



# Initiating Conversations

## Autism & ABA Therapy Social Skills

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### Activity Title:

"Friendship Chat: Practicing Conversation Skills"

### Objective:

To help the child with autism practice initiating conversations and maintaining them in the context of building friendships.

### Materials Needed:

- Conversation Starter Cards: Cards with simple, engaging questions or prompts suitable for the child's age and interests.
- A timer (optional, to structure conversation length).
- Comfortable seating in a quiet, distraction-free space.

### Activity Setup:

Prepare Conversation Starter Cards:

- Create or select cards with phrases or questions that can initiate conversations (e.g., "What is your favorite game?" or "Tell me about your weekend").

Choose a Comfortable and Quiet Space:

- Select a space where the child feels relaxed and can focus on the conversation.

## **Activity Steps with Example:**

### Introduction to Conversational Skills:

- Begin by discussing the importance of talking to friends: “Talking and listening to our friends help us learn more about them and have fun together.”

### Using Conversation Starter Cards:

- Present a Conversation Starter Card to the child.
- Example Prompt: “What’s your favorite animal?”
- Encourage the child to answer and then ask the same question back to you.

### Role-Playing a Conversation:

- Act as if you are new friends. Use the card to start a conversation.
- Example Interaction: After the child answers about their favorite animal, you can share yours and then ask a follow-up question like, “Why do you like that animal?”

### Practicing Conversation Extension:

- Use the timer to practice maintaining the conversation for a set period, like 2 minutes.
- Encourage the child to ask questions and add comments related to the topic.

### Feedback and Encouragement:

- Provide positive feedback on the child’s participation and guide them to improve.
- Example Feedback: “I really liked how you asked me questions too. That’s a great way to keep our conversation going!”

## **Skills Targeted:**

- Initiating Conversations: Using prompts to start talking to someone.
- Maintaining Conversations: Continuing the dialogue with questions and related comments.
- Listening Skills: Paying attention to what the other person says.
- Reciprocal Interaction: Engaging in a back-and-forth exchange in conversation.