

# SOCIAL SKILLS LESSONS

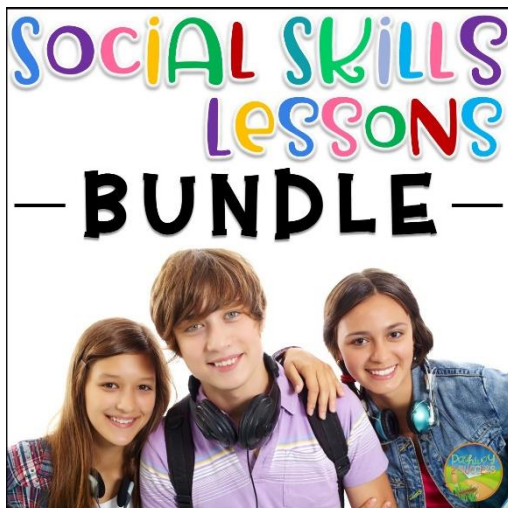
## Starting a Conversation



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These are a FREE sample of my [Social Skills Lessons for Communication Skills](#), which include 10 complete lessons with over 50 activities for young adults to complete.



You may also be interested in the [Social Skills Lessons Bundle](#). Just some of the lessons target being respectful, following directions, accepting criticism, working with others, understanding emotions, dealing with anger, understanding perspectives, accepting different perspectives, flexible thinking, understanding social cues, developing empathy, using perspectives to resolve conflicts, and MUCH more. This resource includes 4 core units with 40 lessons, each with several activities for extended practice. Over 150 activities are included!

# Social Skills Lessons • Educator Guide

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Social skills are the abilities and competencies we use to navigate the social world. These skills tell us how to act and what to say in particular social situations. With strong social skills, kids and young adults can more easily build friendships, get along with others, work collaboratively in groups, handle frustrations, and have an overall improved quality of life.

While some kids and young adults learn social skills just from observing and interacting with those around them, many do not. These kids might struggle to develop friendships, have difficulty working in partners or groups, experience challenges in following directions, act in ways perceived as rude or mean, or misread the social cues of others. To these youngsters, the social world is confusing and challenging. Some students who may struggle with social skills specifically include those with autism, ADHD, ODD, intellectual disabilities, and a variety of other needs.

In order for kids and young adults to acquire new social skills, they need explicit instruction and practice in that particular area. Then, kids will need real opportunities to use the skills in real-life settings. These lessons provide detailed and structured activities and practice with a variety of social skills.

This set of free lessons focuses on initiating a conversation, finding things in common with others to enhance communication, and keeping a conversation going with peers.

# Social Skills Lessons • Educator Guide

	Starting a Conversation
Objectives	<p>Students will discuss and use strategies for starting a conversation.</p> <p>Students will identify things in common with peers to help start a conversation.</p>
Lesson Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Introduction:</b> Explain that students will be working on building their skills to start more meaningful and robust conversations with others. Remind students what it means to have a conversation. It's a give and take of information from one person to another. We learn information from others and can develop really positive relationships. Even if it's a little bit uncomfortable for you to start a conversation at first, you will get more comfortable and these skills will help you throughout your entire life. Kids and adults have to have conversations with people all the time!</li> <li><b>2. Activity 1:</b> Ask students to share strategies for how to start a conversation.</li> <li>Pass out the "Starting a Conversation" worksheet. Read through. Feel free to give extended examples for each ways to start a conversation or ask kids to come up with them. For example, kids love to come up with their own "would you rather" questions.</li> <li><b>4. Activity 2:</b> Remind students about the list from the previous activity. Explain that they will be putting those strategies for starting a conversation into action.</li> <li>Pass out the "Conversation Starters" worksheet. On their own or with a partner, have students come up with questions or ideas for how to start a conversation. Let students know they can use this list to help them start a conversation with someone else.</li> <li>Allow students to partner up and ask a partner some of their questions.</li> <li>for kids to respond to how these topics can drive conversations with others.</li> <li><b>8. Activity 3:</b> We will be finding things we have in common with others. Ask students to think about how this could help them start conversations with others.</li> <li>Explain that students will get a worksheet and will start with one partner. They will talk for about 3–5 minutes with that partner and try to find as many things in common as they can. Maybe you like the same type of music or maybe you grew up in the same area. These are things in common that you could easily talk about, so you would write them down. After a few minutes, you will work with another partners and do the same.</li> <li>Pass out the "Finding Common Ground" worksheet. Read through. Have students work with partners, timing them as you go.</li> <li>Ask students to share their take-aways from the activity and how finding things in common can help them start conversations with others.</li> <li><b>14. Activity 4:</b> Have students work with a partner. Let them know they will be practicing how to start a conversation using some conversation starters. Let students know that the goal is to use that starter question to get a conversation going. They don't need to pick up another card right away once the conversation has started! Keep talking if you are talking. Pass out the "Conversation Cards". Give time for students to talk.</li> <li>You can choose to have students switch partners to work with a new person at one point.</li> <li>You can also have students write their own conversation starters on blank cards. They can use the list from activity one to help them come up with strategies for developing ways to start a conversation.</li> </ol>



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# STARTING A CONVERSATION

There are many different ways to strike up a conversation with someone else! Whether you are giving a compliment, talking about a topic you have in common, or just asking an open-ended question, use these strategies to help yourself get started.

