

Social skills – Conversation skills

School and Home information sheet

Dear Parent,

Your child is attending/has attended a social skills group. They would benefit from further activities at home to target these skills in their everyday environment (see activities sheet attached). The aim of this programme is to: *increase your child's awareness and understanding of conversation skills and to improve their skills in using conversation strategies effectively for communication.*

The following goals are the targets for their current intervention.

For your child to:

1. Understand the importance of listening skills and to demonstrate effective listening skills across different environments.
2. Understand the different ways that we can use our voices to show emotion e.g. volume, rate, fluency etc.
3. Use a range of vocal strategies to express different emotions e.g. nervous, bored, excited etc.
4. Demonstrate appropriate turn-taking skills during conversation e.g. waiting, commenting etc.
5. Understand the skills required to begin and end a conversation.
6. Use appropriate skills to start and end a conversation. i.e. body language, commenting, concluding etc.



Top tips for encouraging social skills at home

- ☺ Demonstrate good social skills when your child speaks to you e.g. use gesture where appropriate, turn to face your child, provide good eye contact.
- ☺ Praise your child when they demonstrate good social skills.
- ☺ Provide specific feedback to your child if they make a mistake e.g. 'You did not use your face to show me how you are feeling, I want you to show me that talking about your friends makes you happy, so you should smile!'
- ☺ Allow some 1:1 time with your child to engage in conversation about what they did that day/their topic of interest.

If you have any questions about this programme, please contact your School Speech and Language Therapist via the school/Schools Speech and Language Therapy telephone on 02082219300.

Carryover Activity Sheet

Social skills - Conversation skills

Activities

- To understand the importance of listening skills and to demonstrate effective listening skills across different environments.



What's your favourite? Ask your child to tell you about their favourite meal (or hobby). Whilst they are explaining it to you, demonstrate the following;

- Poor eye- contact (look away as they are talking to you)
- Poor posture (slouch or fidget whilst they are talking)
- Interrupt occasionally

Can they identify why you are not a good listener?

Now swap roles! Whilst you tell them about your chosen topic, see if they can model **good listening**.



Back to back conversation: Take it in turns to ask what your favourite colour is and why. Sit back to back so you cannot see each other. How easy was it to communicate? Ask them to identify **why** it was more difficult/ easy.

- To understand the different ways that we can use our voices to express emotion e.g. volume, rate, fluency etc.

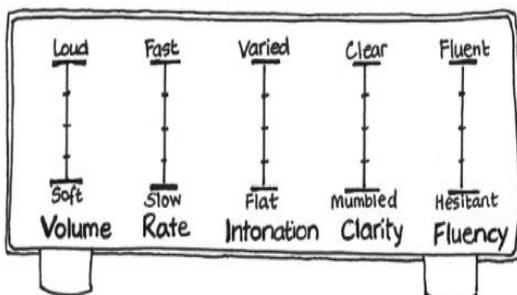


TV time! Have a look on YouTube or on the TV for your child's favourite TV personality. Use clips which express a range of emotions e.g. excited, angry, scared, tired etc.

Use the "balancing our voices" worksheet to put a line on the different meters based on the emotions they are seeing.

Notice how we tweak our voices to show feelings

- To use a range of vocal strategies to express different emotions



Follow my finger! See the "balancing our voices" worksheet attached to this pack. Run your finger up and down each meter (e.g. volume, rate, fluency etc.) whilst saying the phrase "We don't have school today". Notice how by changing the level on the meter, we also change the sound of our emotions! Swap turns!

- To demonstrate appropriate turn-taking skills during conversation i.e. good waiting, commenting etc.



Let's make a story: This game can include up to 4-5 people. Sit in a circle facing each other and *take it in turns* to add a sentence each to your magical story filled with twists and turns! To choose the next person in the story, you must both high-5 each other and swap seats.

Bonus round! To work on *eye-contact* and *attention skills*, you can add gestures and actions during your turn which the next person in the game must copy.

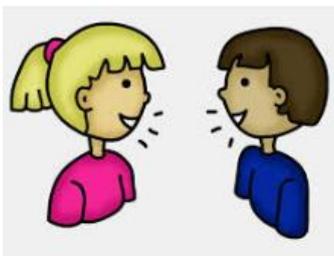


Who is it? This game requires between 3-6 people. Have the names or pictures of familiar people on separate sheets. One person will sit in front of the group (the detective) and another member will hold up a picture of the familiar person *above their head* (so they can't see).

The detective can only ask **yes & no** questions and must **wait** for a response from the team before asking for more information.

E.g. "Am I a boy?" "Do I have long hair?" "Do I play football?"

- To use appropriate skills to start and end a conversation. i.e. body language, commenting, concluding etc.



(See page 106 "starting out" worksheet). Think of some examples for ways that we can start a conversation with somebody else. Act out the conversations. Notice how it may be different if we are talking to friends compared to teachers and strangers. Why is it different?



Bonus! Watch short TV programmes or clips on YouTube with your child. Notice how the characters or people begin and end conversations. See if your child can use the "starting out" worksheet as a prompt to identify how people have started their conversations. If they could change the script, what would they say or do differently? (Use the "ending conversation" worksheet).

How are they ending their conversations? Do they just walk away?

Carryover Activity Sheet

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This section is for young people in secondary school. As well as the activities above, you might want to try the activities below as an extension.

- **To understand the importance of listening skills and to demonstrate effective listening skills across different environments.**



The blindfold game (page 97), children and adult take it in turns to pick a card. The person talking has to talk about their chosen topic blind-folded. The aim of the activity is to illustrate skills involved in good listening. This can be illustrated by modelling appropriate listening (e.g. staying quiet) and inappropriate listening (e.g. interrupting).

- **To understand the different ways that we can use our voices to express emotion e.g. volume, rate, fluency etc.**

Emotional talk (page 101), children/adults take an emotion card and a sentence card and read out the sentence un that emotion. The rest of the group then discuss how the person is feeling. The aim of the activity is to introduce how emotions can affect the way we ay things.



Social skills games



These are games that can be played at home with your child/the whole family, to help encourage the use of positive social skills.

- **Chinese whispers:** Best played with 3+ players. Everyone should sit in a circle/line. Take it in turns to think of a phrase to say e.g. 'I like chocolate cake'. The person who goes first whispers it into the next person's ear, and so on. The last person has to say the phrase out loud, to see if the phrase was repeated correctly to everyone.
- **I went to the market and...:** Can be played with 2+ players. This is a memory game. The first person says: 'I went to the market and I got X' e.g. 'eggs', the next person has to say what the other person said plus a new item e.g. 'I went to the market and I got eggs and milk'. The game continues until someone forgets an item on the list.
- **Mystery objects:** An object is placed in the bag without the other players seeing it. The bag is passed to each person who then tries to either identify the object with one guess/or describe it without saying the name of the object. Whoever guesses correctly can choose the next object! **Alternative version:** Adult picks something and hides it behind their back. They describe the object to the child, who has to guess what it might be based on the clues.
- **Change one thing:** The child/adult leaves the room. Other people in the room decide to change one thing e.g. someone takes off a shoe, a book is upside-down etc. The person then re-enters the room and has to guess what is different.
- **The alphabet game:** Choose a topic e.g. sport/food items. Take it in turns and go through the alphabet and name items beginning with the letters of the alphabet e.g. apple, banana, cherry and so on.

Other easy examples of games you can play at home that encourage social skills development: Hangman, charades, headbandz/21 questions, pictionary.

Space for notes/comments