

does not attend my preschool, but we visit each other at home. She dresses different than me, but she likes me, and I like her.”

Another characteristic of friendship for the Polish children is an ability to trust someone: “If someone falls down, the friend will help you to get up, or if something breaks, they will fix it.”

One Polish child even mentioned sacrifices: “My Mom is my friend because she gave birth to me.”

## Summary

In both countries, the children could respond to the given task and draw a friend(s), which means that they are able to think in an abstract way and find connection to the target domain (friend/ friendship). They used symbolic thinking to express their thoughts and feelings and conveyed the meanings to other people (researchers). There were some surprising results at the very beginning of the study, when the children drew just a few friends and when asked, “How many friends did you draw?” they gave very low numbers. When asked a follow-up question, “How many friends do you have?,” the majority said 1 (Polish sample) or 2 (American sample). They could differentiate between friends and occasional playmates, contrary to the conclusion of Van Hoogdalem et al. (2013), that only some 3-year olds can differentiate between friends and non-friends. All the preschool children precisely identified the number of friends, and for some children, the number of friends was higher than 1 or 2. Another finding demonstrated that the American children drew just friends, but the Polish children drew themselves among the friends. The American children associated friendship with help, confirming the findings of Thien et al. (2012) and Goldman and Buysee (2007) and play at school or at home. For the Polish children, the symbolic connotation was play and being together. Another small difference was in the explanation “A friend is like.” For both groups of children, a friend is like a family member or somebody to play with or do activities with. It also could be an object like a toy, but for the American children it is also the character that counts in a friend, like kindness, being nice, or happiness, and in the Polish sample, the important qualities were related to feelings like joy or sadness.

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