

# **MAKING CONNECTIONS: FOSTERING FRIENDSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES**

- Kids Included Together helps organizations engage children & youth with and without disabilities.
- Presenter: Torrie Dunlap



**Kids Included Together**

# Learning Objectives

- **Practice an activity to remove the barriers to friendships for children with and without disabilities**
- **Apply a social mapping tool to examine friendship interactions.**
- **Develop a plan to enhance friendship interactions in a scenario.**

- **Personal Recipe for Friendship:**
  - Gallon...
  - Quart...
  - Pint...
  - Cup...
  - Tablespoon...
  - Teaspoon...
  - Dash...
  - Sprinkle...
  - Touch...
  - To Taste...

# Friendship

Byusse, Goldman, West, & Hollingsworth, 2008

- **A voluntary and reciprocated relationship between two or more children who exhibit:**
  - a mutual liking for and attachment to one another,
  - a frequent proximity to one another and engagement in shared activities, OR
  - evidence of enjoyment and positive affect

# Friendship & Development

Early, 2009

Age	Development	Friendship
Birth-2 years	Can I trust the world?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependence on caregivers</li> </ul>
2-4 years	Is it okay to be me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity</li> <li>• Interests</li> </ul>
4-5 years	Is it okay to do, move, act?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similarities and differences</li> </ul>
5-12 years	Can I make it in the world of people and things?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived social hierarchies</li> <li>• Having and choosing friends</li> </ul>
13-19 years	Who am I? What can I be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social hierarchy</li> <li>• Led by emotions</li> <li>• Perceived independence</li> </ul>

- **Environment**
- **Social Skills**
- **Adult Guidance of Friendship Development**

- Supportive Staff
- Welcome new members
- Social roles and responsibilities
- Variety
- Clearly defined expectations
- Diversity acceptance



Picture credit:

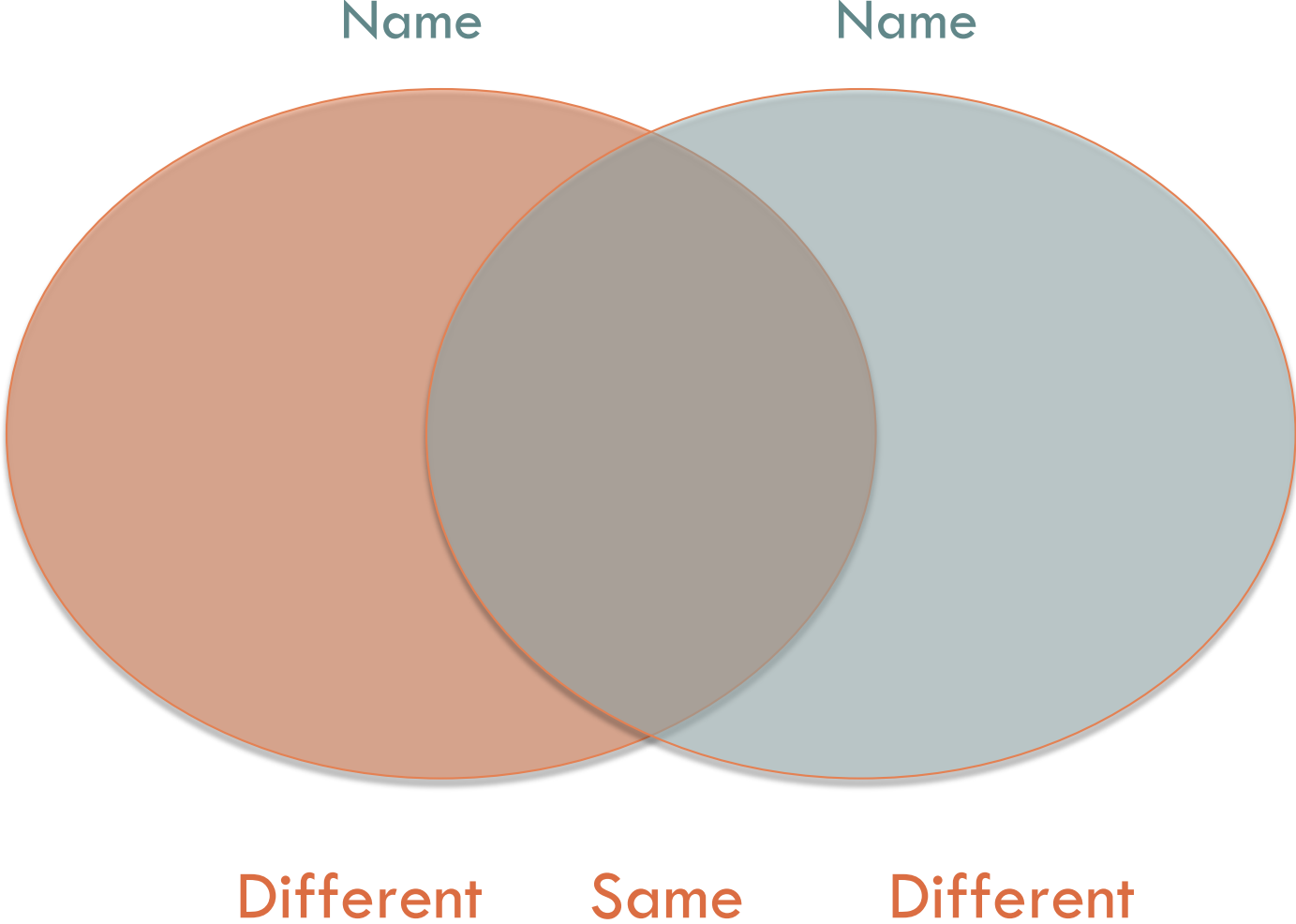
<http://westroom13.blogspot.ca/2012/07/welcome.html>



