

Supporting Children and Young People with Conversation Skills

There are lots of different ways parents, carers and familiar adults can help and support children and young people with their conversation skills.

Show your child how to use conversation throughout daily activities and in different situations.

For example, when talking, explain what you are doing or going to do.

You could say, "When dad gets in I'm going to ask him about his day".

Give your child extra **time** to think of what to say and to respond during conversations.

Explain that conversation is about taking turns to talk.

Talk about ways to start and end conversations and practice this, such as: how to join in, how to say hello and ask the first question, how to finish a conversation.

Play word games to practice turn taking.

For example, start with a word and ask your child to say something related, such as, 'fish → sea → water'.

Make chat topic cards so you can discuss different things e.g. what people have done at the weekend, places they like to go to or sports.

Remind your child to stick to a topic if they start talking about something else.

For example, you could say "we aren't talking about X right now, we're talking about Y", or "we will talk about X later, for now, we need to talk about dinner".

Practise what to say and questions they can ask in different situations.

For example, when grandma visits, you could ask her: "how are you doing?", "how is your gardening coming on?"

Discuss expected and unexpected topics that can happen during a conversation.

Talk about what is a good topic to talk about and what is not. Talk about the amount of information and how much detail to give.

Set time during the week to have a conversation for at least five minutes each day. This will become part of their daily routine.

Talk about 'people files'; this is information you know about a person. It can help you to think about topics to discuss and questions to ask.

For example, "Lily likes animals, you could ask her about animals and talk about the zoo".

Support your child to practice conversation skills in situations they feel comfortable with. This will help them to try out their new skills with other people.

Use www.scenariaid.com to practice situations.

Please call the Speech and Language Therapy department on **01925 251389** if you have any questions.