

Should we take the friendships of children seriously?

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Hayley and Jude are seven years old. They live in a new town north of London. Jude's dad decides to move the whole family to Cornwall after his mum has a stroke. Jude and Hayley are distraught at being parted; they have been best friends since they started nursery four years prior. They play together at school; they go to each other's houses after school and in holidays. Neither set of parents expect the friendship to last beyond a few months: "They'll both find new friends eventually".

Hayley is upset and cries after the separation. Her dad tries to comfort her saying "You've got other friends. You'll have a new best friend one day". "But I don't want another friend" says Hayley mournfully, "I want this one back".

As a primary school teacher, I have found the most frequently asked question at parent consultation evenings to be not "How is my child doing in their work? What level are they at?" but "Does she have many friends? How does she get on with her friends?" Parents of young children seem to worry as much (if not more) about the happiness of their children and the relationships they make with others as they do with their academic progress; they acknowledge the importance of friendship in their desires for the well-being of their children. There is much empirical evidence that those with many friends and/or deep friendship bonds lead happier, healthier lives. A recent newspaper article ¹ quoted from some new research from Gallop entitled "Vital Friends: The People You Can't Afford to Live Without" illustrating the empirical importance of personal friendship in such areas as health, poverty and social relationships.

The concept of friendship, after a lull, has had a great deal of attention within recent years from philosophers. Whilst the majority of the attention has centred around the Aristotelian conception of friendship and related areas (Sherman, 1987, Pangle, 2003), there have been moves to reinterpret the concept in the light of sociological and psychological interpretations or evidence (Pahl, 2000, Gilbert, 1991). However, this attention restricts itself to friendship between adults and rarely

¹ Vernon, Mark "Amity is the Best Policy". The Guardian. July 10th, 2006.

considers the issue of friendship between children and, even less often, between children of primary school age. Whether this is because it is assumed that what consists of friendship for adults will be the same for children, or whether it is considered 'not philosophically interesting' is debatable. Yet to leave such topics solely to empirical studies may be doing both young children and the concept of friendship a disservice.

The issue of friendship and how we get on with others should be an important concept for education, yet schools rarely take the forming, nurturing and nourishing of friendship beyond helping to deal with disputes between friends when they disrupt school life. The general attitude tends to be a 'bus theory' of friendship: don't worry if you miss one, another will be along in a minute. In this paper, I want to tease out some of these issues and explore why we should take the friendship of young children seriously and, if this holds, then perhaps we should be more attentive to how schools can make space for friendship.

I wish to argue that friendship is critical to the development of character and can properly be seen as part of 'an invitation to the moral life'. As such, the topic assumes great importance for educators. To achieve this, I use an interdisciplinary approach: whilst in the main I use current thinking in philosophy on friendship, I also make use of interviews taken with young children to examine how they understand friendship. In Section 1, I consider the key facets of the concept of friendship, leading into a deeper examination of the Aristotelian view of friendship in Section 2. In Section 3, I turn to identifying friendship with concepts of the self, that in friendship we learn moral behaviours. In Section 4, I make the argument for the 'shared life' of friendship, that it requires a joint growth and development. Finally, In Section 5, I turn to the implications this may have for education.

Section1: What is friendship?

Friendship is a curious relationship – important to us all, yet strangely neglected in our public life. We do not have ceremonies to mark the start of friendships nor their demise (as we do with relationships such as marriage). Friendship does not come with a “rule book” and is thus more open-ended than many other relationships. We see something valuable in another person that makes us want to be with them, to commit to them, and they to us in some unspecified fashion. Most of us have little idea how we made our friends, but the chances are, we did not wake up one morning and decide to suddenly make one.

One cannot be a friend in isolation: as a concept it requires the existence of another person. Friendships can exist between more than two – but they are not the same friendships – e.g. Tom may be friends with Louis who may be friends with Robert, who may in turn be friends with Tony – but the friendship between each pair is unique to that pair. Most literature on the psychology of friendship suggests several different reasons for choice: proximity (they are people we come into contact with), a form of reciprocal liking (both parties like each other), similarity (parties have something in common), physical attractiveness (we like the initial look of them) or strategic friendships (they can do or have something we want) (Goering, 2003, Schutte and Light, 1978, Helm, 2005).

