



# Tips for Working on Social Skills

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| To strike up a conversation (with someone you know or someone new): | Talk about some of the things that are around you (such as something on the TV, the weather, the person's dog, etc.).  |
|   | When you're first getting to know someone, stick with neutral topics. Avoid talking about politics, religion, money, or personal information.  |
|   | Ask open-ended questions, for example, "What did you do over the weekend?", "What do you think about the movie?", "What kind of hobbies do you have?", "What did you do over the holidays?", or "What are your plans for the weekend?"   |
| To maintain a conversation or keep a conversation going:            | Focus on topics that you think might be interesting to the other person, and ask open-ended questions related to the conversation.   |
|   | Be aware of your body language. For example, make comfortable eye contact (looking at the person but not <u>staring</u> ), nod your head, and smile.   |
|   | Take turns talking and listening.  |
|   | Watch for cues that the other person might want to end the conversation (looking at the clock, looking away, comments about being in a hurry).   |
|   | Be respectful of other people's personal space by not standing too close.  |
| When you feel like there could be conflict in a conversation:       | Let the other person finish talking and listen to what they have to say. Try to see the other person's point of view. What is it that the person wants you to know? If you don't know, it's okay to ask. For example, "It sounds like you're upset that I didn't clean the kitchen, is that right?" If you can't agree on something, try to meet them halfway. |
|   | Use friendly body language and tone of voice. For example, avoid pointing your finger, yelling, or rolling your eyes. Try to stay calm and have your body and face as relaxed as possible. Remember to breathe.  |
|   | Pay attention to your emotions. Let the person know what you are feeling and start with the word "I": "I feel frustrated right now," or "I'm feeling upset about that." If you think you need time to calm your emotions, let the person know that you need to take a break.   |
|   | Show respect to the other person by talking to them in a way that you would want someone to talk to you.   |