

## Social communication strategies

1. **Encourage the child to become an active listener, support the following with pictures or symbols**
  - look at the speaker
  - sit still
  - think about the words he is saying and try to talk about the same things
2. **Use Circle time**

Teach key principals of good social interaction through circle time - listening, looking, waiting, turn taking and responding to others!  
Model appropriate behaviour.
3. **Encourage the child through modelling to greet and say goodbye to adults and peers using appropriate phrases**
4. **Encourage the child to maintain a conversation by nodding, maintaining eye contact and using verbal fillers such as uh-hum, ummm, ok etc...**
5. **Only accept language that is relevant to the conversation**

Don't allow him to change the subject  
Keep the child on target and on topic by reminding him of the subject
6. **Only accept language that is relevant to the audience**

Let the child know if he hasn't given you enough information about the topic.  
Let him know the detail he is giving is irrelevant because you already know it.
7. **Encourage him to take turns**

Play turn taking games  
In a conversation make the child aware of the need to take turns so that each person has a time when he talks and when he listens.
8. **Don't be side tracked by constant interruptions**

Some children are good at taking you off the subject. This is not a

true conversation but a monologue in which you are expected to nod at the right places. This is not helpful. Kindly, but clearly stop the change of topic as this is not meaningful and reinforces bad patterns, Remind the child what you were talking about

Give the child time to respond

**Some children need 10 seconds to understand what was said and respond.  
It can be helpful to wait before repeating what you said.**

Adapted from 'Language Builders: advice and activities to encourage children's communication skills' by Henrietta McLachlan and Liz Elks