Friendship is both an emotional attachment to another and a statement about the status of that relationship. It would be curious to call someone a friend and not care for them or have any feelings towards them in some way. It would be equally curious to call someone a friend and it to make absolutely no difference in the way one treated or regarded the person. Friendship introduces a moral element into our behaviour with non-kin. Indeed, Pahl refers to friendship as “a metaphor for morality”

(Pahl, 2000, p86). Friendship usually marks the boundary of where the private world meets the public. It enlarges the number of persons we have regard to be partial to.

The ancient philosophers took it for granted that friendship was a virtuous, moral activity. It was revered as one of the highest of virtues - Aristotle gives more space in the Nicomachean Ethics to an account of friendship than to any other personal virtue. It ties in closely with all accounts of our personal well being and what it is to live a good life. Our own ideas of what counts as a good friend changes as we age: our expectations and aspirations grow (Pahl, 2000, p8). Much of the literature in philosophy of friendship is firmly rooted in the Aristotelian model and, as such, familiar territory, yet it is necessary to briefly revisit this area and apply these insights to our thinking on the possibility and importance of friendship between young children.

Section 2: The Aristotelian View

Without friends, says Aristotle, no one would choose to live even if he had all other goods (Aristotle). This suggests that being with others is in some sense a fundamental condition of what it is to be fully human; everyone needs friends. Friendship for Aristotle is a virtue, or implies virtue; it is seen as a way of building character. Aristotle distinguishes three types of friendship, which he terms utility friendships, pleasure friendships and virtue or character friendship.

Friendships of utility.

Utility friendships are the most easily dissolved of all friendships being based on personal interest. Because what is considered utility can change over time and because one cannot count on someone remaining 'useful', such friendships are prone

to disappointment and dissolving. Such friendships are quickly activated ... and just as quickly fall apart.

Take very young children for example, who may quickly become friends at school on the basis of some triviality – such as someone who has colouring pencils that could be borrowed. Should the friend fail to bring them one day, or even to lend them, this friendship of utility easily falls apart. The friendship exists as a form of exchange of goods and services. But is this standard view of friendships of utility for children sufficient or even satisfactory? In the conversation below, a six year old tries to describe what being a friend means.

Child A: A friend is like... a friend who plays with you and if you fall out with someone... your best friend.... you might get a new friend then... they might play and say do you want to be best friends and the other person says yeah.

Teacher: so you become best friends with someone by them saying 'do you want to be my best friend' ... is that how it works?

Child A; Only if you come up to them and say ' do you want to play with me' and they say yeah and then.... Once you've been playing with each other like... if you play with each other all the time... someone might say 'do you want to be best friends'

Teacher: Right

Child A: And that's what friends do.

Teacher: So you've got to be able to play together for a long time?

Child A: Well...

Teacher: ...or lots of times...?

Child A: Just some times

Teacher: About how often?

Child A: About two days?

Teacher: Two days? Then they can be your best friend?

Child A: Or one day

On a superficial reading, this conversation would seem to support the idea that friendship is merely for the sake of the function of having someone to play with. The ease with which Child A implies someone becomes a best friend and the lack of time in which to get to know the other's character seems to indicate the lack of seriousness that friendship is held in. This may not, however, be the case. Leaving aside the fact

that time is pretty fluid in the minds of young children and a day or two seems like forever, Child A seems to indicate that even for young children there is a 'trial period' before offering 'best friendship', a time in which to gauge the character of the other. Does the other cheat in games? Do they share readily? Will they wander off and leave you? Are they likely to take the bond seriously or trade you in should someone else come along? Will they be loyal? The *playing together* is a crucial element to establishing the character of the other. It is through the play that each has access to assess the type of person the other is and make decisions as to what sort of friend they would be.

Whilst Aristotle argues that in friendships of utility, the affection is motivated by their own good, I would argue that even here, the character of the person is relevant. Even young children will on occasions prefer to be on their own than to play with just anyone. We prefer to be with people we *like* and are drawn to when we call them "friends". We prefer to be helped by those we like when a choice is possible. Relationships of friendship are different in kind to relationships of utility. Not all of the latter are friendships. To tease this difference out further, a practical example. Many primary schools have started to use 'Friendship Benches' in their playgrounds for children who may be 'friendless' on occasions. The child without a friend sits on the bench in the hope that someone will notice and offer to play with them. Other children are encouraged through various methods to include such people in their games. The aim is not to create friendships as such, but for the utility of having someone to play with.

