

Conversation starters

Questions for parents and caregivers to consider before speaking to their child's teacher

Consider how you might respond to the following questions before speaking to your child's teacher. This way, you can guide the teacher by offering information specific to your child, as well as providing proposed strategies in advance. Consider your child's strengths and make a list.

- Is there something that helps your child to self-regulate?
- Are there any visual tools you use at home (for example, for communication or everyday skills and routines) that would be useful for your child in the classroom?
- What changes to the school environment would create comfort for your child?
- What style of learner is your child? Would a visual guide or step-by-step process poster help?
- What are your child's interests or passions? Are there opportunities at school for your child to share their interests? Are there other children you know of at school who share the same interests as your child? Can these shared interests be used to develop friendships?
- Do other children at the school understand the idea of diversity, and neurodiversity? Does the school actively acknowledge that everyone has different strengths and difficulties?



Conversation starters with teachers – examples

- I've noticed that my child seems to be having regular trouble with drop off at the start of the day. Do you think they are struggling more than the other children?
- My child's lunchbox/water bottle seems to be coming home full most days. Have you noticed whether they're eating or drinking?
- I've noticed my child's underwear is wet or soiled sometimes when they come home. Have you noticed if they are going to the toilet when they need to?
- I've noticed that my child is covering their ears when I vacuum or when they hear hand-dryers in bathrooms. Have you seen anything like this at school?
- My child seems to find it hard to follow more than one-step instructions. Have you noticed this as well?
- My child mentioned that their friend is angry at them and not playing or engaging with them anymore. Have you noticed anything like this?



Resources for families: <https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/parents/topics/autism-families/starting-school/>