

JAMES LOWELL

HEALTHY LION

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Find friends who are kind and fair

Social connections are a way to make you feel accepted, supported, happy, and loved. When you aren't accepted, you may feel you're not being seen, social worker Carolyn Smith told the *Healthy Lion* reporters recently.

"Being connected to others creates feelings of belonging and being loved, cared for, and valued," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

People with strong social bonds are more likely to live longer and can help protect you from serious disease and illness, says the CDC. The organization also says having social connections can also reduce depression and anxiety, increase physical activity, and help manage stress.

In a recent interview with fourth-grade reporters in Ms. Dempsey's room, Ms. Smith said healthy social connections are "feelings of being close to other people like friends, family, classmates, and teammates." For instance, you are making social connections when you hang out with friends and family. The connection can make you feel accepted and supported.

On the other hand, an unhealthy social connection is when people are not accepting, are not fair,



Illustration by *Healthy Lion* third-grade cub reporter

Coloring together is one way to connect with other people.

and are mean to each other. They also make you feel bad and left out, said Ms. Smith who works at Jefferson Hospital.

If you are having a hard time making social connections, Ms. Smith said you should keep trying and

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How kids can connect with others

Lowell Healthy Lion reporters recently learned about the importance of making connections. After their interview with social worker Carolyn Smith, they reflected on a time that a connection meant a lot to them. The reporters also shared advice they have on how to make and keep connections with friends. Read a sample of their work below.

Connecting to others means to be kind and make people feel seen. I made two friends in third grade in the school yard. To stay connected to my friends, I am nice to others, I say kind words, and I stick up for my friends when they're being bullied. Advice I would

give others is to be kind, respectful, and don't be a bully. You should treat others the way you want to be treated. —Riley Fitch

I have a friend I met on the first day of school and we talk every day. To stay connected with him, I talk, share, and play with him. I would give advice that to make friends you should talk with your friends and not fight with them. To stay connected to your friends, you should share, help, and play with him. —Tyshawn Freeman

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Cub Corner

Using your breath to help you feel calmer

Breathing Makes It Better

Written by Christopher Willard and Wendy O'Leary

This book is about breathing and how it can reduce our stress. The book also helps kids work with their emotions like sadness, frustration, and fear.

The authors wrote the story about breathing patterns and continued it throughout the book. The authors also connected nature to feeling calm. The word “breath” is highlighted and made larger so the reader could see it. The illustrations were detailed and colorful.

Mrs. Pincus’s third-grade cub reporters read the book. One cub reporter said he liked the book because “it helps you solve your stress. It can also clear your hard thoughts you



Illustration by *Healthy Lion* third-grade cub reporter

may have.” Another cub reporter also said the book was good because it made us better and calmer.

Cub reporters recommend this book to elementary students because everyone has stress in their lives. This book helps you calm yourself down by breathing.

—By Mrs. Pincus’s cub reporters

Why connections matter

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be the person you want to connect with. You should be friendly, accepting, and open-minded.

Social connections are important because they make you feel good about yourself during the day, in the classroom, and at recess. If you’re having trouble with feeling connected, you can always ask adults for help, says Ms. Smith.

Kids can make social connections if they keep their minds open, even if they’re different. People can accept each other, and you can also find people who have similar interests, said Ms. Smith.

—By *Healthy Lion* staff

James Lowell Healthy Lion

The *Healthy Lion* is a publication of James Lowell Elementary School in the School District of Philadelphia. Fourth-grade staff members for this issue include Iris Agostini, Karter Colbert-Liggons, Riley Fitch, Tyshawn Freeman, Khy'air A Jackson-Walker, Jeenceley Joseph Alfred, Raquel King Joseph, Kaeden Mahoney, Sandra Meza Vasquez, Alanna J Norman, Aaren Pollard, and Tichmeng Tang. The *Healthy Lion*’s faculty advisor is Mrs. Martin and the school principal is Dr. Jessup.

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Reflecting on friendship

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I made a friend in the classroom. When he came in and talked, we became friends. To stay connected, we talk and are kind to each other. To make friends, you need to be kind and caring. To stay connected, you should play with your friends and be kind to them.

—Tichmeng Tang

Making connections to me means that I can meet people and not make them feel left out. I have a friend whom I met in school. To stay connected, I share food with him and play outside with him. Advice I would give to others is to make friends is to not bully or make fun of others. Be kind.

—Karter Colbert-Liggons

I’ve had my friend since second grade. We became friends at lunch when she asked me to be friends. To stay connected, we try to hang out when we are free and play games. Advice I would give to others on how to make friends is to ask if they want to be friends. To stay connected, you just have to be yourself.

—Aaren Pollard