

Supporting your child's speech, language and communication at home

Conversation Activities

This resource is designed to be used at home by parents and carers to support the development of their child's conversation skills.

While the instructions often describe how the activities can be done by groups of children, **all of these activities can also easily be done with one child**, where the parent or carer takes turns with the child.

Spot the difference

This game is a great way to build children's conversation skills – and have wonderful fun doing it. Being attentive to changes in someone's appearance can be a good starting point for a conversation.



10 mins

How it works

One of the group (Person A) leaves the room or puts on a blindfold. Someone else in the group changes their appearance in some way.

Person A returns to the room (or takes off the blindfold) and is asked to say what has changed. The next person leaves the room, and so on.

Getting started

It's best to start with changes that are pretty obvious; for example, take a shoe off, turn a jumper inside out, two people swap places, etc.

As the children get better at the game, you can make the changes more subtle. Example: roll up one sleeve higher than the other.

How to support

Encourage the children to work out what you need to do well to be good at the game.

- 'You need to look very carefully.'
- 'You need to remember things.'

Day to day

What's different in the class today? Can we work out who is missing? What's different about Mrs Jones today? She's had her hair cut. Shazia has something different – she's lost a tooth. What about George? He's got new shoes.

Make it harder

Change something about your appearance while in the classroom or out and about and see if the children can spot the difference.

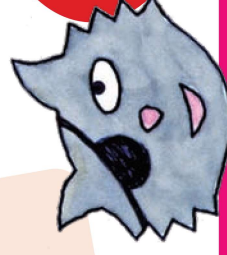
Make it easier

Have the person leaving the room be the one to change their appearance. Get the rest of the children to guess what's changed.

Remember

Talk to the children about how it feels when people notice and comment on new things about their appearance.

'If I look really carefully, I can see what is different'



Let's talk about it



10 mins

These four games are designed to stimulate conversations around simple topics.

Loves and hates

Collect a range of items and place one of them in the centre of a circle of children. For instance, the item might be a jumper or packet of food. Explain to the children that they should stand close to the object if they like it, or move far away if they hate it.

Ask the children to explain why they stood close or far away. Encourage them to exchange points of view with each other. 'I hate the jumper because it's too small.' 'I like beans because they fill me up.'

Point out similarities between children so that they can see they have things in common. 'That's interesting. David and Ryan both like soap because they say it smells nice.'

What's my job?

Cut out pictures of people doing different jobs. For instance, someone looking after people in hospital, serving food in a restaurant, driving an ambulance, or mending a car.

Give a picture to a child and ask them to describe what the person is doing. Others in the group have to guess what their job is.

Special person

From the circle of children, choose someone as the 'special person'. This person then receives a compliment from everyone in the group. 'Mary is very kind.' 'She shares her sweets.' 'Michael makes me laugh when I am sad.'

When children are new to this game, they can find it hard to think of things to say. In this case, send the special person out of the room, so you can help the group to work out what they want to say. The special person then comes back in the room and each child says something they like about them. Make sure all the children get a chance to be the special person.

This activity is demonstrated on the DVD.

Fruit salad

Each child chooses the name of a fruit. Alan decides to be a grapefruit. Miya decides to be an apple, and so on. The group leader (initially, you) says the names of two fruits and these children have to swap places. When you say: 'Fruit salad', all the children must swap places. Once children are familiar with the game, get them to take turns at being the leader.

This activity is demonstrated on the DVD.

Variation

You can choose words from any vocabulary - types of animals, vegetables or shapes, for instance. Alternatively, let the children choose.

