

Making Friends



An information leaflet
for young people with
spina bifida and/or
hydrocephalus

Some Do's and Don'ts

- DO** try smiling and say "hello" when you meet someone.
- DO** introduce yourself if you don't know each other.
- DO** take turns in the conversation.
- DO** try asking the other person their views – if you're talking about your favourite TV programme or holidays for example you could ask: "What did you think about what happened in EastEnders last night?" or "Where's your favourite holiday place?"
- DO** show you are listening to them by looking at them and nodding sometimes.
- DO** show good manners by saying please and thank you.
- DON'T** take over the whole conversation.
- DON'T** try and tell someone your life history the first time you meet.
- DON'T** talk at the same time as the other person – listen to what they have to say.
- DON'T** forget the other person is just as nervous as you and they want you to like them.
- DON'T** give up – you can't be friends with everyone you meet, so if you don't get on with some people don't give up trying.

Where to find out more

UK Youth, (formerly Youth Clubs UK), telephone 020 7242 4045,
Email: johnb@ukyouth.org

PHAB England, has 300 affiliated clubs where people with and without disabilities come together. They have group holidays. Telephone: 020 8667 9443.

Girlguiding UK, for details about being a girl guide, telephone 020 7834 6242.
Email: chq@girlguiding.org.uk

Scout Association, to find out about groups in your area, Helpline: 0845 300 1818 (Mon-Fri 8am-8pm).

Duke of Edinburgh's Award, telephone 01753-727400 for information.

Write Away, 1 Thorpe Close, London W10 5XL.

Penpals Club, for adults and children, telephone 020 8964 4225.

Visit or phone your local library to find out more about clubs, evening classes and leisure activities where you live.

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Getting the most out of life



more lonely and unhappy so it is worth making a big effort and forcing yourself to get to know other people.

To make friends you need to think about your behaviour. Try to think about how other people see you.

Is there anything you do that you wouldn't like in someone else? It's not very interesting if someone talks to you and only talks about themselves, without letting you get a word in.

So, when you talk to people, make sure you ask them what they think and then also listen to their answer!

What is a friend?

A friend is someone who you like a lot and who likes you. Someone you can talk to, enjoy shared interests and go out with. Friendship means trusting each other and caring about each other's feelings.

Other people will want to be your friend if you are nice to be with and are interested in them, but you don't have to agree with your friend about everything.

Real friends will know each other very well and understand that it's OK to disagree, or even get cross with each other sometimes.

You do not have to be beautiful or handsome, have lots of money or be really clever to have friends.

To have friends is important to us all, but making friends takes thought and effort.

Meeting people

To make friends you have to meet people and talk to them. You need to be able to meet young people of your own

age, who are likely to be interested in the kind of things that you are interested in.

Meeting new people can be difficult if you don't get out much and especially if you are shy. If you find a group or activity which interests you and where there are other young people, then you have something in common with them straight away.

Try joining a youth club, the scouts or guides, taking part in a sport or an interest group, eg photography.

Some people make friends by taking part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme or by going to evening classes. There are some addresses at the end of this leaflet where you can find out more about clubs and activities.

Start talking

It might seem easier to just sit in the background and not to make the first move to talk to people. But this could make them think you are not very friendly and they may just leave you alone.

If this happens you will probably feel