

Parent Guide to Friendship & Conflict

Helping kids handle school friendship challenges with confidence and respect.

Created by: Horizon ATA Martial Arts | Parent Resources Guide | Last reviewed: June 2026



*Confidence is not just what kids show in class.
It is something they practice at home, at school, with friends, and during hard moments.*

1 ★ WHY FRIENDSHIP SKILLS MATTER

Friendship problems are a normal part of growing up, but kids often need help finding the right words. This guide gives parents simple language to coach children through common school situations without solving every problem for them.

Practice areas: joining in, kind words, apologies, and asking for help

2 ✓ CORE MESSAGE

Kids do not need perfect words. They need practiced words, calm bodies, and trusted adults who help them try again.

Small scripts build big confidence.

3 ↔ HORIZON LIFE SKILL CONNECTION

Primary life skills: Confidence, Respect, Communication
Supporting life skills: Self-Control, Responsibility, Kindness

At Horizon ATA, students practice confidence and respect through listening, speaking clearly, controlling their body, and trying again after mistakes.

4 ! PARENT REMINDER

The goal is not to make every social moment easy. The goal is to help your child practice one better next choice: use kind words, walk away, repair the mistake, or ask for help.

- Validate the feeling.
- Practice the words.

A SIMPLE FRIENDSHIP COACHING FLOW

1

LISTEN

Name the feeling.



2

SPEAK

Use strong, kind words.



3

CHOOSE

Pick a good next action.



4

REPAIR

Own mistakes.



5

GET HELP

Tell a safe adult.

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The Horizon Friendship Conflict Framework



Listen. Speak. Choose. Repair. Get Help.

Children handle friendship challenges better when the steps are simple and practiced before the hard moment happens. Use this framework at home in short, calm conversations.

1

LISTEN AND NAME THE PROBLEM

Start with the feeling and the facts before jumping to advice.

Parent Script

"That sounds really hard. I am glad you told me."

2

USE STRONG, KIND WORDS

Practice short phrases your child can remember under stress.

Parent Script

"Let us practice saying it in a calm, strong voice."

3

CHOOSE A GOOD NEXT ACTION

Ask to join, find another friend, walk away, or get help.

Parent Script

"What is one respectful thing you can do next?"

4

REPAIR AFTER A MISTAKE

Help your child take responsibility without shame.

Parent Script

"Everyone makes mistakes. What matters is what you do next."

5

GET HELP WHEN NEEDED

Repeated, unsafe, or threatening behavior needs adult support.

Parent Script

"You are not in trouble for telling me. We will figure this out together."

WORDS KIDS CAN PRACTICE

"Can I play too?"

"Please stop."

"I do not like that."

"I am sorry."

"I need help."

EXPERT NOTE: StopBullying.gov encourages youth to seek adult help, avoid unsafe places, walk away before threatening encounters, and be assertive without being aggressive.^[1]

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Common School Friendship Moments



Practice these simple words before your child needs them.

1 NOBODY WANTS TO PLAY

What your child can do:

- Validate the feeling.
- Practice one way to join.
- Look for one friendly person.

Strong words to practice:

"Can I play too?"
 "What are you playing?"
 "Can I join the next round?"

2 SOMEONE IS BEING MEAN

What your child can do:

- Use a calm, strong voice.
- Walk away if it continues.
- Tell a trusted adult.

Strong words to practice:

"Please stop."
 "That is not kind."
 "I am going to walk away now."

3 YOUR CHILD FEELS LEFT OUT

What your child can do:

- Ask kindly to join.
- Choose another activity.
- Remember one hard moment is not the whole day.

Strong words to practice:

"Can I join you?"
 "Maybe I can try something else."
 "I can still make a good choice."

4 YOUR CHILD MADE A MISTAKE

What your child can do:

- Take responsibility.
- Apologize simply.
- Say what will be different next time.

Strong words to practice:

"I am sorry I grabbed it."
 "Next time I will ask."
 "Can I try again?"

5 CONFLICT OVER TURNS OR RULES

What your child can do:

- Pause before reacting.
- Use fair words.
- Ask an adult if needed.

Strong words to practice:

"Can we take turns?"
 "What are the rules?"
 "Can a teacher help us decide?"

6 GROUP CHAT OR ONLINE DRAMA

What your child can do:

- Do not reply with mean words.
- Save or screenshot if needed.
- Tell a parent or trusted adult.

Strong words to practice:

"I am not going to argue."
 "I choose to step away."
 "I need help with this."

★ PRACTICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Role-play these moments for one minute at a time. The goal is not perfect delivery. The goal is for your child to know there are respectful words and safe next steps available when a friendship moment feels hard.

What Parents Can Do

Coach the skill. Do not carry the whole friendship problem.



Your calm support makes a huge difference. These steps help your child feel heard, prepared, and more confident without making you responsible for every social outcome.

1 START BY LISTENING

Begin with connection before correction. Many kids need to feel understood before they can problem-solve.

Helpful things to say:

- "Thank you for telling me."
- "That sounds really hard."
- "You are not in trouble."

2 ASK HELPFUL QUESTIONS

Use questions that help your child understand the situation and choose a next step.

Helpful things to say:

- "What happened?"
- "What did you try?"
- "What is one respectful next choice?"

3 PRACTICE THE WORDS

Practice short scripts out loud. Social words are easier to use when kids have said them before.

Helpful things to say:

- "Please stop."
- "Can I join?"
- "I am sorry. Next time I will ask."

4 PRAISE THE SKILL

Notice the effort, not only the outcome. Confidence grows when kids see their own progress.

Helpful things to say:

- "You used kind words."
- "You tried again after a hard moment."
- "You asked for help the right way."

5 WHEN TO INVOLVE SCHOOL

- Behavior is repeated or targeted.
- Your child feels unsafe.
- There is physical contact, threats, or harmful online messages.

Reminder: Ask for support when the pattern is bigger than one hard moment.

6 COACHING FORMULA

- 1 Name the feeling.
- 2 Practice the words.
- 3 Choose the next action.
- 4 Praise the effort.



EXPERT NOTE:

Child Mind Institute notes that parents can coach social skills at home through role-playing, modeling good behavior, and practicing social scripts before real-life situations.^[2]

Using This Guide and Related Resources



Simple tools to keep practicing friendship skills at home.

USE THIS GUIDE WITH THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUCCESS PACK

Use this guide alongside the four printable worksheets: Morning Routine Checklist, School Confidence Worksheet, After-School Reset Sheet, and Homework Focus Chart.



Morning



Confidence



Reset



Homework

RELATED HORIZON PARENT RESOURCES

1



[Parent Resources Page](#)

More free worksheets, guides, and coloring pages for families.

4



[Reviews from Horizon Families](#)

See what local parents say about Horizon ATA.

2



[ATA Tigers Classes](#)

Age-appropriate martial arts classes for younger children.

5



[Schedule a First Class](#)

Try a first class and experience the program in person.

3



[Kids Martial Arts Classes](#)

Confidence, focus, respect, and self-control for school-age kids.



HORIZON CONNECTION

At Horizon ATA, children practice confidence, respect, communication, and self-control every week.



WANT MORE SUPPORT?

Learn more or schedule a first class using the links above.



HELPFUL SOURCES

1. StopBullying.gov. "How Youth Can Protect Themselves From Bullying." U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. stopbullying.gov
2. Child Mind Institute. "Kids Who Need a Little Help to Make Friends." childmind.org



EDUCATIONAL NOTE:

This guide is for educational support and general parent guidance. It is not a substitute for medical, mental health, educational, legal, or school-specific advice. If a child is unsafe or repeatedly targeted, contact school or emergency support.

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