson, A. (1988). Conflict and the friendship relations of young children. *Child Development*, *59*, 1590-1600. https://doi.org/10.2307/1130673

Hestenes, L. L., & Carroll, D. E. (2000). The Play Interactions of Young Children with and without Disabilities: Individual and Environmental Influences. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 15*(2), 229-46.

Hinde, R. A., Titmus, G., Easton, D., & Tamplin, A. (1985). Incidence of "friendship" and behavior toward strong associates versus nonassociates in preschoolers. *Child Development*, *56*, 234-245. https://doi.org/10.2307/1130190

Howes, C. (1983). Patterns of friendship. *Child Development*, *54*, 1041-1053. https://doi.org/10.2307/1129908

Katz, L. G., & McClellan, D. E. (1997). NAEYC research into practice series: Vol. 8. *Fostering children's social competence: The teacher's role*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Kostelnik, M. J., Soderman, A. K., & Whiren, A. P. (2015). *Developmentally appropriate curriculum: Best practices in early childhood education*. Boston: Pearson.

Kowalski, K., Pretti-Frontczak, K., & Johnson, L. (2001). Preschool teachers' beliefs concerning the importance of various developmental skills and abilities [Electronic version]. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 16*, 5-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/02568540109594970

Ladd, G. W. (1990). Having friends, keeping friends, making friends, and being liked by peers in the classroom: Predictors of children's early school adjustment?. *Child Development*, *61*, 1081-1100. https://doi.org/10.2307/1130877

Ladd, G. W., & Coleman, C. C. (1993). Young children's peer relationships: Forms, features, and functions. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *The Handbook of research on the education of young children* (pp. 57-76). New York: MacMillan.

Ladd, G. W., LeSieur, K. D., & Profilet, S. M. (1993). Direct parental influences on young children's peer relations. In S. Duck (Series & Vol. Ed.), *Understanding relationship processes series: Vol. 2. Learning about relationships* (pp. 152-183). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Ladd, G. W., Profilet, S. M., & Hart, C. H. (2016). Parents' management of children's peer relations: Facilitating and supervising children's activities in the peer culture. In R. D. Parke & G. W. Ladd (Eds.), *Family-peer relationships: Modes of linkage* (pp. 215- 253). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine [NRCIM] (2000). From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. In J. P. Shonkoff & D. A. Phillips (Eds.). *Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences Education.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Navaz, P. B., & Ross, D. P. (1991). Parents as Direct Facilitators of Children's Peer Relationships: Effects of Age of Child and Sex of Parent. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *8*(3), 423-440.

Newcomb, A. F., & Bagwell, C. L. (1995). Children's friendship relations: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*, 306-347. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.2.306

Parke, R. D., Simpkins, S. D., McDowell, D. J., Kim, M., Killian, C. … Dennis, J. (2002). Relative contributions of families and peers to children's social development. In P. K. Smith & C. H. Hart (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of childhood social development* (pp. 156-177). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Parker, J. G., Rubin, K. H., Price, J. M., & DeRosier, M. E. (2006). Peer relationships, child development, and adjustment: A developmental psychopathology perspective. In D. Cicchetti, & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Developmental psychopathology: Vol. 2. Risk, disorder and adaptation* (pp. 96-161). Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.

Pellegrini, A. D., Galda, L., Bartini, M., & Charak, D. (1998). Oral language and literacy learning in context: The role of social relationships. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *44*, 38-54.

Rhodes, H. G. (2002). *Family practices and beliefs around the friendship socialization of preschool children*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Rubin, K. H., Bukowski, W., & Parker, J. G. (2006). Peer interactions, relationships, and groups. In W. Damon, & N. Eisenberg (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 3. Social, emotional, and personality development* (pp. 619-700). New York: Wiley.Rubin, Z., & Sloman, J. (2005). How parents influence their children's friendships. In M. Lewis (Ed.) *Beyond the dyad* (pp. 223-250). New York: Plenum Pres

Sandall, S. R., & Hemmeter, M. L. (2006). *DEC recommended practices*. Missoula, Mont.: Division for Early Childhood.

Slomkowski, C., & Dunn, J. (1996). Young children's understanding of other people's beliefs and feelings and their connected communication with friends. *Developmental Psychology*, *32*, 442-447. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.32.3.442

Sparkman, K. L. (2003). *Promoting social and emotional competence in preschoolers with and without disabilities: What is the role of teachers' educational beliefs and practices?*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Stayton, V. D. (2004). *DEC personnel preparation in early childhood special education: Implementing the DEC recommended practices*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West [u.a..

Vaughn, B. E., Azria, M. R., Krzysik, L., Caya, L. R., Bost, K. K., Newell, W., & Kazura, K. L. (2000). Friendship and social competence in a sample of preschool children attending Head Start. *Developmental Psychology*, *36*, 326-338. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.36.3.326

Vaughn, B. E., Colvin, T. N., Azria, M. R., Caya, L., & Krzysik, L. (2001). Dyadic analyses of friendship in a sample of preschool-age children attending Head Start: Correspondence between measures and implications for social competence [Electronic version]. *Child Development*, *72*, 862-878. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00320

Vespo, J. E., & Caplan, M. (1993). Preschoolers' Differential Conflict Behavior with Friends and Acquaintances. *Early Education & Development, 4*(1), 45-53. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15566935eed0401_4

Virginia, B., Barbara, D. G., & Martie, L. S. (2002). Setting Effects on Friendship Formation among Young Children with and without Disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 68*(4), 503-517.

Copyrights