Friendship Wobbles

Joining in · Taking turns · Feeling left out · Falling out · Asking for help

A Collyvale Pack for ages 6–9



Hello, I'm Riley.

Friendships can be amazing. You can laugh, play and have adventures together.

But friendships can feel wobbly too. Sometimes it's hard to join in, or you both want the same turn. Sometimes you feel left out, or you fall out.

I have friendship wobbles too.

This pack has words and ideas to try, and helps you know when to ask a parent or other grown-up.

You don't have to be friends with everyone. And being a good friend doesn't mean always saying yes.

For Parents and Caregivers

Friendship wobbles are a normal part of growing up, but they can feel big to a child. This pack gives children practical words for joining in, taking turns, falling out, setting boundaries and asking for help, without telling them they must play with or forgive everyone.

There's more guidance on the parents and caregivers page at the end.

There isn't one right way to have a friendship wobble. Start wherever feels helpful.

Collyvale
A little place for big feelings.

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What kind of wobble is it?

Sometimes it helps to figure out what the wobble is. There might even be more than one.

Which ones have happened to you?
You can point, check or color them.



◯ I want to join in

I want to play, but I'm not sure what to say.

◯ We both want the same thing

We both want the same turn, toy, job or idea.

◯ My friend wants to play with someone else

I know that's OK, but it can still feel a bit wobbly.

◯ I feel left out

Other children are playing and I don't feel included.

◯ We've had a disagreement

We've had an argument, or something has gone wrong between us.

◯ Someone keeps being unkind

It keeps happening, and I'm not sure what to do. This is a good one to tell a grown-up about.

How does your wobble feel?

☹ Sad ☹ Angry ☹ Jealous ☹ Lonely ☹ Worried 😐 Embarrassed ☺ Confused ☺ Something else

My wobble feels: _____

However you feel is OK. Feelings aren't bad – they're clues that can help us work out what we need.

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Can I join in?

Sometimes I want to join a game, but I don't know what to say. I can watch for a moment, find out what's happening, and try some friendly words.



Words I can try

"Can I play too?"

"What are you playing?"

"Can I be on your team?"

"Is there something I can do?"

What if they say no?

Sometimes someone might say no. That can hurt, even if they weren't trying to be unkind. It's OK to feel disappointed.

You could:
- ask someone else to play
- choose something you enjoy doing by yourself or with another friend
- try again later
- tell a parent or other grown-up how you feel

I can say no too

You don't always have to join in just because someone asks.

You can say:

"No thanks. I want to do something else."

"Not right now, thank you."

"Maybe later."

Asking to join in is brave, even when it feels wobbly.

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My turn, your turn

Sometimes we both want the same turn, toy or idea. That can feel frustrating, but there are ways to make it fair and keep the fun going.



Ideas to try:

Take turns

We each get a turn.

Set a timer

We can use a timer to help.

Choose together

We can think of a new idea together.

Have a plan B

We can try something else, or take turns next time.

How does it feel now?

Better | A bit better | Still wobbly

Something I could try next time:

It’s OK if it still feels tricky. You can keep practicing.

Ways to take turns

We can build together, one at a time.

We can share and swap when we’re ready.

We can take turns, and both have a go.

Being a good friend means being fair, kind and thinking about how other people feel too.

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When I feel left out

It can feel sad when other children are playing and you don't feel included.



It might happen at recess, in class, or in a group.

It's OK to feel left out. Your feelings are real and they matter.

What might help?

- Take a deep breath.
- Watch for a good moment to join in.
- Try using some friendly words (see page 3).
- Ask a teacher or grown-up for help.
- Remember, you could also find something else to do that you enjoy.

Friendly things to say

"Can I play too?"

"Is there something I can do?"

"Maybe I can join next time?"

Try a different idea

If you can't join in right now, that's OK. You could:

- play on your own for a while
- find another game or activity
- spend time with a different friend
- do something you enjoy, like reading, drawing or building

Be kind to yourself

It's not your fault if you feel left out. It happens to everyone sometimes.

You are still important.

You are still a good friend. You can try again.

Remember...

Friendships can have wobbles, but kind words, patience and trying again can help. You can still have a great day, even if things feel a bit wobbly sometimes.

