

# Navigating Friendships in Primary School



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# Rationale for the importance of verbalising emotions



- Language ability of 5yr olds is recognised widely as the strongest indicator of a successful life
- Emotional characteristics such as resilience and optimism are strong indicators for length of life (optimism being a stronger indicator of stroke/heart attack than smoking)
- Friendships involve having mutual interest in each other's thoughts, feelings and experiences. Friendships work on **reciprocity of trust, respect and emotional support**.
- *Complex skills involved in good emotional literacy. Children need role modelling, scaffolding and opportunity to develop this independently.*

# Our strategy to help your child build their emotional literacy

**T** – Talk about how you feel



**A** – Ask for what you need



**G** – Get help



**S** – *Speak up*

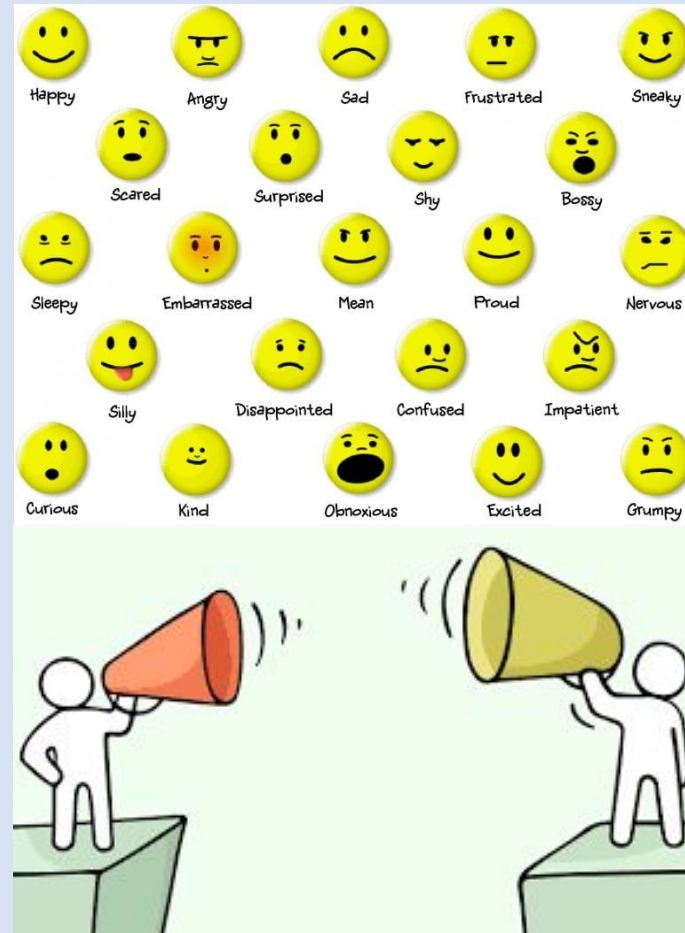


- Human nature at all ages, in all relationships, is that we all want to be truly seen and heard, validated and loved, irrelevant of the situation.

# What you can do to help...

## Skills:

- Emotional regulation
- Turn taking
- Identify how they feel
- Name the emotion
- Confidence to verbalise it
- Truly listen to another
- Empathise with them
- Consider a solution for themselves



## Unhelpful phrases:

Just ignore him/her, Go and play with someone else, Push them back, Send her/him to the teacher, Just say sorry, Just give it to her/him, I don't want you playing with them anymore, Tell her/him\_\_\_\_\_!

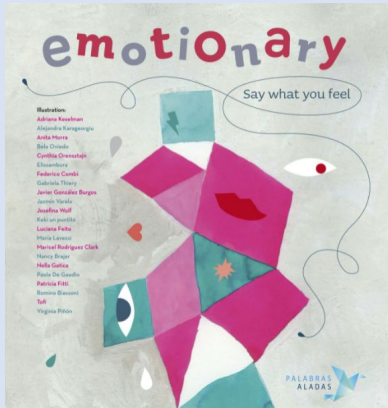
Do not try to 'fix it' but offer the opportunity for children to take turns to speak and truly listen. Allow your child to find their own solutions. Model this in your own relationships around children.



