

# How the Pandemic is Changing Children's Friendships

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Just one year ago, kids could hold their friends' hands. They shared blankets at sleepovers. They clustered around birthday cakes to help blow out the candles.

And now they don't.

Many things in our pandemic-stricken world are very different. But perhaps the most striking change is how kids' interactions with each other have transformed. Learning to socialise in the era of social distancing can be tougher than any subject offered in virtual school, and experts like [Wellesley College psychology professor Tracy Gleason](#) believe that if children's friendships are altered, that could have an effect on them both now and in the future.

That's because, as she explains, that relationships beyond family are key to a child's development in a number of ways. Friendships help forge skills like negotiation, cooperation, and conflict resolution. They teach kids how to be supportive and show empathy. They also stimulate independent thinking and open kids up to new ideas.

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