
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Making 'mum friends'



This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Neil

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

Beth

And I'm Beth. Do you remember your first day at school, Neil?

Neil

Um, yes I do. I changed schools quite a lot when I was a kid, so I had lots of first days and they were never easy. How about you, Beth?

Beth

Well, my mum always tells this story about how I was crying a lot on my first day. But apparently as soon as she left, I was quite happy. So, my mum spent the day being a bit sad and I was completely fine.

Neil

Well, yeah, starting school and making new friends is difficult for many children. But it's not just the kids who find it challenging. For mums and dads who drop their kids off at the school gates in the morning and pick them up again at the end of the school day, making friends with other mums can be just as hard.

Beth

Here, BBC presenter, Nuala McGovern, discusses this problem using the term, 'mum friends'.

Nuala McGovern

So if you are a mum dropping off or picking up the kids this week, how do you feel about hanging out with other 'mum friends'? I find that term kind of interesting as well, mum friends – they're never called 'friends', they're called 'mum friends'. Do you struggle to make those relationships, or do you thrive on them, or are you perfectly happy without them?

Neil

'Mum friends' are usually the mums of other children in your child's class at school. They might go for coffee together, help out with babysitting or chat about being a mother. But is making new 'mum friends' really the positive experience it's often described as, or an additional stress for already overworked mothers? That's what we'll be discussing in this programme, along with some useful new vocabulary.

Beth

And if the idea of 'mum friends' is new to you, why not take a minute to read through the list of vocabulary before you listen? It's easy to find on our website, bbclearningenglish.com.

Neil

Now I have a question for you, Beth. Another term often associated with 'mum friends' is **play date** – a time that parents arrange for their children to play together. But according to the Oxford English Dictionary, where does the term come from? Is the origin in:

- a) Australia?
- b) New Zealand? or,
- c) the United States of America?

Beth

Um, I'm gonna guess the USA, C.

Neil

OK. Feeling confident?

Beth

Yes!

Neil

Well, we'll see at the end of the programme. For some mums, dropping their kids off at school reminds them of when they themselves were little and under pressure to make friends. Listen as mum, Jayne Cherrington-Cook, describes these feelings to BBC Radio 4 programme, Woman's Hour:

Jayne Cherrington-Cook

The school gates take you back to being back at school. It's like you said, a high school **clique**. You've got the sporty mums over there, you've got the **glam** mums over there, you've got, you know... And if you don't **fit into** one of those it's really, really difficult to navigate, and yet you're all there just because your children were born in the same year. It's a really weird thing!

Beth

Jayne says that mums often form **cliques**, small groups of people who like spending time together and seem unfriendly towards others. For example, at Jayne's daughter's school there's a clique of sporty mums, and a clique of **glam** mums who put on make-up and dress up. Jayne uses the adjective **glam** as a shortened form of the word, **glamour**, meaning attractive and exciting.

Neil

Problems start when someone doesn't **fit into** one of the cliques. If you **fit into** a group of people, you feel you belong and are accepted, probably because you are similar to them.

Beth

So some mums feel rejected from cliques and worry about their children being left out of play dates. But other mums don't mind – if people want to be friends that's fine, and if they don't, that's fine too! Being a mum is hard enough without adding more stress. Jayne definitely belongs to this group, as she explains to BBC Radio 4's, Woman's Hour:

Jayne Cherrington-Cook

I think I'd had some really bad experiences at baby groups where you're trying to make your child do yoga or paint when they're four months old, and trying to bond with these other women and I just thought, 'This is ridiculous!' And I pretty much straight away realised it was gonna be just **down to luck** if I met somebody that I **clicked with**.

Neil

Jayne says it's **down to luck** if she makes mum friends. If you say something is **down to luck**, you mean it depends on chance rather than any skill or effort you make. But there's always the possibility you'll meet someone and **click with** them, become friends as soon as you start talking.

Beth

Well, I know something that isn't down to luck, Neil – the answer to your question.

Neil

Ah yes. I asked you about the origin of the term play date. Which country does it come from?

Beth

I think it's the USA.

Neil

Well Beth, you are right. [Yay!] So well done. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'play date' was first used in the Lincoln Daily Star newspaper in Nebraska, USA in 1915.

Beth

OK, let's recap the vocabulary we've learned, starting with **play date** – an arrangement that parents make for their young children to play together.

Neil

A **clique** is a small group of people who spend a lot of time together and may seem unfriendly towards other people.

Beth

Glam is short for glamorous, meaning visually attractive and exciting.

Neil

If you **fit into** a group of people, you belong and feel accepted by them because you're similar to them.

Beth

If you say something is **down to luck**, you mean that it depends on chance or luck, rather than any skill or effort you make.

Neil

And finally, if you **click with** someone, you feel a friendly and positive connection when you meet them for the first time. Once again, our time is up. Why not head over to the 6 Minute English website to find a quiz and worksheet for this programme while it's still fresh in your mind. See you again soon, goodbye for now!

Beth

Bye!

VOCABULARY

play date

time that parents arrange for their young children to play together

clique

small group of people who like to spend a lot of time together and may seem unfriendly towards other people

glam

(informal) short for glamorous: visually attractive and exciting

fit into (a group of people)

belong and feel accepted by the other people in a group

down to luck

(informal) depend on chance rather than effort or skill

click with (someone)

quickly feel a friendly connection with someone, especially the first time you meet them