# Barriers to Friendships

- **Physical proximity**
- **Lack of shared communication system**
- **Disability stigma**
- **Lack of shared interests**
- **Under-developed social skills**
- **Lack of understanding the rules of the activity**
- **Mismatch of endurance to activity demands**
- **Adult Leaders**

# It's Okay to Be Different



# Social Skills and Friendships

Josephson Institute, 2013

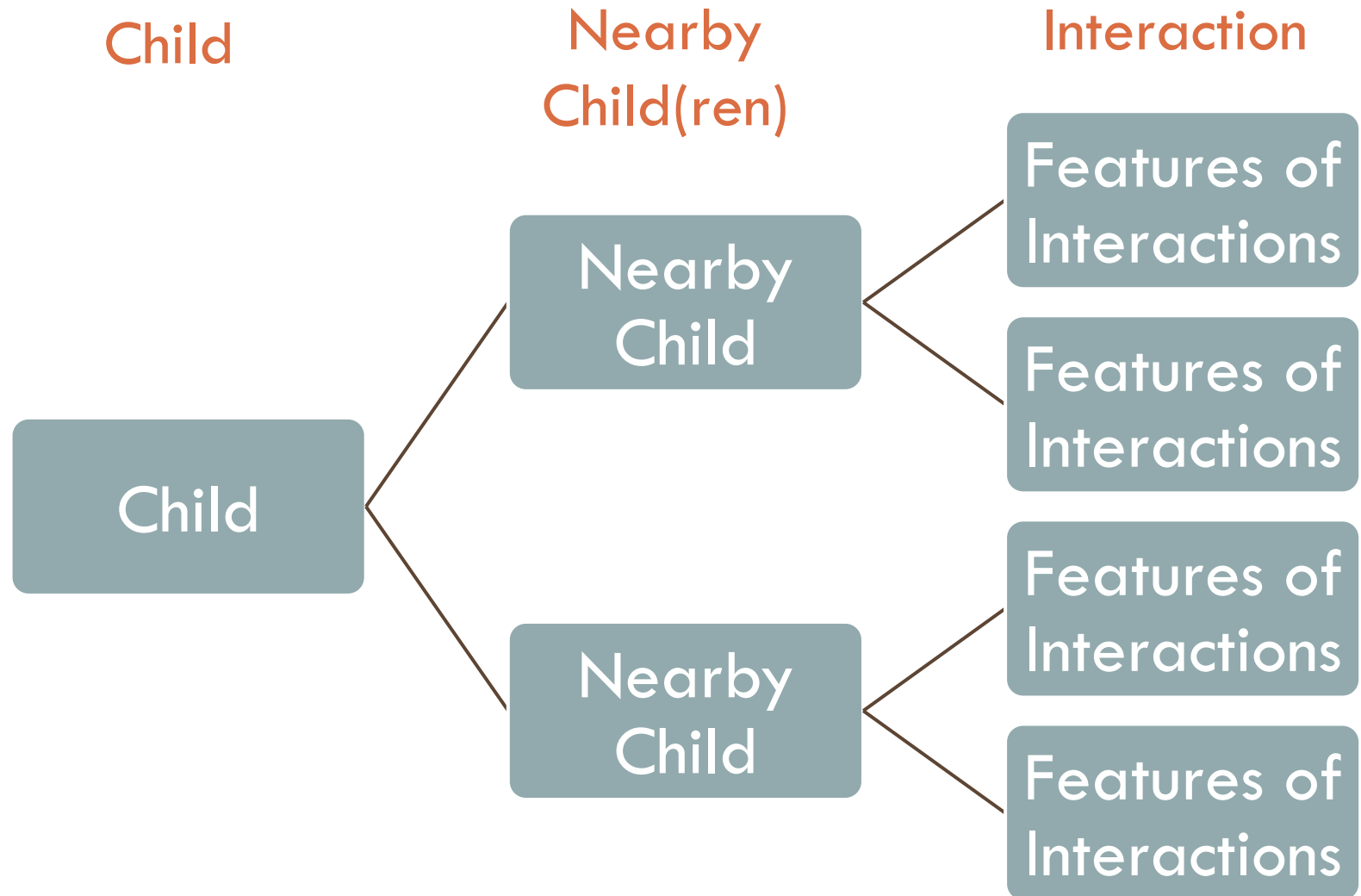
- **Social awareness**
- **Empathy**
- **Remorse**
- **Positive interactions**
- **Effective communication**
- **Leadership**
- **Collaboration & teamwork**
- **Conflict management**

