

Individual Project Proposal

Friendships in Childhood

Background

Friendships are unique relationships. As the saying goes: we can choose our friends, but not our family! Friends are typically those people with whom we develop trust, closeness or a sense of belonging through shared interests or being part of something together. However, friendships are not always easy. They can encompass struggle, tensions and contradictions.

Our friendships are often shaped by societal messages about how we are supposed to feel about and relate to one another. For example, it has been argued that girls and boys 'do friendship' differently and struggle to be friends with one another, but perhaps this is changing as we see greater gender equality and stereotypes around boys / girls being challenged? The nature of friendship has shifted and evolved over time. One key change has been the influence of social media, mobile communication and gaming technologies. For many of us today, making friends isn't just confined to school, work or the neighborhoods we live in but extends online too.

Brief

Despite the recognition that friendships are important for young people's health and wellbeing, we do not know very much about how friendships matter to young people. The following points are areas that are particularly under-researched, and may provide useful beginnings to your individual research project:

- Online friendships
- Boy / Girl friendships
- Friendships with pets
- Conflict in friendships
- Friendships in couple relationships

- Being friends with your family

Key Resources

Agenda: A Young People's Guide to Making Positive Relationships Matter,

www.agenda.wales

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Additional resources

Think pieces to spark ideas

Social Media Is Impacting IRL Friendships, by Julie Pennell

<http://www.teenvogue.com/story/how-technology-and-social-media-affect-teen-friendships>

To make new friends, walk the dog, by Lisa Wood, Hayley Christian and Sinclair-Jones

<http://www.news.uwa.edu.au/201307305916/events/make-new-friends-walk-dog>

17 teens take us inside the world of Snapchat streaks, where friendships live or die, by Taylor Lorenz

<https://mic.com/articles/173998/17-teens-take-us-inside-the-world-of-snapchat-streaks-where-friendships-live-or-die#.kJ5fJI6mK>

Challenging gender cultures in childhood to address school bullying

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elizabethe-c-payne/challenging-gendered-cult_b_8540524.html?utm_hp_ref=gay-voices

Research on pre-teen and teen friendships

'Just Be Friends': Exploring the Limits of Educational Bully Discourses for Understanding Teen Girls' Heterosexualised Friendships and Conflicts

http://www.academia.edu/332017/Just_Be_Friends_Exposing_the_Limits_of_Educational_Bully_Discourses_for_Understanding_Teen_Girls_Heterosexualized_Friendships_and_Conflicts

Boys and Girls Speak Out: A Qualitative Study of Children's Gender and Sexual Cultures (age 10 – 12)

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/boys-girls-speak-out-summary-english.pdf> (see the section on 'relationship cultures')

A snap of intimacy: photo-sharing practices among young people on social media, by Jette Kofoed and Marlene Charlotte Larsen

<http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/6905/5648>

"We're Friends, Right?": Inside Kids' Culture William A. Corsaro

https://www.edu.helsinki.fi/lapsetkertovat/lapset/In_English/Corsaro.pdf

Friendship theory: some philosophical and sociological themes

<http://infed.org/mobi/friendship-some-philosophical-and-sociological-themes/>