



Indiscriminate Friendliness

Information sheet for Parents / Kinship Carers

'Indiscriminate Friendliness' is used to describe children who are too friendly or cuddly with strangers and might wander off with anyone, putting themselves at risk.

Children with Indiscriminate Friendliness sometimes have difficulties developing and maintaining close relationships with family and friends.

About one in a hundred nursery or primary school children have Indiscriminate Friendliness and they are often children who have had a difficult early start in life. Most children with Indiscriminate Friendliness have other problems, such as hyperactivity or aggressive behaviour. We do not know how common this is in teenagers or in adults, but Indiscriminate Friendliness can persist throughout life.

What to look for:

- Being over-friendly with strangers.
- Younger children may:
 - display a willingness to interact and making physical contact, i.e. crawl onto a stranger's lap, hold their hand, sit too closely to them or lean against them
 - wander off without checking back, putting their safety at risk
- Older children may:
 - ask strangers inappropriate personal questions
 - tell the stranger too much about them
 - display attention seeking behaviour
 - have poor peer relationships
 - trust new people and want to please, even when it can put them at risk

What can be done to help?

We don't know a lot about treatments for Indiscriminate Friendliness, but warm consistent parenting is probably the most helpful thing. Because children with Indiscriminate Friendliness have a tendency to wander off and might not think to go to parents or carers for help, providing this warm, consistent parenting is not easy! Extra support in providing this might be needed and some parenting programmes (such as Mellow Parenting) might be particularly helpful. Some families might benefit from support from social work.