

BETTER TOGETHER

Joy in Company

INITIATIVE



Friends in school

Rules and commentary

V0.1

This is a design proposal for a game aimed at children aged 6-14 years.

The focus is not yet on graphics but rather on testing the core mechanics for the age groups and the suitability of the descriptive texts. The materials can be ordered from [Spielmaterial.de](https://www.spielmaterial.de), along with a few A4 printouts.

What remains to be determined is the division of complexity levels A (6-8), B (9-12), and C (10-14), as well as which components are appropriate and at what point the game becomes overly complex.

Preface

This friendship game is currently in development and therefore not yet illustrated. It aims to help children aged 6 to 12 playfully simulate the themes of "making friendships" and "developing friendships." It is also designed to assist teachers and parents in better understanding the challenges children face in this context.

Some mechanisms are described in different ways. On the one hand, the game will ultimately be easier to play with printed cards. However, the initial design with printable templates is more accessible for testing the questions and other game concepts.

It is assumed that an adult will be available, at least within calling distance, to read aloud and clarify any questions for the children playing the game. The instructions have not yet been simplified enough to ensure that children under 10 can easily read and follow them independently.

We welcome comments, feedback, and suggestions.

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Open Questions

- How should the components be adjusted to properly calibrate the complexities for different age groups?
- **Is the concept adequate for explaining various difficult aspects, such as discrimination, bullying, and loneliness, to children of this age group and as challenges in forming friendships?**
- **Is it possible to trigger good discussions for the kids on such difficult concept of discrimination and social disadvantages, before adult induced stereotypes take hold and fortify?**
- Testing the wording of questions and instructions.
- With what modifications could the game also be used as an intergenerational tool, such as a board game for visits with older people?
- Is there a mode to incorporate storytelling (e.g., "This happened to me last time") or icebreaker questions?
- Can short role-playing elements be included, and how? For instance, something like, "You see four other kids on the playground. How do you join them, or do you play alone?"
- Is there a way to introduce a Game Master? Another player would guide the game and make decisions, like in tabletop role-playing games, to keep the gameplay engaging.
- How long does each round take, and do the other players stay interested as the turns go around?

Preparation - Shopping

Printing Templates

- Game board – print once
- Player boards – print a total of 6 boards

Online Purchase of Additional Materials – Simple

The portal Spielmaterial.de has all the necessary materials in its shop. In addition to the printed templates, the following materials are required:

- Pawns (P0001b – 6 colors)
- Small cubes (P0058a – 6 colors, 6 cubes per color)
- Regular cubes (P0058 – 6 colors, 6 cubes per color)
- Additional regular cubes (P0058 – 6 cubes in black or gray)
- If not already available, you will also need two six-sided dice (W0003y) and one twenty-sided die (W0006).

Online Purchase of Additional Materials – With Additional Effort

Spielmaterial.de also sells card sets for printing. We have the templates ready.

- Cards on backing paper (K0001h3)

Printing Card Templates (in Development)

- Character cards, challenge cards, and goal cards (B)
- Appointment cards
- Action cards (temporarily replaced with a d20 die)
- Challenge action cards (temporarily replaced with a d20 die)

Preparation of the Board

A decision is made whether to use Complexity Level A, B, or C.

The different versions are designed to allow siblings of different ages to play together.

A: Children aged 6–8 – simple game with a fairly linear flow.

B: Children aged 8–12 – general game with character traits and loneliness, introducing prioritization incentives and occasional setbacks.

C: Children aged 10–14 – general game with character traits, loneliness, and challenges, featuring prioritization incentives, setbacks due to challenges, and vulnerabilities in prioritization.

Setup:

- Each player receives a pawn and a board.
- Each board gets 4 stones in the player's color. These are placed on Status 1 for the four resources: Fun, Health, Learning Progress, and Kindness. Additionally, a black stone is placed on Loneliness at Status 1.
- Each board gets 5 stones in the colors of the other players. These are all placed on the Acquaintance status.
- B: Each player receives a card with a character trait.
- C: Each player receives a card with a character trait and a challenge.
- All pawns are placed on the 6 o'clock – Start position.

Rough Sequence of the game

Morning Activity:

A: Nothing.

B: Morning activity (roll die, draw a card).

C: Morning activity (roll die, draw a card).

School Activity:

A, B, C: School activity (roll die, draw a card).

Make decisions.

Afternoon Activities (2 PM):

A, B: Make decisions for afternoon activities.

C: Make decisions for afternoon activities and roll the event die.

