



# MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS

## FASD BEHAVIOURS

- Making long-term friendships can be one of the greatest challenges for children with FASD.
- FASD is often associated with learning difficulties, lower IQ, social skills and maturity than other children the same age, which means your child may not understand social etiquette and subtle concepts of friendship.
- Children with FASD may be lonely and isolated. This can lead them to be taken advantage of or bullied by other children.

## STRATEGIES

- **Role-play:** Role-playing and role-modeling are effective techniques to help your child understand how to act in social situations.
- **Help your child learn to recognize body language and social expressions:** Look at pictures of people in books and magazines and teach what the people might be thinking or feeling.
- **Involve your child in group activities:** Sports teams, clubs, and groups are a good way to expose your child to organized social settings, build social skills, and meet children with common interests.
- **Develop a support network:** Join (or form) a support group for families with children affected by FASD. Encourage the friendships your child makes at these meetings.

Develop and practice *social stories* to help your child remember appropriate social interactions. Create stories and scripts with pictures that describe common social activities such as waiting your turn, personal space, or sharing.

Here's an example:

*Tina meets someone new and shakes their hand when she says hello. She keeps an arms-length distance from the other person while talking. Tina greets her mother with a hug, because she already knows her and feels safe to have close touch with family members.*

## QUICK TIPS

- HELPING YOUR CHILD MAKE AND KEEP FRIENDS WILL REQUIRE A LOT OF PARENT OR CAREGIVER INVOLVEMENT.
- WITH STRUCTURE AND SUPERVISION BY CAREGIVERS, YOUR CHILD CAN ENJOY POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS.

