

# Helping Children Get to Know Each Other

Try these songs, games, and strategies to help children get to know each other as a new school year begins.

## Learn one another's names

- Sing songs that incorporate children's names as a fun way for everyone to get to know one another. Try the chant "Who Stole the Cookie from the Cookie Jar?" or other songs that use children's names. Children will join in, have a blast with the silly rhymes, and learn one another's names all at the same time.
- Play "Meetball," a simple game with a funny name. As children pass a ball or beanbag to one other, the child who catches it introduces himself to the group. "Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_." All of the other children respond, "Hello \_\_\_\_!" You can play this game at circle time, during transitions, and while outdoors.

## Get to know one another's families

- Using family photo albums or posters, invite children to talk about their families and whatever is depicted in the photos. If some children are too shy to speak to the group, teachers can talk briefly about the child's family while sharing the photos.
- Offer materials children can use to create frames for photos they bring in from home. Hang the framed photos on the walls to foster a welcoming atmosphere. Later invite children to talk about the photos of family and friends during group time.

## Help children to make friends

- Try grouping children in different combinations during center or small group times.
- Invite pairs of children to complete a chore or take a special trip with you to the office or kitchen so they can get to know each other along the way.
- Encourage two children with similar interests to visit a center or do an activity together.
- Distribute a class list containing each family's contact information (after getting their permission) so families can arrange play dates for their children outside of school.
- Organize a class picnic soon after the program year starts so children and families can get to know one another in a different setting.
- Lead games like "Ring around the Rosy" or "The Farmer in the Dell" with small groups of children on the playground.

Do you have more ideas for helping children get to know each other? Post them on the TYC discussion boards.