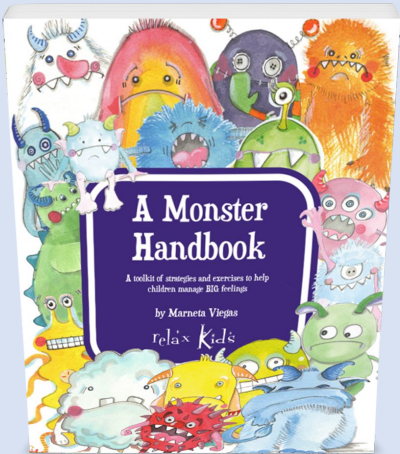
# Recommended Resources

## Books:

Emotionary: say what you feel  
by Cristina Nunez Periera



A Monster Handbook  
by Relax Kids



### Shyness

Shyness stops us from behaving naturally. It tends to get the better of us around strangers or people who seem untrustworthy or threatening.

#### How does a shy person feel?

A shy person feels uncomfortable and clumsy. They fear saying or doing something wrong, so they stay still and quiet in order not to be noticed.

Imagine that you have to spend the night with some elderly neighbours. Even though they are kind to you, you stay silent at one end of the sofa. You don't feel at ease. You might even begin to feel confused.

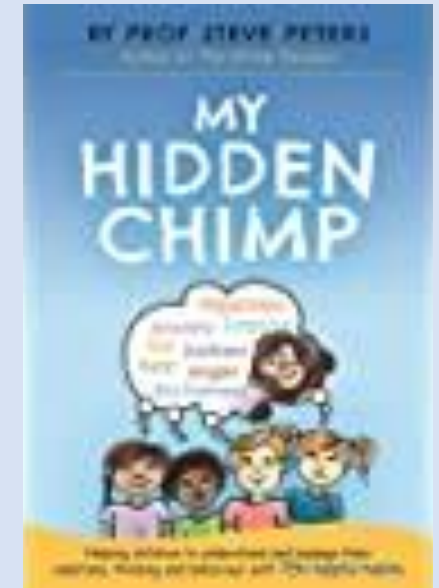


# What do you do when things go wrong?



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- When does unkind behaviour become bullying?
- How to help your child?
- Perception and assumptions – be careful not to use your own experiences. Your child is their own person
- Rebuilding confidence after a difficult experience



# To have a friend you need to be a friend

- Encouraging a variety of friendships for your daughter, both in and out of school.
- Having friends to tea and joining the cricket club/Brownies etc. to build shared experiences with other children.
- Must be a friend to themselves and not expect too much of themselves
- Senior School – Notes to my younger self – self reflection.





# Opportunities to try different skills



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- Introvert/extrovert
- Cool gang
- Circle of friends
- Touring and mingling
- Practice saying 'no' perhaps to the dog or the mirror





# Zooming Out



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- Navigating friendship and relationship dynamics is a life-long part of being human
- Intuitive parental response to difficulties is protective
- **Pause, and consider your overall goals:**
  - To help her grow into a teenager and adult who can form and maintain good, happy, meaningful relationships with others?
  - To be a trusted adult she will come to throughout her life?

