Developing and Using Conversation Books

KidsAbility™ Centre for Child Development
Augmentative Communication Services
Conversation Books

What is a conversation book?
- It is a book (any shape or size) that contains a person’s own news or events.
- Like a scrapbook it contains “remnants” or memorabilia of news and/or events of home, school, and community events or activities.
- Conversation books showcase the individual – what they like, what they do – who they are!

Why would we make and use a conversation book?
- To spark conversations between people
- To share information
- To ask and respond to questions
- To support literacy development
- To foster participation (in making the book and sharing the information)

How can you make one?
- Be on the lookout for “remnants” (i.e. ticket stubs, a leaf from a walk, a photograph, a postcard, a newspaper article, a picture from a catalogue or a flyer, a napkin, a cut out from a container etc.)
- Put the “remnants” into a photo album or paste them into a notebook
- Include a sentence describing the item
- Talk about it while making it together
- Add new information as often as possible
- Have fun!!

Organizing Information
- Doesn’t have to be in chronological order
- Placement of core vocabulary (i.e. alphabet board, topic board, lists, strategy information)
- Think ahead about next steps when the book gets full
- Use more of the same books
- Transfer information to a larger reference book

Keeping the book up to date/useful
- It is recommended that something be added to the book at least ONE time per week.

Remember…
- Have fun!!
- Keep the topics child focused
- Talk about it while making it
- Don’t be concerned about how it looks
- Include a quick sentence about the topic to help support the conversation
**Conversation Book Ideas!**

Include the following to help your child explain where they have been, places of interest or where they are planning to go. (If an accompanying explanation is needed, write a simple message on a post-it note or index card and include it with the picture or item):

- pamphlets, brochures
- newspaper articles/pictures
- magazine articles/pictures (even items that are on their Birthday or Christmas list!)
- pictures or ads
- ticket stubs
- photographs
- birthday or other greeting cards from special people
- body tattoos
- stickers

Include **jokes** – write the question on one side of the page with the answer on the other so the communication partner can’t read the answer before your child has had a chance to “ask” the question.

Include lists of information (examples below) that your child might be talking about - they may be words that are new or with difficult sound combinations.

- favourite movie titles
- games they enjoy
- toys that they play with
- music that they like to listen to
- video games (i.e. XBox 360, Playstation 3, Wii)

Include photographs and or lists of places that your child has visited on vacation or for special events – you can also include a small map (hand drawn or copied!). These could include places that you have been to quite some time ago or places you are planning to go to.

Include drawings (stick people are OK!) of an event like:

- taking the dog for a walk
- playing with dolls/toys
- going to the arena with friends
- helping to make cookies
- helping cook dinner
- helping to set the table

Or you could just put in an index card with a written message on about what you did together (i.e. shopping for groceries, going for a walk etc.). If your child bought some nail polish or new markers for example, you could mark some of it/them on the index card to show the colour(s).
Put in a dried leaf or a flower from a walk. If you are on a walk and your child finds something like a rock that does not fit in the book, put in a note about it and put the item in their backpack.

Include grocery receipts – circle what your child picked out to buy for their lunch.

Take photos of collectables (favourite vehicles, teddy bears, dolls, coins, etc.)

Include collector cards (i.e. hockey, baseball, Webkinz, Build a Bear).

Include favourite pictures from calendars.

Include mementos from places that you attended (i.e. ski tags, attendance bracelets).

Include core vocabulary (topic board, alphabet board, lists of info, strategies information).
Planning a Conversation Book

Introduction:

Materials:

Permanent Information:
Conversation Topics Ideas:

Extras: (ex. alphabet board, clock, calendar, map)