**#1 Start with Small Talk.** Start just by saying hi, asking how someone is doing, or talking about the weather. Starting with small talk can lead the way into a longer conversation when you want it to.

**#2 Give a Compliment and Tie it to a Question.** Giving a compliment can be a kind way to start a conversation. Then, just add a question to that compliment to find out more information and start a conversation. For example, you might say, "I noticed you were pretty good playing in gym. What tips would you give for me to improve my basketball practice?"

**#3 Find Common Ground.** If you know of something you already have in common with that person, bring it up. People love to talk about what they love and what they are good at. If you both have some activities or ideas you're already both interested in, talking about it can be much easier.

**#4 Ask Open-Ended Questions.** An open-ended question is one that can't just be answered with "yes" or "no". These questions often require longer answers and can lead into strong conversations. An example might include: "What are your favorite outdoor activities?" because it means the person will have to elaborate on different activities.

**#5 Use Ice-Breaker Questions.** Some questions might start as simple ones, but can lead into deeper conversations. Questions like, "Are you a cat or a dog person?" and "What's your favorite show right now?" can help you learn more information about that person and guide your discussion.

**#6 Ask Would You Rather Questions.** While it's not appropriate all the time, asking "would you rather" questions with friends can be a blast! It's important to use these types of questions with closer friends usually, because they can come off as a bit silly and random. Still, they are lots of fun and can spark up great conversations. These might include questions like, "Would you rather live without your cell phone or your shoes?" and "Would you rather have a double period of math or science?"



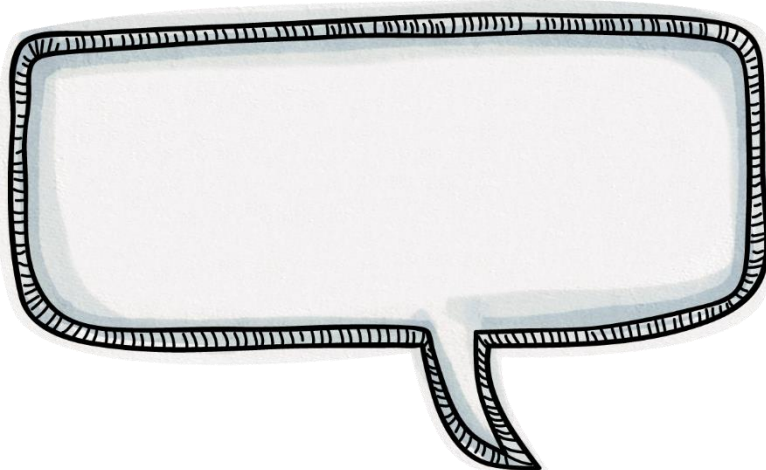
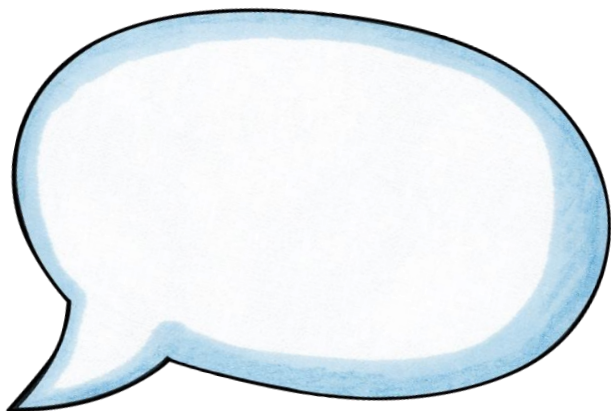
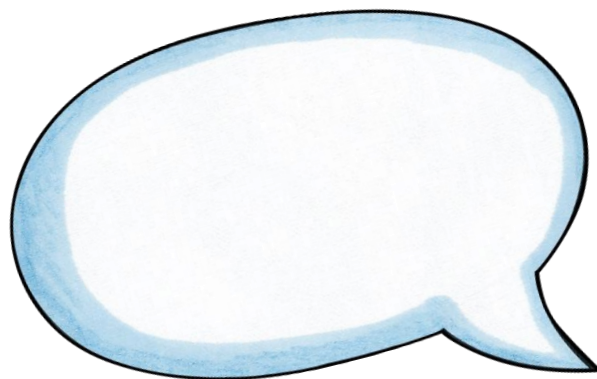
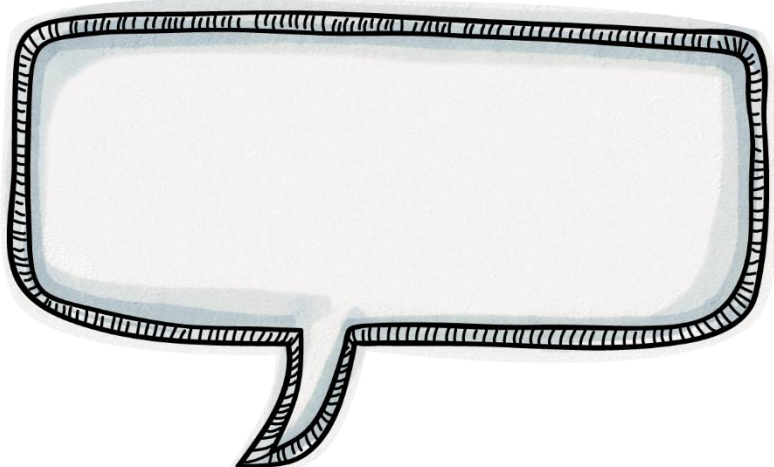
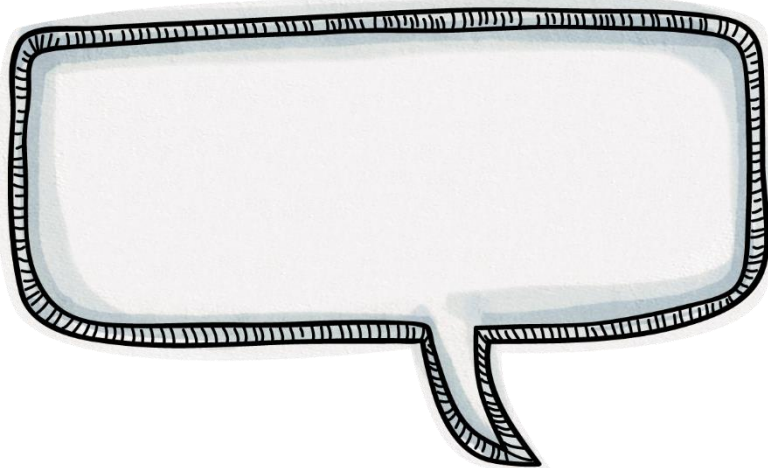
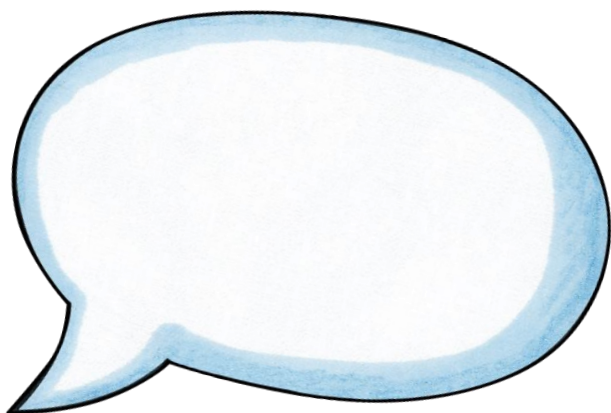
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# CONVERSATION STARTERS