Pleasure Friendships

Friendships of pleasure, according to Aristotle are symptomatic of the young who live by their emotions and change rapidly. These friendships have a tendency to

be transient, but whilst they last, are deeply felt - the friends cherish each other's company. However, as Aristotle points out, even these friendships give cause for problems. As long as the pleasure experienced between the friends, continues, so does the friendship. But should one of the two change in some way, and the initial pleasure experienced as a result of the relationship should wane, so may the friendship. He argues that this is because such pleasure friendships are based on emotions and emotional responses – for example, people falling in and out of love. Their friendship changes with changes in the object of their pleasure.

If we did not take pleasure in the company of our friends – why would we remain with them? Surely it must be part of what we look for in a friend that we should find their company pleasurable? Only martyrs and masochists would think otherwise! Sharing time, company and pleasures are important to friendship as acknowledged by Aristotle – all of which are demanding of time and energy, leading one to assume that the number of people one could count on as being 'pleasure friends' would ultimately be limited.

Child B: A friend is like .. happy. If they're like miserable... you really won't want them.

Teacher: So you're saying a friend has to be a happy person because if they're miserable you just might leave them? Why would you do that?

Child B: cos they...won't listen to you or want to do your stuff.

Teacher: What if they're sad because their hamster died? Would you still leave them then?

Child shakes head

But we don't take pleasure in everyone's or just anyone's company – and neither do children. Interestingly, Child B's idea on friendship centres on the idea of the character of the other firstly, whether they are a happy person to be around and then on the utility of having someone to play with. It is obvious to Child B that the 'miserable' that she is thinking of is not the reaction to unhappy events, but she is talking of the overall character of the person.

We take pleasure in the company of people we like – and we like them for reasons of who they are. Even friendships of pleasure are to some extent reliant on the character of the friend.

Character Friendship

Aristotle sees the perfect form of friendship in those who love their friends for their own sake – not merely because they are useful (which they may be) nor because their company is pleasurable and they are fun to be with (which they might be) but because of who and what they are – the virtuous person. A character friend (the third category is frequently referred to as either virtue, character or perfect) would seek automatically to be ‘useful’, to help his friend and would find their company pleasurable – because that’s what friends do (Jeske, 1997). Virtue thus represents the highest level of moral goodness – and the virtuous person, the epitome of such goodness.

The characters of the virtuous draw such friends to each other, not because of any benefit each may incur – virtue friendship could never involve using another person as a means to one’s own happiness – but because such complete friendship would be based on mutual recognition and association in virtue (Blum, 1993, Cooper, 1977, Pakaluk, 1991). Character friends are integral to each other’s lives and thus the flourishing of one is intimately connected with the flourishing of the other. It would not be possible to form this type of friendship with many because of the requirement of time and building an easy familiarity and trust with one another. The “wish for friendship may arise quickly, but friendship does not” (Aristotle, p197). But what is it to say someone is virtuous?

Cooper puts forward an interpretation of Aristotle's concept of perfect virtue as being part of a wide variation of virtue friendships (Cooper, 1999). One could, in this scenario, be attracted to someone for his or her generosity to the less fortunate, or for his or her kindness whilst still acknowledging that they have a foul temper first thing in the morning and do not suffer fools gladly! They do not have to exhibit virtue of every kind but just have some morally good qualities and it is those qualities that attract their friend. Such a friendship could still be part of the category of virtue friendships even though neither person has a perfectly virtuous character. Cooper must be, in this instant, correct in his view, if we are to allow the possibility of people having character friendships – and common experience teaches us that they do indeed exist.

Whilst Aristotle's account of friendship is attractive in its simplicity, it holds many problems. I would argue that the separation of the three types of friendship is not as clear-cut in practical terms as supposed. Character traits matter in questions of friendship – they have to, or we would never have a reason to choose one person over another as a friend. Friends can doubtlessly be useful – but they are still friends – and the emotional attachment inherent in the term is necessary to the concept. We enjoy and take pleasure in doing things with our friends – but spending time with our friends is part of the friendship – it is how we build the 'common history' and get to know our friends better.