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Friendship fix-it kit

Sometimes friendships get a little wobbly. That's OK – it happens to everyone.

You can try these steps to help fix it. They might not always work, but they can help. And you can always ask a grown-up for support.



1. Take a breath	Stop, breathe and give yourself a moment to feel calm.
2. Think about it	What happened? How do you feel? What would you like to happen next?
3. Use friendly words	Be honest and kind. You can say how you feel and what you would like. "I felt a bit left out. Can we play together?"
4. Listen too	Give your friend a chance to talk. Try to really listen to what they say.
5. Find a solution	You could come up with an idea together. It might be a turn, a new game or a different way to play.
6. Give it time	Sometimes it takes time for things to feel better. Keep being kind and try again.

It might not always work

Sometimes your friend might still feel upset, or they might need more time. That doesn't mean you've done something wrong. You can still be kind and try again another time.

You can also ask for help

If you're not sure what to do, try talking to a teacher or a grown-up you trust. They can help you think of ideas and support you.

Friendships can be wobbly sometimes, but kind words, patience and trying again can help.

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When should I ask a grown-up?

Most friendship wobbles can be sorted by trying some ideas, being kind and giving it time.

But sometimes it's a good idea to ask a grown-up for help. Grown-ups can listen, give advice and help keep everyone safe.

Someone is being unkind often

If a child keeps being unkind to you, even after you have tried to sort it out.

You feel really upset

If you feel very sad, worried or upset and it won't go away.

You don't feel safe

If someone is hurting you, scaring you or making you feel unsafe.

Someone is left out over and over

If you see another child being left out a lot and they look sad.

There is a big problem

If there has been a big argument or something has gone really wrong and you can't sort it out on your own.

You just need to talk

You can also ask a grown-up if you just need to talk about how you feel.

Who can I talk to?

- a parent or family member
- a teacher or school staff member
- a school counselor
- another grown-up you trust

Asking for help is brave.

Grown-ups want to help and will listen to you.

You are never alone. There is always a grown-up you can talk to.

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Helping with friendship wobbles

Friendship wobbles are a normal part of growing up. They can feel big to a child, but they also offer opportunities to learn important skills.
Here are some ways you can help at home and at school.



Listen and validate

- Give your child time to talk.
- Let them share their feelings without rushing to fix it.
- Show that all feelings are OK.
- Use simple phrases like:

"I can see you're feeling upset."
"That sounds really hard."
"It's OK to feel like that."

Encourage problem solving

- Help them think about what happened.
- Talk about different choices they could try.
- Brainstorm ideas together.
- Remind them it's OK if something doesn't work – they can try again.

Model and practice

- Use kind and respectful language.
- Practice friendly words together (see pages 3 and 6).
- Model calm behavior when things feel tricky.
- Talk about taking turns, sharing and including others.

Build confidence and resilience

- Remind your child of their strengths.
- Celebrate kind choices and efforts, not just perfect outcomes.
- Help them see that setbacks are a normal part of learning.
- Encourage them to be kind to themselves and to try again.

Watch for bigger worries

You may want to get extra support if your child:

- often feels very sad or anxious
- regularly avoids school or activities
- is being unkind to others
- is being left out a lot and this doesn't improve
- mentions being hurt, scared or unsafe
- has trouble sleeping or eating because of worries

Useful resources (USA)

Child Mind Institute – childmind.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – nami.org

Crisis Text Line – Text HOME to 741741 (free, 24/7)

Kind support, patience and understanding can help children navigate friendship wobbles and build strong, healthy relationships.

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Riley's Friendship Words

These friendly words can help when you want to join in, share, take turns or help a friend. You can try them too!

Cut out along the dashed line. Fold in half along the dotted line.

Riley's Friendship Words



This card belongs to:

_____

- "Can I play too?"
- "Is there something I can do?"
- "Can I join next time?"
- "It's your turn now."
- "Here you go!"
- "That's OK."
- "Can we take turns?"
- "I feel a little left out."
- "Can we play together?"

Riley's Friendship Words



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_____

- "Can I play too?"
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- "That's OK."
- "Can we take turns?"
- "I feel a little left out."
- "Can we play together?"

Friendly words help build kind and happy friendships.

You can always try again, even if things feel a bit wobbly sometimes.

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