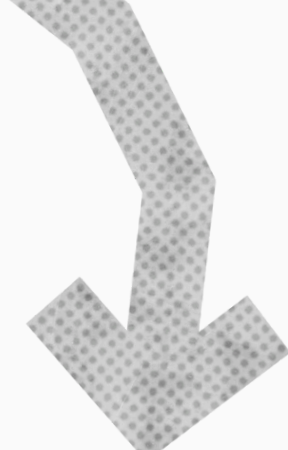


Child Personas



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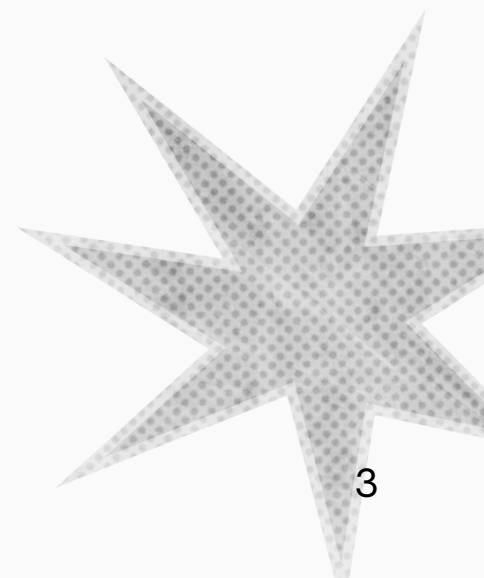
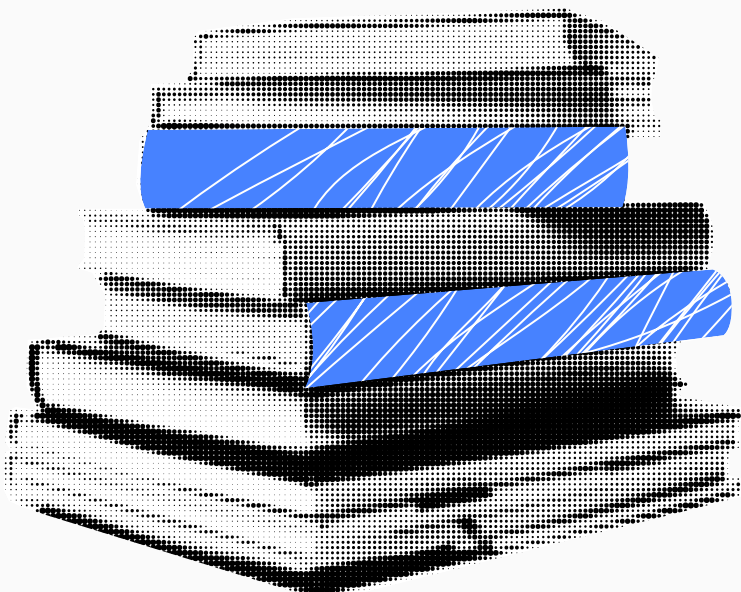
Empathy Mapping __ 34 - 40

What are child personas?

Every child is unique. Some love to talk, while others keep their thoughts inside. Some meet serious conversations with jokes, while others ask endless questions or prefer to show their feelings through art, play, or quiet time.

Because children respond so differently, there isn't a single "right way" to talk about big topics like safety, relationships, or growing up. What works brilliantly for one child might not work with another, and that's okay.

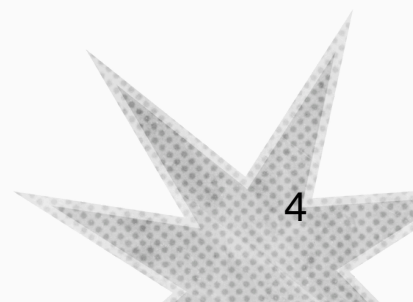
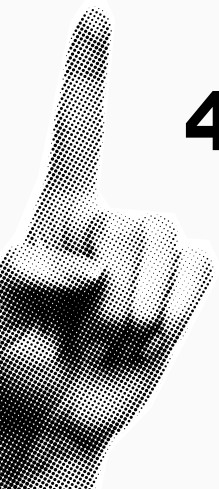
This toolkit shares a set of child personas. The Everyone's Invited Education Team created this *toolkit based on our experience working with a wide range of young people across the country*. The Child Personas are simple profiles that capture different styles of communication, personality, and behaviour. They are not boxes to put children in, but helpful ways of imagining how your child might be feeling and what they might need from you.