Children, just as adults do, 'try on' their friendships to see if they 'fit'. The playing together, the sharing together is as much a part of trying to discover the character of the other as for the sake of utility or pleasure. We may well start with utility or pleasure, which, with time, then becomes friendship based on elements of character. If we return to Hayley and Jude – the utility of playing together gave them

the opportunity and space to discover each other's character, to find out if they liked each other enough to keep the friendship going for its own sake. If their relationship does not survive the utility, perhaps they discovered they really didn't care for each other that much to begin with!

It is to be remembered that Aristotle's theory of friendship takes place within the context of the Nicomachean Ethics in which he seeks to explore the connection with morality: that friendship helps us to become good. If friendship can be seen as a way of pursuing a shared moral life, then it assumes great importance for moral development: it forms an arena in which children learn to practice their moral reasoning. As Richard White describes it:

"true friendship offers us an apprenticeship in virtue and an everyday training in the moral life". (White, 1999a, p79)

Friendship is thus an 'introduction to the moral life': it teaches us to see others as ends in themselves and not as a means to an end. In the next section, I take this a stage further.

Section 3: Friends as 'Other Selves'

To talk about friendship is to talk about how we relate to others; hence it can be argued that a form of moral development and/or character education takes place within its remit. Friendship plays a considerable role in our self-knowledge and perspectives on the world and is frequently the means by which we learn the affective dimensions of social life and respect for others outside of the family. The dispositions of friendship (a complex mixture of attitudes and emotions) predispose us to consider the needs and wants of others as being of importance and thus to draw back from being prepared to always sacrifice the goods of others to our own. To be someone's friend implies within it a propensity for wishing them well, for wanting to spend time

with them, for wanting to help when they are in need, for liking them. Friendship can thus be claimed to have a constitutive role in our happiness and personal identity (Badhwar Kapur, 1991).

According to Cocking and Kennett, a view of the self is vital in an understanding of the nature of friendship (Cocking and Kennett, 1998). They discern that what marks friendship out is the extent to which the self is disclosed to the other in the relationship. This disclosure creates an intimacy and cements bonds of trust between the individuals. In one view, the 'companion friends' spoken of by Cocking and Kennett, (a deep friendship) disclose themselves to their friends (a 'secrets' view of friendship: we share those things closest and most important to us with those whom we trust the most) and in another view what marks out companion friends from others is the extent to which we see ourselves as reflected in our friends (a 'mirror' view of friendship) leading to self-knowledge. Both views, however, depend on disclosure in the relationship; either the disclosure of the self *to* the other or the self is disclosed *in* the other.

But people can have similar interests and very dissimilar characters. Having similar interests or similar characters to another is no guarantee of friendship. It is possible to share interests and be very similar to another and have absolutely no interest in being friends at all. It would be assumed that the more alike two people are the more likely they are to be friends, yet experience teaches us this is not always the case. This focus on similarity of friends leads to the 'mirror' understanding of friendship: the idea that the friend is a mirror for the self, we see ourselves reflected back because our friend is *like* me.

According to the mirror view of friendship, people can be friends only in so far as they happen to be alike. In several places, Aristotle states that a friend is

“another self” (Aristotle) – a statement that has been held to support various interpretations (Millgram, 1987, Franck, 1999, Cartledge, 1993, Cocking and Kennett, 1998). A friend is someone who shares many of the same values, goals and priorities as I do. However, Cocking and Kennet dispute this:

“...the mirror view misrepresents the depth and nature of the engagement which friends have with each other and the impact which each has on the other. For you do not passively reflect my own characteristics; what you give back to me is not a reflection, but an interpretation of me, and for this you do not need to be like me ...I do not see myself in you as the mirror view suggests, I see myself through you. We are thus, to some significant extent, each other’s creators.”(Cocking and Kennett, 1998, p509).

There is the obvious interpretation taken by many, as pointed out by Annas, that logically a friend cannot regard another’s thoughts, wishes etc as they would their own as they are separate beings (Annas, 1977). Yet as Annas continues, there is a sense in which this phrase says something profound about the nature of deep friendship – that there is a sense in which I can come to regard my friend as a second self in that I regard their wishes, desires and the fulfilment of them etc as having as much importance as do my own and will therefore seek to bring them about. And insofar as the other views me as a friend, they reflect back to me “an approval and endorsement of whom I am” (White, 1999a, p86). The moral self that we are is thus not developed in isolation, but particularly with those who know us best. As White continues:

“... our commitment to friendship is an objective expression of our commitment to the moral life. Indeed, at a more basic level than the reflective choice of moral principles and explicit values, my friends give me recognition and make me immediately aware of myself as a moral being” (White, 1999a, p86).

