

Conversation Starters For Early Childhood Education and Care Services



Shared conversations are an opportunity to talk and listen with other inclusion team members.



- ▶ They help you to connect and start a working relationship.
- ▶ They help you to learn more about other team members and to understand what is important to them.
- ▶ They allow you to share what is important to you.

Shared conversations support the inclusion team to build strong, ongoing, working relationships.

- ▶ They improve communication, enhance teamwork and keep you on track.
- ▶ They help the team to find common ground to work on together, agree on the path forward and keep connected.
- ▶ They help you to work better together.

Shared Conversations come in many forms.

- ▶ They can be informal, such as a short catch-up at drop-off time, or more formal, such as in a planned meeting with all team members.
- ▶ They can be in-person, online, over the phone and through email interactions.



To connect and start a relationship

- ▶ Hello. Welcome to...
- ▶ My name is... My role is... My role involves...
- ▶ Hi. I haven't met (child) and/or your family yet. I am... What is your name?
- ▶ These are the names and pictures of the educators who support (child) to play and learn at our service. Have you met them all? Who can I introduce you to?
- ▶ Is there anything you need to know more about, or I can help you with?
- ▶ These are my/our contact details. The best time to have a phone/in-person... conversation with me/educator is...
- ▶ Always feel free to contact me by... I can generally get back to you in (time).



To help you learn about families and carers

- ▶ Tell me about your child and family.
- ▶ What are your hopes/needs/problems/thoughts/goals/ideas about your child's learning and development?
- ▶ What are your hopes/needs/problems/thoughts/goals/ideas about the inclusion of (child) at our service?
- ▶ What are your priorities for (child)'s inclusion at our service?
- ▶ Who are the people that are important to (child)?
- ▶ Tell me about (child)'s strengths/interests/identity/skills/dispositions...
- ▶ How does (child) prefer to communicate?
- ▶ What helps (child) to feel supported? How is (child) best comforted?

- ▶ Are there any challenges you experience at home for (child) with...? (e.g. getting ready for child care, getting to sleep, eating...)
- ▶ How do you...? Tell me more about... Can I clarify...? What are your expectations?
- ▶ At the service, we've noticed that (child) likes.../prefers to play.../is friends with.../engages with.../is comfortable.../is challenged by... What are your thoughts or experiences?
- ▶ Thank you for sharing those assessments and reports. They were very helpful. My understanding is ... Is this your understanding of them?



To help you learn about Early Childhood Intervention Professionals

- ▶ Great to meet you. Could you tell me about your role?
- ▶ It would be great to hear a little more about yourself and your professional background/scope of practice/approach/experience...
- ▶ Can you tell me about your approach to therapy in natural, everyday environments and what this would look like in our service?
- ▶ Can you tell us about the work you have been doing with (child)?
- ▶ What ideas/strategies/practices for (child)'s learning and inclusion do you think will be most helpful for the team to know?
- ▶ What are your priorities for (child) learning and development?
- ▶ How do you see best practice working when you visit our service?
- ▶ As children learn through play and relationships how will you involve (child)'s peers in the activities you plan?
- ▶ How do you...? Tell me more about... Can I clarify...? What are your expectations ...?
- ▶ Thank you for sharing those assessments and reports. They were very helpful. My understanding is... Is this your understanding of them?



To share our Early Childhood Education and Care Service perspective

- ▶ We have a play-based curriculum. Can I explain this?
- ▶ As children learn through play and relationships, we will involve (child)'s peers in all activities planned for (child). Can we tell you what this looks like?
- ▶ Our Service Philosophy guides our daily work and reflects our values and beliefs. Here is a copy, but some key elements are...
- ▶ Our service has an Inclusion Policy, here is a copy to keep. Can I explain what this looks like in everyday practice?
- ▶ Our service operates under the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations. There are also child protection obligations and a duty of care to keep all children healthy and safe. Let me explain how this relates to families and service visitors.
- ▶ Can we share our observations and program documentation relating to (child)?
- ▶ We've noticed that (child) likes.../prefers to play.../ is friends with.../engages with.../is comfortable.../ is challenged by... What are your thoughts or experiences?
- ▶ We promote children's agency by...
- ▶ Some ideas/strategies/practices that we think might be helpful are...



To find common ground with other inclusion team members

- ▶ Can we talk about the hopes, needs, problems, thoughts, goals and ideas that might help us find what we want to focus on together?
- ▶ What do you think is important for (child)'s learning and development?
- ▶ What do we need to focus on to support (child)'s learning, development and inclusion at the ECEC service?
- ▶ Can we talk about what we agree is important to focus on first?
- ▶ Let's start small. Let's agree on (shared priority) and start to work on next steps.
- ▶ This might be challenging for... because... Another way to do this could be...



To agree on the path forward

- ▶ Can we get together to talk about next steps? What day and time will suit?
- ▶ Let's brainstorm what needs to happen to get started.
- ▶ Who will do what? Let's make sure everyone knows what's happening and who is doing it.
- ▶ What else do we need to do? Do we need any extra help to do this?
- ▶ How will we know when things are working well and we're on the right track?
- ▶ Let's make sure everyone knows what is happening. Who is sharing the plan?



To keep connected and check in on progress

- ▶ Can we schedule a check-in? What day and time will suit?
- ▶ How have you been? Did you get to try that new strategy? How did it go at home/the park/at soccer/at Aunty's?
- ▶ I am just checking in to see if you received the information I emailed to you. What do you think about this idea?
- ▶ I have noticed that... seems to be going well. What are your thoughts?
- ▶ (Child) really likes outdoor play with their friends. This would be a good part of the day to trial... (strategy).
- ▶ I have some observations/experiences/ideas about why our inclusion team plan is not working well. When would be a good time to chat about this?
- ▶ Let's get together to review our progress.



To start a more challenging conversation

- ▶ I've noticed that.... This makes me think... What is happening from your perspective?
- ▶ I'd like to chat about (issue/problem). Can we schedule a time to talk about it?
- ▶ I am not understanding... Can you help me to...? What am I missing?
- ▶ I need your help with (issue/problem). Let's work out how we can solve it together.
- ▶ I'd like to chat about how we might be able to work better together.
- ▶ I'd really like to hear your ideas. What else could we do?
- ▶ I'd like to share something I've observed. Can I get your help with...?

Click [here](https://inclusionagency.nswact.org.au/about/inclusion-together) to find out more about *Inclusion Together* or go to <https://inclusionagency.nswact.org.au/about/inclusion-together>