How can child personas help you?

At Everyone's Invited, our mission is to help tackle sexual violence. We believe that parents and carers play a big role in helping children to understand the world around them and develop into adults who demonstrate respect, empathy and understanding. This resource can help you with how to approach conversations on important topics with your child.

- 1** They help you to see things from your child's perspective, noticing what might be going on under the surface.
- 2** You can discover new ways to connect, with tips for adapting your approach to suit different personalities.
- 3** They can help you feel reassured. If one approach doesn't work, it doesn't mean you're doing it wrong. It just means you need to try a different route.
- 4** They encourage you to stay flexible and curious. Remember, children can change from one day to the next.



How to use child personas

- 1** Start by using our 'Parent & Carer Reflection' resource to help you understand your values and parenting style.
- 2** Read through the different child personas in this booklet and see if any feel similar to your child.
- 3** You will likely find that your child is a mixture of different child personas and that parts of these personas overlap.
- 4** Head to page 34 where you will find the 'Empathy Mapping' task. This task will encourage you to think about which personas / personas represent your child and will give you the chance to think about how to support your child best.
- 5** When filling out the 'Need' section, explore the conversation starters and responses for each persona that matches your child. Think about how you might use the sentence starters when you speak to your child this week.
- 6** After a few weeks, return to the personas and reflect on how successful your attempts have been to meet the needs listed and your use of conversation starters and responses. You may need to revisit them or try new approaches from different personas.

Changes don't happen overnight. They require consistent effort. The most important thing is simply this: your willingness to listen, adapt, and keep the conversation going. Trying matters more than getting it "perfect."

The Resister – Respect their independence and listen without judgment; patience is key.

The Big Questioner – Encourage curiosity, provide honest answers, and celebrate thoughtful inquiry.

The Eager Thinker – Challenge ideas gently and support critical thinking without stifling enthusiasm.

The Silent Observer – Allow them to watch and reflect; don't force verbal responses.

The Joke Deflector – Take humor seriously as a coping mechanism; gently guide toward deeper conversation.

The Sensitive Feeler – Be a calm anchor; validate emotions and show patience.

The Activist – Validate passion, but teach pacing and self-care while encouraging action.

The Digital Native – Engage with their digital world; use it as a bridge to real-life lessons.

The People Pleaser – Make honesty feel safe; reassure them their voice and needs matter.

The High Achiever – Separate worth from performance; emphasise effort and self-value.

The Shrugger – Don't push; keep the door open and value small responses.

The Mood Swinger – Don't take emotions personally; stay steady and supportive.

The Secret-Keeper – Build trust slowly; respect boundaries and offer multiple safe ways to share.

The Challenger – Encourage respectful debate; validate independence and critical thinking.

The Creative Dreamer – Use imagination as a bridge; honor creative ways of expressing thoughts.

The Slow Processor – Practice patience; allow space for reflection and thoughtful responses.

The Late Bloomer – Celebrate progress at their pace; encourage small steps and reassurance.

The Guarded student – Consistency and respect for boundaries build trust; patience is essential.

The Busy Bee – Keep conversations concise, relevant, and flexible to fit their pace.

The Identity Explorer – Offer openness, curiosity, and reassurance for safe exploration.

The Bookworm – Use stories and reflection as a bridge; honor thoughtful, introspective approaches.

The Rule Follower – Acknowledge respect for rules while encouraging autonomy and critical thinking.

