



Visual Support Guide: Meal Talk

What?

The meal talk visual support has pictures and question a child can ask to start a conversation with another child during meal or snack time. Using the meal talk visuals provides children with multiple ways to communicate and get to know each other. Children can look at the pictures to find a topic for conversation or they can use the visuals directly to communicate with their peers.

Why?

- Meal and snack times offer great opportunities for children to learn and practice conversation skills with other children. Encourage children to ask and respond to questions from friends and get to know each other. This helps create a sense of community and belonging in the group.
- You can use the meal talk cards in different ways.
 - Promote children's social and communication skills.
 - Support a child who needs extra help to ask questions or stay engaged in conversation with other children.

How?

- Make meal talk visual supports.
 - Print, laminate, and cut cards.
 - Translate the questions into the languages spoken by the children in your program or make separate cards in each language.
 - Create additional cards around diverse topics based on children's interests.
 - Store in a file folder, bowl, or other container in a location children can easily access. Keep a set of meal talk cards on every snack or meal tray in your learning environment.
- Use meal talk visual supports.
 - Show the cards to children during meal or snack time.
 - Demonstrate how to use the cards.
 - Begin by making a comment on one of the cards. You can say, "My favorite thing to do outside is ride a bike."
 - Then ask a child the question on the card, "What do you like to do outside?"
 - After the child responds, invite the child to ask the same question to another child and so on.
 - Have each child give the card to another child as they ask the question to support children who need extra help or who communicate using alternative communication.
 - If a child has difficulty answering a question, provide two to three choices. Create a chart with common responses that children can point to if they need extra support to answer a question from a friend.

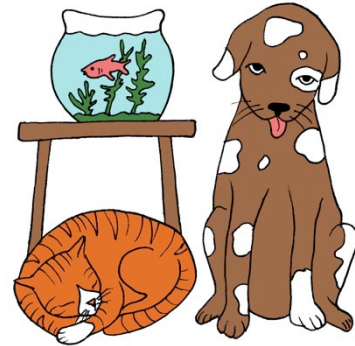
- Make the meal talk cards available to children every day during meal and snack time. Facilitate conversations as needed until children have learned to use the cards independently.
 - Make sure all children at the table have an opportunity to ask and answer questions.
 - Offer children opportunities to use the cards to nonverbally communicate with each other.

Meal Talk

Do you have any brothers or sisters?



Do you have any pets?



How old are you?



What do you like to do on a rainy day?

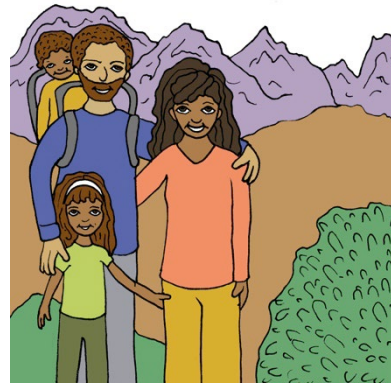


Meal Talk

What do you like to do outside?



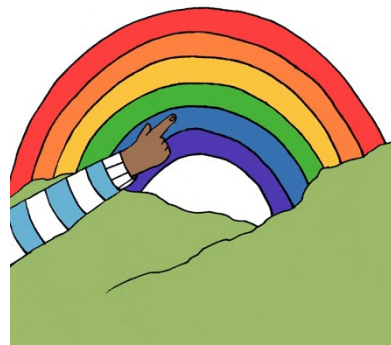
What do you like to do with your family?



What are you going to play with today?

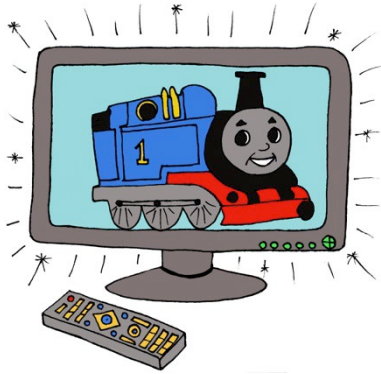


What is your favorite color?



Meal Talk

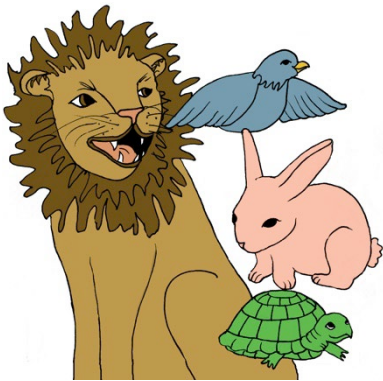
What is your favorite show?



What is your favorite toy?



What is your favorite animal?



What is your favorite food?

