Tools for Extending Conversations for Older Students

Introduction:

Children with social language problems often have difficulty holding full conversations with others. They may change the subject abruptly or just stop talking all together. Some children may want to communicate with others but may not know the right thing to say to keep it going.

Instructions:

For older children who are able to read, use the first page to discuss why it is important to extend a conversation. Then, go over the different types of conversation extenders listed.

Then, show the child the conversation toolbox. Explain what each box on the page means and how it could be used to extend a conversation.

Then, pick a topic to converse about. Each time it's the student's conversational turn, have him pick one of the strategies and point to the one he's using while he says something. If he gets stuck, give him some suggestions of things he could say for each box.

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Making Conversations Longer

Why should we make conversations longer?

Talking with other people is how we *make and keep friends*, *share the things we love*, and *learn new information* that we might not have known before.   When we have a conversation with someone, we are *building our relationship* with them. It will make us *closer as friends* and allow us to *share information* with each other about important things.

If we stop talking after only saying a few things, we aren't able to become better friends with the other person. We also aren't able to tell our friends what we know and learn from what they know. Making our conversations longer (talking more) will help us *connect better with our friends*.

How to Make our Conversations Longer:

There are many things we can do to keep a conversation going. When you run out of things to say, try using one of these tools:
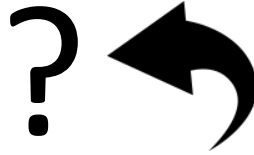
1. **Ask a Question**: Ask the other person a question about the topic that you're talking about. (ex: "Where do you like to go for pizza?")

2. **Answer a Question:** Answer a question that the other person just asked. (ex: "I eat pizza at Pizza Hut")

3. **Tell a Fact:** Do you know something else about this topic? Tell the other person what you know. (ex: "Did you know that Domino's has 15 different pizza toppings?")

4. **Give an Opinion:** How do you feel about the topic you're talking about? Do you like it? Do you dislike it? Talk about what you think of the topic. (ex: "My favorite type of pizza is pepperoni.")

5. **Ask About Their Opinion:** Ask the person you're talking to how they feel about the topic. Or, ask about their favorite thing related to the topic. (ex: "What's your favorite kind of pizza?")

6. **Tell a Story:** Talk about something that happened to you that's related to the topic you're talking about. (ex: "One time, I was getting pizza with my mom and the waitress dropped it on the floor!")

7. **Ask Them for a Story:** Ask the person you're talking to if something related to the topic has ever happened to them. (ex: "Have you ever had a pizza delivered to your house?")

8. **Talk About Something Similar:** Talk about something that's related to the topic you're talking about but make sure you explain how it's related. (ex: "When I eat pizza, I always like to drink soda as well. My favorite soda is Pepsi.")

My Conversation Toolbox

Tools to Keep Talking

Ask a Question: Ask the other person about the topic that you're talking about.

Answer a Question: Answer a question that the other person just asked.

Tell a Fact: Do you know something else about this topic? Tell the other person
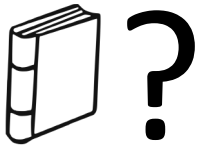
Give an Opinion: How do you feel about the topic you're talking about? Tell them.
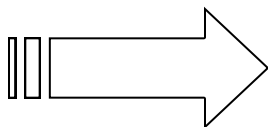
Ask an Opinion: Ask how the other person feels about the topic you're talking about.

Tell a Story: Talk about something that happened to you that's related to the topic

Ask Them for a Story: Ask the person you're talking to if something related to the topic has ever happened to them.

Talk About Something Similar: Talk about something that's related to the topic but make sure you explain how it's related.