Afternoon Activities (4 PM):

A: Optionally skip this phase.

B: Make decisions for afternoon activities.

C: Make decisions for afternoon activities and roll the event die.

Evening Activities:

Make decisions for evening activities.

Closing the Day Cycle:

Update resources, loneliness, well-being, and relationship markers.

Well-being is calculated as the sum of resources minus loneliness.

Check for victory conditions (the day cycle is always completed, so two players can win simultaneously).

Morgenaktivität

These options will be replaced by cards in the final version:

In Version A, nothing is done here.

In Versions B and C, a six-sided die (and possibly a 20-sided die in later versions) is rolled.

Outcomes:

1. Nothing happens.
2. Nothing happens.
3. Nothing happens.
4. Rain (no outdoor play).
5. Player X is sick: Another six-sided die is rolled to determine which player is affected.
6. Nothing happens.

Option:

In later versions, events tied to character traits or challenges may be introduced.

School activity 8am

These options will be replaced by cards in the final version:

In Version A, nothing is done here.

In Versions B and C, a 20-sided die is rolled – see event card list.

Simpler Alternative with a 6-sided die (W6):

1. School Test for Everyone:

If Learning Progress = 0, subtract 1 from Fun.

If Learning Progress = 3 or 4, you have the option to help another player (Player X):
Kindness +1 for you, no penalty for Player X, and Friendship with Player X +1.

2. School Conflict:

A bully threatens Player X (roll a six-sided die to determine who).

If no help is given: Fun -1, Health -1 for Player X.

If Health = 3 or 4, you can help:

No penalty for Player X, Kindness +1 for the helper, and Friendship with Player X +1.

3. Nothing happens.

4. Nothing happens.

5. Nothing happens.

6. Nothing happens.

Afternoon activity I - 2 pm

In the final version, other mechanisms will be implemented, but for now, the choice of afternoon activities is being tested.

Version A:

Each child openly decides their activity by placing their pawn. Activities are then carried out as follows: Playing: +1 Fun, Sports: +1 Health, Playing Outdoors: +1 Health, Homework: +1 Learning Progress

It is unclear whether the mechanism for Version B will also work here.

Version B:

Each child chooses an activity (maximum of three children per activity). Results are determined as follows:

Playing at Home: +1 or +2 Fun, Sports Club: +1 or +2 Health, Playing Outdoors: +1 Fun, +2 Health, Homework: +1 or +2 Learning Progress

For each other child who shares the same activity space, a die is rolled. On a 6, the friendship with that child improves (+1).

Version C:

Each child chooses an activity (maximum of three children per activity).

If a child has a relevant trait at Status 3 or 4, they can also choose to help other children (e.g., helping with Homework improves Learning Progress, playing improves Fun, and sports improves Health).

Roll a six-sided die:

1, 2, 3: Activity result occurs, or friendship improves (+1).

4, 5: Nothing happens.

6: The child doesn't make it to the activity and lets the others down - friendship decreases (-1).

Afternoon activity II - 4 pm

In the final version, other mechanisms will be implemented, but for now, the choice of afternoon activities is being tested.

Version A:

Each child openly decides their activity by placing their pawn. Activities are then carried out as follows: Playing: +1 Fun, Sports: +1 Health, Playing Outdoors: +1 Health, Homework: +1 Learning Progress

It is unclear whether the mechanism for Version B will also work here.

Version B:

Each child chooses an activity (maximum of three children per activity). Results are determined as follows:

Playing at Home: +1 or +2 Fun, Sports Club: +1 or +2 Health, Playing Outdoors: +1 Fun, +2 Health, Homework: +1 or +2 Learning Progress

For each other child who shares the same activity space, a die is rolled. On a 6, the friendship with that child improves (+1).

Version C:

Each child chooses an activity (maximum of three children per activity).

If a child has a relevant trait at Status 3 or 4, they can also choose to help other children (e.g., helping with Homework improves Learning Progress, playing improves Fun, and sports improves Health).

Roll a six-sided die:

1, 2, 3: Activity result occurs, or friendship improves (+1).

4, 5: Nothing happens.

6: The child doesn't make it to the activity and lets the others down - friendship decreases (-1).

Evening phase - 6 pm

In the final version, different mechanisms will be implemented, but for now, the choice of afternoon activities is being tested.

