

Early Elementary Years and the Social World Around Them

In chapter 3 of *Children's Friendships: The Beginning of Intimacy*, written by Judy Dunn the social world children during the elementary school age are living in is the main discussion. The early school years and the beginning of Kindergarten is a huge time of change for children. There becomes a sense of freedom regarding who and how they can socialize with. They become fixed on the importance and novelty that a school social network/ environment brings. The importance of social skills emerge and children develop into social beings that are capable of many things. In this chapter, Dunn discusses the beginning and importance of child gossip, compromise, morals, and the growth of togetherness or theory of mind.

"Gossip" becomes important during this age and kids find friends based on both of them not liking a person in their class. Sharing dislike towards another student is not necessarily a good skill to have but it becomes very prominent in the social ties children share.

Children also learn the importance of compromise while playing. At the same time, children are growing their conflict-management skills, they are also becoming emotionally attuned to their newfound peers. What a child believes and their morals also interact with how they socialize with the others around them. The thought of right or wrong and which children are performing right or wrong tasks help a child choose who they should become friends with.

A child will care more about their friend's feelings and the intimacy between friendships grow tremendously during this age. Children build their theory of mind and explore with their friends what different emotions mean. Their feelings, memories, and beliefs about the world

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around them are growing and this makes its way into pretend play between two friends regularly.

While using pretend play is diminishing during this stage of childhood. They only engage in pretend play when they know the friend they are playing with is close to them.

The chapter ends with the connection between the individual differences and growth children face along with their interaction of a new and large social network of school. The way friendships change the child individually ultimately depends on the relationships that the child has with each individual friend or friend group. When two friends or a small friend group are very close there is more of an overlap in individual and social development.

This chapter provides a great outlook on the developmental and social growth of this age. It is sectioned off in a way that makes it an easy read. The book as a whole along with the chapter backs up all of their claims with studies that seem reputable and significant. The examples used in this chapter along with the children's dialogue/anecdotes helped when trying to make sense of and analyze the concepts brought forth.

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Source:

Dunn, J. (2006). *Children's friendships: The beginnings of intimacy*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.