

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://www.aaid.org/content_54.cfm?navID=11)
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:

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