

## Friendships Make Your Life Exciting



1. **Having friends is a way for you to learn to respect yourself and others.**
2. **Having friends gives you someone to share your ideas, feelings, and experiences with.**
3. **It's important to know that friendships don't always mean that everyone is getting along.** Sometimes friends are happy and agree on almost everything; other times they disagree and want nothing to do with each other.
4. **Your thoughts and feelings about yourself and about others will change as you get to know one another.** It's alright. You will learn more about yourself by exploring what you like and don't like in others.
5. **It is nice to have friends from a variety of backgrounds and groups.** This helps you to learn about different people and to develop relationships with people of varying abilities.
6. **It may be tough at times to develop your identity.** Being noticed and respected by others is important to us, but remember to be true to yourself and your values.
7. **Joining clubs, groups and teams at school** is a good way to make friends that share your interests and likes.
8. **Participation in inclusive recreation programs can help you acquire a variety of recreational and social skills.**
9. **Keeping friends is often not easy.** Remember that friends need space and time by themselves.
10. **The best way to make new friends and keep your old ones is to be a good listener, get along well with others, and be a friendly person.**
11. **Special recreation programs and health condition-specific summer camps** are places where youth with special needs can meet and make new friends.
12. **Dating, sexual relationships and quality of life.** "Every person has the right to exercise choices regarding sexual expression and social relationships," and "...lead a life enriched by friends and family and have opportunities for intimate relationships based on informed consent and responsibilities." (from the *2008 Position Statements on Sexuality* and *2009 Position Statements on Quality of Life* by the Arc and the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at <http://aaidd.org/news-policy/policy/position-statements/sexuality>.)
13. **Before going on a date** young people with disabilities like all young people should talk about tips for safe dating with parents, friends, counselors and other experts.

**We're here to help.** To learn more about UIC-Specialized Care for Children's programs and services, check out our website at:

[dsc.c.uic.edu](http://dsc.c.uic.edu) or like us on  [facebook.com/dsc.c.uic.edu](https://www.facebook.com/dsc.c.uic.edu)