

CONVERSATION CARDS

A guide for how to use the Conversation Cards resource



WHEN DO I USE THE CARDS?

They can be used with families to encourage and support conversations that allow you as the teacher to gain a deeper insight into the young person.

The conversation cards could be used for a specific purpose such as understanding a young person's communication needs, getting the conversation started, building or strengthening a partnership with a family or helping a parent to feel comfortable.

You may choose one or many cards to use before a planned discussion with a family. One question may be enough – the conversation cards are not meant to be a quiz.

The conversation cards should be part of the agenda of a meeting but not the only focus.

They may be used in discussion with students (where appropriate) to learn more about them.

They may be used with the young person's wider support team, for example, a Speech Therapist or Occupational Therapist.

WHAT STEPS DO I TAKE BEFORE USING THE CARDS?

Look through the cards yourself and have a good understanding of what you are wanting to talk about. Print out the cards, laminate them and have them ready to go for the meeting.

Send some cards home for the family to look through and ask them to choose some that resonate with them and that they feel comfortable talking about. You might also like to offer that the family can bring along a support person on the day, this is something that may make them feel more comfortable.

Let the families know that you will be using the conversation cards and that they have been translated into their language prior to the meeting.

Share an explanation of the cards and how they are going to be used in the meeting with the family.

Identify the goal for the young person at the time, prioritise the use of the cards for the purpose of gaining greater knowledge to achieve the goal you have in mind.

Consider different cultural sensitivities that the family may have around engaging with schools. For example, speaking openly about disability outside of the family home, think about if you are meeting with autistic parents – what supports can you have in place to make them feel comfortable?

PREPARING FOR THE CONVERSATION

Consider the goal identified for the student and what you need to know as their teacher to best support them to achieve this goal. You may only need to use one card or you may choose one from each group.

It could be helpful to let the family know what topics will be discussed. For example, if there is a conversation to be had about self-care e.g. puberty, families can then decide which family member/s should be involved in this conversation.

Let the family be your guide, if they are comfortable and happy to share, allow them to share with you about their young person.

DO I NEED AN INTERPRETER?

The quotes are translated to help families feel culturally safe and comfortable to share, however, they don't replace the need for an interpreter.

Families often report that hearing new and more complex information in their first language makes it easier to understand. (Centre for Ethnicity and Health, 2014)

Each school/state/system will have their own processes and guidelines for how to engage with interpretation and translation services.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Keep a record of the meeting minutes.

Consider including some of the information in the young person's Individual Education Plan document or Personalised Learning Plan.

Where appropriate, share useful information with others on the team that support the child.

If necessary put the family in contact with local support services, therapy directories etc.

Plan to follow up with the family, schedule in the next time you are going to meet and ask them if they would like to contribute to the meeting agenda.

Consider how you can share this resource with your colleagues.

It is also worth considering how the young person would be included in these conversations post the initial meeting with families.