Version A:

Each child openly decides their activity by placing their pawn. Activities are then carried out as follows: Helping: +1 Kindness, Watching TV: +1 Fun, Homework: +1 Learning Progress, Staying Outside and Playing: +1 Fun (plus friendship improvement option), Early Bedtime: +1 Health

Version B:

Activities remain the same as in Version A: Helping: +1 Kindness, Watching TV: +1 Fun, Homework: +1 Learning Progress, Staying Outside and Playing: +1 Fun (plus friendship improvement option), Early Bedtime: +1 Health

Die Roll (W6):

1, 2: Activity result occurs.

3-5: Nothing happens.

6: Activity result occurs as planned.

Version C:

Activities remain the same: Helping: +1 Kindness, Watching TV: +1 Fun, Homework: +1 Learning Progress, Staying Outside and Playing: +1 Fun (plus friendship improvement option), Early Bedtime: +1 Health

Die Roll (W6):

1, 2: Activity result occurs.

3, 4: Nothing happens.

5: Character-related event occurs.

6: Activity result occurs as planned.

Finishing the daily sequence

Version A: No impact.

Versions B and C:

1. Each player checks their friendship status changes:
If the sum of friendship changes is 0 or negative, move the Loneliness marker up by +1.
2. Each player checks their resources:
Fun = 0: Loneliness marker moves up by +1.
Health = 0: The player will be sick the next day.
Learning Progress = 0: The player must complete an extra learning session alongside homework the next day (no afternoon leisure activities allowed).
Kindness = 0: The player will be placed on house arrest the next day, meaning no leisure activities, and their Fun decreases by -1.

Character and Challenge

Character Traits and Challenges for Versions B and C

In Version B, each player receives one positive character trait.

In Version C, each player receives one positive character trait and one challenge.

No two players should receive the same trait or challenge. The aim is to encourage realism and foster empathy.

Positive Character Traits (These enhance good events and make them more rewarding):

1. Curious (Intelligent): Enjoys learning and exploring new things.
2. Humorous and Funny: Brings joy to others and diffuses tension.
3. Supportive and Fair: Stands up for others and fosters fairness.
4. Sporty and Active: Excels in physical activities and inspires others to join.
5. Sociable and Outgoing: Easily makes friends and enjoys being around others.
6. Imaginative and Creative: Thinks outside the box and inspires others with new ideas.

Challenges (These represent personal circumstances or traits that make events harder and lead to negative feelings if no support is provided):

1. Limited Household Means (Poor): Faces economic struggles, limiting access to resources.
2. Child with Movement or Weight Problems (Overweight): Struggles with physical activities and may face teasing.
3. Child with a Different Skin Color: May encounter prejudice or feel excluded.
4. Child with Migration Background/Limited German Skills: Faces language barriers and cultural challenges.
5. Child with Health Challenges (Sickly): Frequently unwell, affecting participation and energy.
6. Child with Learning Difficulties (Simple-minded): Struggles academically and may feel left behind.

The key question is: Does this help trigger a good discussion among the kids, ideally before these effects fortify themselves/get hold, or is this raising stigma and difficulty and hurt?

School dice throw with character and challenge

In the final version, other mechanisms will be implemented, but for now, the afternoon selection is being tested. In Version A, no separate school roll is conducted.

B: Roll a d20 twice, and events occur on rolls 1-6.

C: Roll a d20 twice, and events occur on rolls 1-12.

01 Intelligent makes a good contribution in school - B Learning Progress +1

02 Humorous tells a good joke - B Fun +1

03 Supportive helps a classmate - B Kindness +1

04 Sporty helps a classmate in PE - B Kindness +1

05 Sociable prevents extra homework - B Kindness +1

06 Creative has a good idea for an activity - B Fun +1

No further action

07 "Limited Financial Means" has no breakfast: Health -1, Fun -1

08 "Movement Problems" has a negative experience in PE: Health -1, Fun -1

09 "Different Skin Color" experiences insults/discrimination: Fun -1, Learning Progress -1

10 "Limited German Skills" struggles to follow lessons: Fun -1, Learning Progress -1

11 "Health Challenges" doesn't feel well: Fun -1, Health -1

12 "Learning Difficulties" struggles to keep up in class: Fun -1, Learning Progress -1

Another player can help if they have the affected resource at Status 3 or 4. If they help:

The affected player suffers no penalty, the helper loses 1 resource point, gains 1 Kindness point, and earns 1 Friendship point with the affected player.

13 Nothing happens

14 Nothing happens

15 Nothing happens

16 Nothing happens

17 Nothing happens

18 Nothing happens

19 Nothing happens

20 Nothing happens

Note also the School Action / role playing cards in the other booklet

Charakterwurf / Karten

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