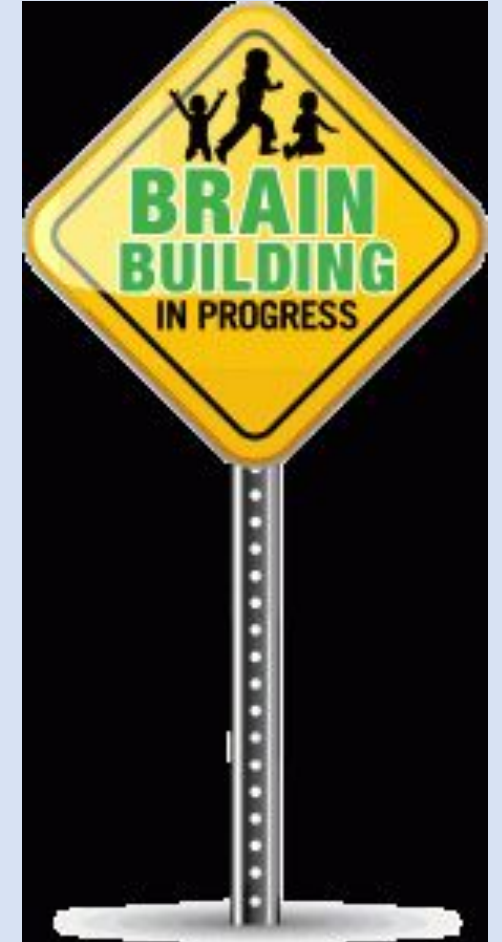


# Teach her how to think, rather than what to think



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- Keep in mind her stage of brain development
- Notice, reflect and validate her own feelings, as well as considering the perspective of others
- Listen, empathise and be curious – ask her questions
- Avoid jumping in with direct advice
- Consider role play

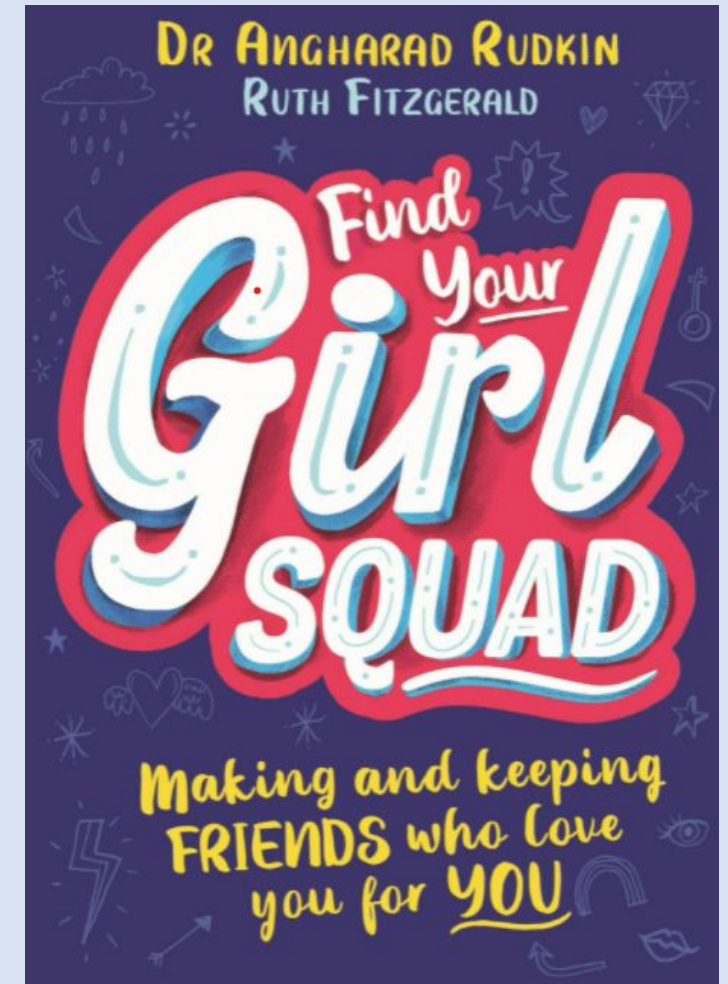


# Build your child's confidence in herself



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- Help build your daughter's confidence in her uniqueness. What are her values?
- Natural to want to belong to a group, helps us bond with others
- Risk of forgetting to be true to ourselves if we try too hard to fit in
- When you're happy with the way you are, others start thinking the same



# Recommended Resources



## **Books:**

Between by Sarah Ockwell-Smith

How to talk so kids will listen and listen so kids will talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Find your Girl Squad: Making and Keeping Friends who Love You for You, by Dr Angharad Rudkin and Ruth Fitzgerald

## **Podcast:**

Good Inside with Dr Becky Kennedy (e.g. “She can’t Play with us!” and other tricky friendship moments)

Is your child confident and contented? – St.Cat’s School Matters [Webinar](#) (Archive)