The Big Personality – Celebrate enthusiasm, but guide focus and listening skills.

The Strong Survivor – Honour resilience while providing choice, safety, and supportive space.

The Explorer – Make conversations an adventure; channel curiosity safely.

The Comfort Seeker – Make safety the foundation, then gently stretch comfort zones.

The Resister

Rolls their eyes at anything “serious” or parent /carer -led. Wants independence and privacy. Often disengages if they feel lectured.

Needs

- Short, non-judgmental conversations.
- Keep conversations casual.
- Put them in the expert role, ask them for advice.
- Use humour and self-awareness, ‘I promise this isn’t a lecture’.
- Encourage conversations, don’t force them.
- Frame conversations as ‘I trust you’ rather than ‘I control you’.

Conversation starters & responses

“YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW THINGS ARE FOR PEOPLE YOUR AGE THAN I DO. WHAT’S IT LIKE FOR PEOPLE YOUR AGE WHEN...?”

“WE DON’T HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THIS RIGHT NOW, BUT IF YOU EVER WANT TO, I’M HERE”

“I SAW SOMETHING ON SOCIAL MEDIA THE OTHER DAY, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT IT?”

“WOULD YOU PREFER I SEND YOU A VIDEO OR PODCAST ABOUT THIS RATHER THAN TALK ABOUT IT FACE TO FACE?”

“I GET THAT THESE CONVERSATIONS CAN FEEL AWKWARD OR HARD. WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT WHEN YOU’RE READY. I AM ALWAYS HERE.”

“I’M SURE YOU’VE PROBABLY HEARD LOTS ABOUT THIS AT SCHOOL ALREADY, BUT I’M CURIOUS WHAT YOU THINK”

The Eager Talker

Loves to chat and process things out loud. Often overshares but they also may overthink & worry about saying the 'wrong thing'.

Needs

- Listen without rushing to solutions.
- Ask open-ended questions which allow them to explore their thoughts.
- Invite them to teach you about things they've learnt.
- Celebrate that they think deeply, but remind them that it's ok not to know it all!
- Thank them for sharing with you.
- Remind them that it is a safe space to share.

Conversation starters & responses

*"WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU'VE BEEN
THINKING ABOUT A LOT LATELY?"*

*"WHAT DOES BEING A GOOD FRIEND
MEAN TO YOU?"*

*"WHAT KIND OF PERSON DO YOU HOPE
PEOPLE SEE YOU AS?"*

*"THAT'S SUCH A THOUGHTFUL POINT.
AND REMEMBER, YOU DON'T HAVE TO
HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS."*

*"IF YOU HAD TO GIVE ADVICE TO A
YOUNGER KID ABOUT THIS, WHAT
WOULD YOU SAY?"*

*"HAS ANYTHING YOU'VE LEARNED IN
SCHOOL OR ONLINE MADE YOU STOP
AND THINK?"*

The Silent Observer

Very internal, keeps worries to themselves. Parents and carers often think they're "fine," but silence may hide confusion, fear, or shame.

Needs

- Offer gentle invitations to talk without pressure.
- Offer choice and control around having conversations - when / where / how.
- Use prompts that feel safe and simple, such as thumbs up / down.
- Validate listening as participation.
- Start with something positive to help them feel comfortable speaking.
- Have a conversation with them at the same time as doing an activity such as drawing, walking or puzzles.

Conversation starters & responses

*"I'D LOVE TO HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS
WHEN YOU'RE READY."*

*"WOULD YOU RATHER TALK ABOUT
THIS NOW, LATER, OR WRITE IT
DOWN?"*

*"IT'S OKAY NOT TO SAY MUCH. JUST
BEING HERE WITH ME IS ENOUGH."*

*"THUMBS UP, DOWN, OR SIDEWAYS.
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?"*

*"YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO HAVE
THE ANSWERS, IT'S FINE TO JUST
THINK ABOUT IT."*

*"WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR BEST
FRIEND WOULD SAY ABOUT THIS?"*

The Joke Deflector

Turns everything into humour or sarcasm. Uses jokes to mask discomfort or dodge serious conversations.