If this is so, when a friend leaves or is taken away, we can feel a deep sense of loss: the loss of part of our 'self'.

The separateness and non-replacability of persons is important in issues of friendship: one person cannot be replaced with another. Let us return to Hayley and Jude:

Hayley is upset when Jude leaves and mourns the loss of her friend deeply. "Don't worry, you'll find another friend" another colleague says rather tactlessly. "But I don't want another one" says Hayley, "I want this one back".

The functional idea of friendship for children assumes a fungibility of persons: the idea that children need someone to play with, and the other is only there to fulfil that role, that the character of the other does not count. Whilst at one level, Hayley probably will make other friends, yet at another each of those friendships will be unique and different from each other. To tell her that she can substitute one person for another is to imply that others are merely a means to an end and not an end in themselves.

Even young children can form bonds with their peers outside of their families. Children can love their friends. If they can love them, they can feel the loss. Let us explore the issue of Hayley and Jude from the opening section in a different way. Do we take their sense of loss less seriously because of the age of the children? Do we assume that because of their age, they cannot have a deep understanding of friendship? Do we assume the Aristotelian line that pleasure friendships are symptomatic of the young, and then fall into the mistake of thinking that ONLY pleasure friendships are possible with the young?

It thus appears that 'friendship' itself may not be such a simple concept after all – i.e. one that indicates or points to *one* particular thing that can be identified. Indeed, Richard White refers to it as “an inherently complex and multiple phenomenon” (White, 1999b, p21). In the next section, I consider friendship as a 'shared life' contributing to our moral development over time.

Section 4: Friendship and the shared life.

If we reflect on our own experience of friendships, those whom we are closest to, those we feel comfortable sharing the intimate details of our lives and selves with, those that have endured over many years are few, there are precious few of us with life-long friends – at different periods of our lives we seek different character traits in our friendships; some friendships last for many years, some do not. Those that last, tend to ‘deepen’ as the friends learn more of each other’s character and build a common history of experiences, sharing secrets, letting the other break through our social pretences.

Coming to know another person is a complex business. We often begin interacting with someone before we can ascertain his or her character. We may initially believe we have much in common and then come to find commonalities were superficial at best. Yet in the interactions, we may come to regard the person as a friend, developing concern and care before we get to know the person that they are.

When we say ‘this is my friend’ we are saying something to set this particular relationship apart from others – it is a relationship of positional importance. When we call someone ‘a friend’, we are saying something about the status of the relationship – we are giving it a value and indicating in some way that we see the other as having value to us. Friendship is by nature preferential: we prefer some to others; it excludes some from the relationship. That we see our friends as having value to us does not mean that they are in themselves more valuable than other people. Others may have different friends to me and see their friends as having value over mine.

Friendship, in these terms, becomes a long-term relationship that is built up and develops over a period of time. This creates a shared history between the friends – which grounds mutual references and experiences. To come to know another person, to be aware of what their well-being consists in, requires time, energy and patience amongst other virtues. The time spent together in learning of each other’s character really is ‘time well spent’ – this grounds the friendship.

There is a sense in which we learn to share in the same activities as our friends and to share similar tastes. My friend may be a sports enthusiast and because this is an area that is important to her, it may become an area important to me. I may never develop an independent liking for the topic but through the friendship I may come to understand and appreciate what it is that appeals to my friend in sports. We want to please our friends; it is only in learning who they are, what their aims are, that we are able to do so. Deep friends will frequently sacrifice or subjugate some of their own wants and aims to seek out that which will most please their friend.

Part of what is required in friendship is spending time together in a “jointly pursued life” (Sherman, 1987, p596) as suggested by Aristotle (Aristotle); it is not the ‘what is shared’ that is important so much as the willingness to share and coordinate activities over a period of time. It would be an unusual friendship if the people concerned did not spend any time together. Could you count as a friend someone who would not ever go for a drink with you, neither would they go to the cinema with you, the theatre, the shops, nor spend time chatting with you nor eating with you, would never keep in touch, phone or write?

