

# HOW CAN WE HELP AT SCHOOL? KS1 & KS2

## Strategies to Support the Development of Conversational Skills



### Encourage Interaction

Create opportunities for the child to interact. This may be to initiate, take a turn, listen, make a choice, give a choice, share information or make a request. To support the child to initiate interaction, you can create opportunities for the child to:

- Pass on short messages to other adults and children (e.g. “Ask Thomas for a pencil please”)
- Hand out items to other members of the group (e.g. giving out the fruit at snack time.) If it is possible to offer a choice, encourage the child to do this (e.g. “Do you want a banana or an apple?”)
- Ask for missing items by not giving the child everything they may need to complete an activity, (e.g. during a painting activity, do not give them a brush)
- Ask questions or give instructions during barrier games. A barrier game is an activity where the child works in a pair with a barrier between them and the other person. The child and their partner take it in turns to follow a command, give an instruction or ask a question.

### Encourage Turn-taking

- Discuss with the child ways that they can identify when it is their turn to speak e.g. when you are asked a question / the other person stops talking for a few seconds / the other person pauses, looks at you and waits / the other person has finished their sentence.
- Discuss with the child how to recognise if something has gone wrong with turn taking, for example, have you said a lot more than other people / have you been interrupting/talking over others when they are trying to speak / do people look like they are no longer listening.
- Discuss with the child how they would feel if other people did not let them have a turn to speak. Also discuss how other people would feel if they do not take turns.
- Create opportunities for the child to develop this skill. This may include taking turns in a game, identifying whose turn will be next in a circle and sharing information during discussions in pairs or small groups.

## Encourage being Relevant and Concise

- Verbally guide the child back to the topic of conversation by using phrases such as: “We’re not talking about \_\_\_\_\_ now, we’re talking about \_\_\_\_\_” or “We’re talking about \_\_\_\_\_ now, you can tell me about \_\_\_\_\_ at break time”
- Ask the child more specific questions to help them to respond appropriately.
- Signal that you don’t understand by using facial expressions, and commenting (e.g. “I don’t understand what that has to do with this activity”.) This may encourage the child to make a more appropriate response.
- Encourage the child to listen to the question/conversation and give them time to think and generate an appropriate response.
- Use visual support to draw the child’s attention to what you are talking about. You could write the topic on the board or in the child’s work book. For younger children you could place a picture on the table/at the front of the class. If the child makes a comment that is not related to the topic, you can use the visual support to prompt the child back to topic.
- Identify a time when information on favourite topics can be shared. Give a boundary on the amount of information the child can share when talking about their topic.
- Agree on a hand signal / visual prompt that can be used to indicate when the child is free to talk about any topic or to prompt the child to be concise or relevant.

If you require any further support/advice please contact via the following email

[walsall.slt@nhs.net](mailto:walsall.slt@nhs.net)

In the subject line please state **FAO Virtual School SLCN Support** to ensure your message is actioned by the relevant team.