

Peer relations contribute substantially to both social and cognitive development. Although relatively few investigators have sought to verify the developmental significance of friendship, emerging evidence suggests that having friends, making friends, and keeping friends forecast good developmental outcomes. Consequently, friendships should be viewed as developmental advantages, rather than developmental necessities, and evidence concerning friendships as educational contexts should be read in this light. Because cooperation and conflict occur more readily in friendships than in other social contexts, friendships are also important to the development of social skills, and children's friendships are thought to be templates for subsequent relationships.