When you want to start up a conversation with someone, it's helpful to think of some conversation starters. These are just simple questions or starts to a sentence that can give you direction for a conversation with others.

Come up with several ways to start a conversation with someone else. Write what you might say in the speech bubbles.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# FINDING COMMON GROUND

When you start a conversation, it's easiest when you talk about topics you already know about. When you and a friend have a few things in common, it can help. Sometimes you might like the same sports, music, or classes in school. Even just growing up in the same town is having something in common!

Work with a few partners to fill out this grid and find out what you have in common with others:

**Partner #1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Partner #2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Partner #3** \_\_\_\_\_

**Partner #4** \_\_\_\_\_

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SPORT TO WATCH?

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WHAT IS YOUR  
FAVORITE CLASS  
IN SCHOOL? WHY?

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IF YOU COULD BE  
ANY ANIMAL WHAT  
WOULD IT BE?  
WHY?

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WHAT WOULD BE  
YOUR DREAM  
JOB?

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WHAT IS YOUR  
FAVORITE TYPE OF  
EXERCISE?

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WHAT IS THE BEST  
ICE CREAM  
FLAVOR?

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WHAT ARE THE  
THREE MOST  
DISGUSTING  
FOODS?

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WHAT WOULD BE  
YOUR FAVORITE  
VACATION SPOT?

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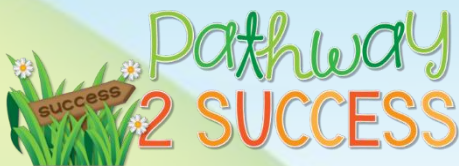


# About the Author



Kristina Scully has been a special educator for over 10 years. She has a bachelor's degree in special and elementary education from the University of Hartford, along with a master's degree in special education with a specialization in autism from the University of St. Joseph. She has worked extensively with kids and young adults with behavioral challenges, learning disabilities, autism, ADHD, anxiety, and other needs.

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