



by Karen Stephens

## Friendship Skills: Books for Children Ages 8 to 12

Books open the door to reflection for children of all ages. Below I've listed some that will help children, grade 3 and older, to contemplate the hows, whys, and wherefores of friendship. Your children may enjoy reading the following books alone, or you can both read a book at the same time so you have a common interest. Don't be fooled. Children who can read on their own **STILL** enjoy being read to occasionally by mom and dad. Swap chapters to read and you'll build a stronger relationship as well as reading skills.

Just as is true for younger children, reading books together is a safe, effective way for school-agers to explore the ins and outs of friendship. Discuss the plot and the characters' behaviors and conversations to gain insight on how your child thinks and feels about making and keeping friends. Reading the books together will also create relaxed opportunities for children to ask you questions that so easily get lost in the hustle and bustle of daily life.

Good communication about important things, like friendship, doesn't just happen — parents have to set the stage for it. Talking about books is a great way to begin. Below are titles to get you started. They can be obtained either from a bookseller, child care, school, community library, or through your child's school book club.

At the end of this list, I also cite books written for parents and teachers. Each examines the influence friendship has on development. They also give you tips on nurturing children's friendship potential. Enjoy the discovery.

### Children's Books for Ages 8 to 12

- *39 Uses for a Friend* by Harriet Ziefert (New York: Penguin USA, 2001).
- *A Bear Called Paddington* by Michael Bond (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998).
- *A Good Friend: How To Make One, How to Be One* by Ronald Herron (Boys Town, NE: Boys Town Press, 1998).
- *And To Think That We Thought We'd Never Be Friends* by Mary Ann Hoberman (New York: Crown Books for Young Readers 1999).
- *Anne of Green Gables* by L. M. Montgomery (New York: Random House Books for Young Readers, 1994).
- *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo (Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2000).
- *The Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson (New York: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1987).
- *Catwings* by Ursula K. Le Guin (New York: Scholastic, 1990).
- *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White (New York: HarperCollins, 1974).
- *How Kids Make Friends: Secrets for Making Lots of Friends, No Matter How Shy You Are* by Lonnie Michelle (New York: Freedom Publishing Company, 1997).
- *Leaving Emma* by Nancy Steele-Brokaw (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).
- *Little House On The Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder (New York: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1976).

“Children  
who  
can read  
on their own  
**STILL**  
enjoy being  
read to  
occasionally.”

- *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (New York: Random House Books for Young Readers, 1994).
- *Love from Your Friend, Hannah* by Mindy Warshaw Skolsky (New York: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1999).
- *Love, Ruby Lavender* by Deborah Wiles (New York: Harcourt, 2001).
- *Missing May* by Cynthia Rylant (New York: Scholastic, 1992).
- *My Friend Flicka* by Mary O'Hara (New York: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1988).
- *No One Can Ever Take Your Place* by Fred Rogers (New York: Random House Books for Young Readers, 1988).
- *Sarah, Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan (New York: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1987).
- *Shiloh* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (Riverside, NJ: Aladdin Paperbacks, 2000).
- *Stuart Little* by E.B. White (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1974).
- *The Black Stallion* by Walter Farley (New York: Random House, 1986).
- *The Care and Keeping of Friends* (American Girl Library Series) by Sally Seamons (Middleton, WI: Pleasant Co. Publishing, 1996).
- *The Friends* by Kazumi Yumoto (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers, 1998).
- *The Friendship* by Mildred Taylor (New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, 1998).
- *The Man Who Loved Clowns* by June Rae Wood (New York: Hyperion, 1995).
- *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Brunett (New York: Random House Books for Young Readers, 1993).
- *Tobin Learns to Make Friends* by Diane Murrell (Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, 2001).
- *Tokyo Friends* by Betty Reynolds (Boston: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1999).
- *Tuck Everlasting* by Natalie Babbit (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1977).
- *Winnie the Pooh* by A.A. Milne (New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, 1992).
- *Wonderful Alexander and the Catwings* by Ursula K. Le Guin (Chicago: Orchard Books, 1999).

#### **Books of Interest to Parents and Teachers**

- *Children's Friendships* by Zick Rubin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).
- *Cliques: 8 Steps to Help Your Child Survive the Social Jungle* by Charlene Giannetti and Margaret Sagarese (New York: Broadway Books, 2001).
- *Building Healthy Friendships: Teaching Friendship Skills to Young People* by Terry Beck (Saratoga, CA: R & E Publishers, 1994).
- *The Friendship Factor* by Kenneth Rubin (New York: Skylight Press, 2002).
- *Best Friends, Worst Enemies: Understanding the Social Lives of Children* by Michael Thompson and Catherine O'Neill Grace (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001).
- *Connecting: Friendship in the Lives of Young Children and Their Teachers* edited by Dennie Palmer Wolf (Redmond, WA: Exchange Press, 1986). Currently being revised, expanded, and updated
- *Good Friends are Hard to Find: Help Your Child Find, Make and Keep Friends* by Fred Frankel (Pasadena, CA: Respective Publishing, 1996).

#### **Books Written Specifically for Teachers**

- *Building Social Competence in Children: A Practical Handbook for Counselors, Psychologists and Teachers* by Lilian Katz, Diane McClellan, James Fuller, and Garry Walz (Greensboro, NC: ERIC Counseling and Student Services Publications, 1995).
- *Connecting: Friendship in the Lives of Young Children and Their Teachers* edited by Dennie Palmer Wolf (Redmond, WA: Exchange Press, 1986). Currently being revised, expanded, and updated
- *Fostering Children's Social Competence: The Teacher's Role* by Lilian G. Katz and Diane E. McClellan. (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1997).
- *Guiding Children's Social Development* by Marjorie Kostelnik, et.al. (Albany, NY: Delmar Press, 1993).
- *Kids Can Cooperate: A practical guide to teaching problem solving* by Elizabeth Crary (Seattle, WA: Parenting Press, Inc. 1984).
- *Promoting Social and Moral Development in Young Children* by Carolyn Pope Edwards (New York: Teachers College Press, 1986).
- *Promoting the Social Development of Young Children* by Charles Smith (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 1982).

**Books Written Specifically for Teachers** (continued)

- *Roots of Caring, Sharing, and Helping: The Development of Prosocial Behavior in Children* by Paul Mussen and Nancy Eisenberg-Berg (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1977).
- *Together We're Better: Establishing a Coactive Learning Environment* by Bev Bos (Roseville, CA: Turn the Page Press, 1990).

**About the Author** — Karen Stephens is director of Illinois State University Child Care Center and instructor in child development for the ISU Family and Consumer Sciences Department. For nine years she wrote a weekly parenting column in her local newspaper. Karen has authored early care and education books and is a frequent contributor to *Exchange*.