## Develop Social Skills

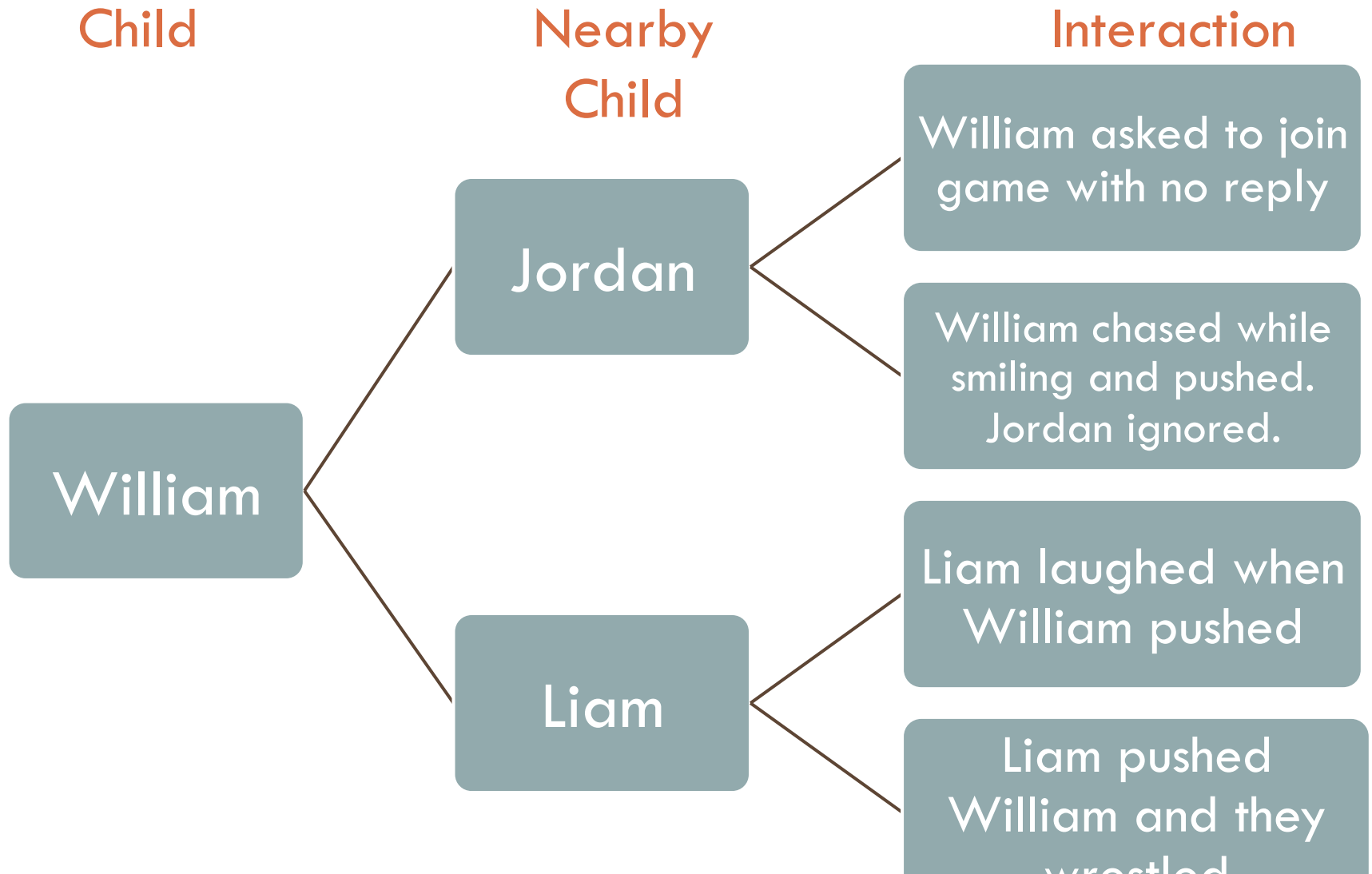
- **View social skills in the same light as fine motor, gross motor, cognitive, and communication skills.**
  - Commit to creating opportunities for children to develop, understand, and practice social skills.
  - **Social Skill Spotlight: Empathy**

