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## How to Deal When Your Kid Is No Fan of Your Best Friend's Kid

**Having a mom friend is the best. But what happens when your kids dislike each other?**

By Maria Mora

There's nothing better than having a best friend with kids. You can plan playdates and family vacations together. You'll always have an adult buddy to tag along on kid-friendly outings. And you can swap babysitting. But what happens when your kid dislikes your best friend's kid?

School psychologist Stephanie Mihalas, PhD, explains: "When it comes to friends, parents cannot ensure that their kids will get along with their friends' kids. Though parents have developed friendships over commonalities and memories, it does not ensure that their children will inherit the same similarities as their friends' kids."

So what's a mom to do? Mihalas suggests trying these tips to diffuse the discomfort of conflict between kids and hopefully foster positive relationships.

### Make playdates accessible to everyone

"Set up playdates that are obtainable for all ages and genders," says Mihalas. "Allow the get-together to not only include you and your friend, but activities that everyone can participate in." That means skipping the mom date at the mall and instead hanging out somewhere the kids can also have fun, like a park or swimming pool.

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### Try to see eye-to-eye on parenting

No matter how much you and your best friend care about each other, you're bound to approach certain aspects of parenting differently. Have a serious heart-to-heart about how you discipline and communicate with your kids, and try to be consistent when your kids are together. "Kids who often are reared the same way will have some of the same boundaries, wants, likes and dislikes, creating a space that both sets of children can come together at," says Mihalas.

### Plan fun activities

Your kids are less likely to whine about having to hang out with a frenemy if they have the opportunity to do something they actually *want* to do. Mihalas says it's the parents' responsibility to check in with kids and make sure they are participating and not getting into arguments. Engaging, fun activities can make the entire situation easier and less forced while also diffusing negative situations, she notes.

### Don't force friendship

You can't require kids to get along, and trying too hard can actually put a greater strain on the kids' relationship *and* the relationship with your friend. "Do not pressure your children to participate in activities if they do not want to," says Mihalas. "It is important to not overload your child with multiple playdates." It may take a lot of time for your kids to develop a bond with your friends' kids. Give them plenty of space, and be patient.

How do your kids get along with your best friend's kids?

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