There is a sense in which friendships require some form of mutual disclosure – that friends trade secrets and keep confidences for each other. The things I may tell my friend about myself will be different to the things I may tell others in the more

public domain. The distinction between public and private information, as Thomas points out, can be blurred in two ways (Thomas, 1993). We can be public about almost everything in our lives, or we can be exceedingly private. The extent in which someone is willing to reveal himself or herself to us is a measure of how much they trust us and vice-versa.

But in addition to the shared life is the fact that friendship does not have a 'sell-by date'. Let us return to Hayley and Jude in a different situation.

Hayley and Jude are postgraduate students, Hayley from the UK and Jude from overseas. Let us assume, for the experiment, that they meet through their studies and become best friends. They do everything together... study together, socialise together, go to each other's houses and get to know each other's families, share secrets and private worries. Eventually the day comes when Jude finishes her studies and has to return to her home country. "Bye" says Jude "That's it. Thanks for everything". And she leaves.

To be able to walk away from the relationship suggests that Jude was just using Hayley for the utility of having someone around and did not care about her as a friend should. To suggest 'I'll be your friend for three years and that's it' seems to demean the relationship to one of utility and few people would be willing to put in the emotional work of getting to know another person for it to be held so lightly and valued so little. Friendship has to be an open-ended relationship to even count as friendship. If it is subject to a time frame, it appears to miss a fundamental aspect of the relationship: the shared life has to be open to the possibility of future development and growth together.

In a mobile world, children are frequently uprooted and moved around as the work demands of parents require. To expect them to drop friendships and move onto another is to casualise the nature of the relationship: it is to say 'this is not of great value'. In the final section, I consider what we as teachers and educators can do to foster these relationships as part of the ongoing moral life.

Section 5: Conclusion: Friendship and schools

Schools, particularly primaries, have always been concerned with issues of friendship, not merely from the practicalities of school life, but in the curriculum itself. Many of the PSHE and SEAL materials currently available to use in the KS1 and KS2 classroom deal with the issues of relationships including friendships. However, many of these materials stop at the level of knowledge *about* friendship and how to make friends, yet many schools neglect the importance of friendships as part of the shared school life, and thus work at cross purposes. If friendship is one of the ways in which we enter into the moral life and learn to adjust our wants and desires around those of others, then the space in which to practice friendship must be a crucial element in school life amongst all members.

It has to be acknowledged that not all relationships bring out 'the best' in those concerned. There are cases where children can bring out 'the worst' in each other, where a particular pairing of children can incite each other forward to situations or events that neither would, on their own, arrive at on their own: a possible example can be seen in the film 'Heavenly Creatures' in which two girls in 1950's New Zealand became inseparable, obsessive friends to the extent that they created an alternative reality from which others were barred and which ended in murder. On a less extreme level, some children can become a disruptive influence on the class if allowed to sit or work together. This does not negate my argument; it merely confirms that friendship is only one pathway in the moral life and indicates the place and need for schools to take friendship seriously, particularly that of young children and to provide a space in which to learn and practice the skills of friendship or even a variety of friendships.

On a practical level, schools can be more welcoming places to newcomers, having strategies to help settle and form utility relationships in the first instance and encourage the conditions for subsequent friendships to form and flourish. The experienced teacher can identify children who have difficulties forming relationships or reaching out in friendship to others and identify opportunities for children to form friendships through shared or paired activities, giving children the opportunity to get to know others. The recent announcement of changes in the Rose Report to the structure of the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 and the consequent further development of thematic or topic based learning (plus a more play based approach in KS1) may create a space in which schools can nurture friendships through children working together. When children move schools, efforts can be made to keep in touch with previous friends: letters, emails, etc.

There are practical difficulties in this. It does put an unrealistic demand on some schools that can experience more than a 20% pupil turnover each academic year. This in itself restricts the capacity for schools to help form and nourish primary relationships, let alone prepare or enable children to form secondary relationships. Whilst how this pupil mobility may affect abilities to make and keep friendships may be an empirical matter, the importance of friendship as part of an introduction to 'the moral life' is a philosophical one.

Not all friendships of children will last. Not all friendships of adults do. But if we are to take the moral development of young children seriously, then we also need to take seriously the *possibility* of relationships of children, particularly those of friendship. Our failure to do so casualises the relationship to one of utility and undermines the nature and importance of social bonds.

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