- **What we know about friendships:**
  - Shared Interests
  - Proximity
  - Communication
  
- **Adult leaders role in supporting friendships:**
  - Commit to using observation in adapting friendship dynamics
  - Recognize your potential as a barrier
  - Own your role as a “friendship bridge”

# Social Mapping



# Social Mapping

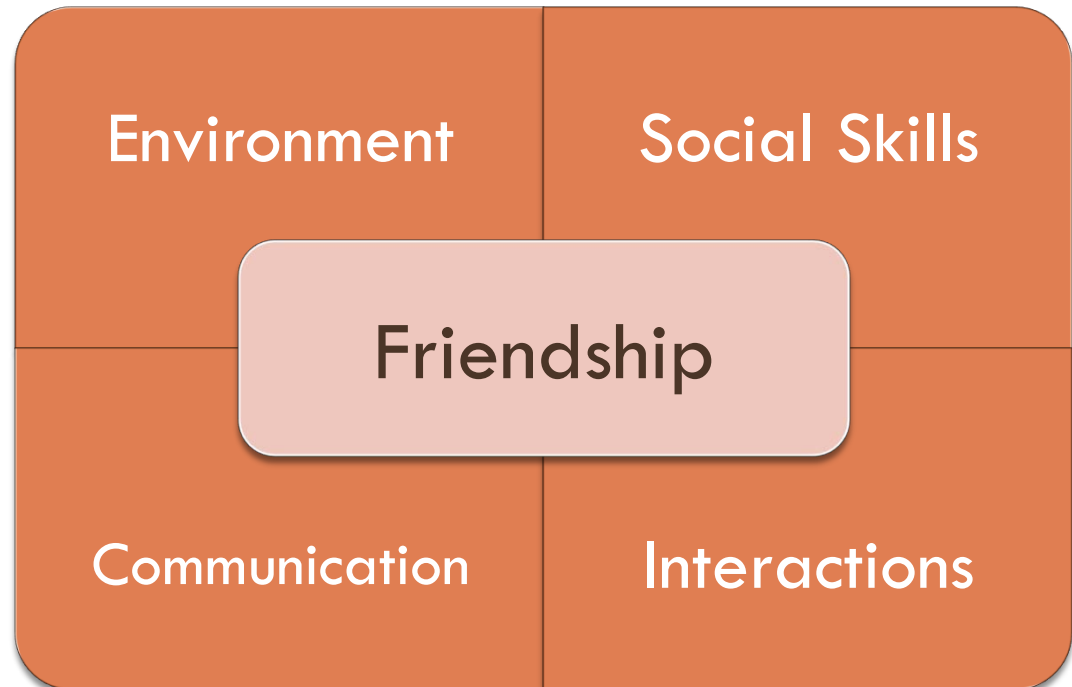


- **Modeling**
  - **Aid & Fade**
    - Find places to take a step back
    - Find the balance between stepping in too early and not stepping in soon enough
- **Staff as a bridge**
  - Highlight how each child contributes
  - Plan activities and groupings strategically



## ○ Scenarios

- Preschool
- School Age
- Middle School
- High School



# Connecting, Relating, Including



- **We want communities where children with and without disabilities live, learn, and play together.**



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