


Friendships: My Safety Net

An extension of "The new kid in class"

Read "The new kid in class" (page 26-27, *What's Up* January 2025). Rita was in a dilemma at first. She did not want to lose her best friends but, at the same time, she knew that the new student should have friends.

As you can see from this story, when students face difficulties, friendships are tested and strengthened (or, in some cases, weakened). True friends are better able to support one another. It is not the number of friends that matter but rather the quality of your friendships. Here's a simple exercise that encourages you to think about the quality of your friendships at school.

1. Plot a little figure to represent each of your friends at school. Use the key below to connect the figure representing you with the other figures.


Me

Key: For lines connecting "me" with friends.

A thick line (—) for good friends who are trustworthy and reliable.

A dotted line (----) for peers whom you would like to get to know better.

2. Take stock of your friendships by examining the web you drew. Ask yourself these questions: How do I feel about my friendships? Are there good friends whom I am drifting away from? What can I do to improve the friendships I want to keep? How can I connect with peers I would like to befriend? Are there peers I prefer to not befriend?

While many children and teens think it is essential to be popular and have many friends, the truth is that it is more important to have a few trustworthy, reliable friends with whom you have high-quality relationships. Spend time to make your friendship safety net look just the way you'd like it to.