



Teaching Conversation Skills

Teaching your children good conversation skills is one of the most helpful and beneficial things you can do for them.



Here are some practical, easy-to-use skills you can teach your child and practice together as a family:

To contribute to a conversation:

- Look at the person who is talking.
- Wait for a time when no one else is talking.
- Make a short, appropriate comment that is related to the topic that is being discussed.

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- Choose words that will not offend or confuse others.
- After you've spoken, give other people a chance to talk.

To keep a conversation going:

- Maintain a relaxed but attentive posture.
- Nod your head to show you understand and to give ongoing encouragement to the person who is speaking.
- Ask follow-up questions that are related to what another person just said.
- Avoid fidgeting, looking away or yawning.
- Don't interrupt when another person is speaking.
- Take turns speaking during the conversation.
- Check to see if others understand what you have said.

To close a conversation:

- Change topics only when everyone appears to be finished talking about a particular issue.
- Change to a topic that somehow relates to the previous one.
- Give everyone a chance to talk about the new topic.
- Wait for a comfortable break in the conversation to leave.



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Additional Resources

- ***Making Friends Is an Art!*** by Julia Cook
- ***Why Don't they Like me?*** by Susan Sheridan, Ph.D.
- ***Helping the Child who Doesn't Fit in*** by Stephen Nowicki Jr., Ph.D. and Marshall Duke, Ph.D.
- ***Teaching Your Child the Language of Social Success*** by Marshall Duke, Ph.D., Stephen Nowicki, Ph.D. and Elizabeth Martin, M.Ed.

➡ **For more information** or to make an appointment at the Boys Town Center for Behavioral Health, call **531-355-3358**.

Visit **BoysTown.org/Parenting** for more information from the parenting experts at Boys Town.