Needs

- Acknowledge the humour, then introduce what you want to discuss.
- Keep things casual, but honest and real.
- Use humour yourself as an entry point to the conversation.
- Offer reassurance behind the jokes, show you understand why they might make a joke to feel more comfortable talking.

Conversation starters & responses

"HAHA, THAT'S FUNNY, BUT I DO WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY THINK."

"WHAT'S THE FUNNIEST THING YOU'VE EVER HEARD ADULTS SAY ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS?"

"SOMETIMES LAUGHING HELPS US TALK ABOUT TRICKY THINGS. DO YOU FEEL THAT?"

"WHAT'S THE SILLIEST MYTH YOU'VE EVER HEARD ABOUT THIS?"

"IT'S OKAY IF YOU'RE NOT SURE WHAT TO SAY. LAUGHING DOESN'T MEAN YOU DON'T CARE."

"I GET THAT THIS IS UNCOMFORTABLE AND IT'S OKAY TO LAUGH. BUT I ALSO CARE WHAT'S GOING ON UNDERNEATH THE JOKES."

The Big Questioner

Asks “why” constantly and wants evidence for everything. Loves facts, logic, and clarity. May challenge parents or carers with awkward or unexpected questions.

Needs

- Encourage them to ask questions; don't shut them down.
- Explore answers together, don't only give them your answers.
- Ask them to tell you how they thought through something.
- Ask them 'if' questions, for example, 'How would the world look different *if...*?'
- Allow them to challenge you on your ideas.
- Share interesting books, articles, videos, podcasts, TV shows and films with them.

Conversation starters & responses

*"THAT'S A BRILLIANT QUESTION,
WANT TO LOOK IT UP TOGETHER?"*

*"IF YOU WERE MAKING THE RULES FOR
HOW PEOPLE SHOULD TREAT EACH
OTHER, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?"*

*"WHAT PART MAKES THE MOST SENSE
TO YOU? WHAT PART DOESN'T?"*

*"WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAPPEN
IF PEOPLE NEVER TALKED ABOUT
THIS?"*

*"THERE'S MORE THAN ONE ANSWER
TO THIS. WANT TO HEAR A FEW AND
SEE WHAT YOU THINK?"*

*"IF YOU WERE ME, HOW WOULD YOU
EXPLAIN THIS TO A TEENAGER?"*

The Sensitive Feeler

**Very connected to others' emotions, easily overwhelmed.
May cry, worry deeply, or not want to talk.**

Needs

- Start conversations by asking them how they are feeling.
- Remind them they are normal for feeling emotions.
- Ask questions gently.
- Explore ways they can manage their emotions together.
- Ask them about things they are good at or enjoy.
- Remind them that you are there for them.

Conversation starters & responses

*"HOW ARE YOU FEELING ABOUT THINGS
TODAY IN YOUR HEAD, YOUR HEART, OR
YOUR BODY?"*

*"WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THIS, WHAT
FEELING COMES UP FIRST?"*

*"LOTS OF PEOPLE FEEL NERVOUS OR
SAD ABOUT THESE TOPICS, YOU'RE NOT
ALONE."*

*"HAS ANYTHING BEEN WORRYING YOU
RECENTLY THAT YOU'D LIKE TO
SHARE?"*

*"WHO MAKES YOU FEEL CARED FOR
WHEN THINGS FEEL
OVERWHELMING?"*

*"EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE
WORDS, WE CAN FIGURE IT OUT
TOGETHER."*

The Activist

Passionate about fairness, justice, and right/wrong. May be outspoken, opinionated, or confrontational when they see harm.

Needs

- Remind them that it is wonderful that they are so passionate!
- Ask them how you can support them to make change.
- Encourage them to spend time reflecting as well as taking action.
- Remind them to also look after themselves, as well as others.
- Ask them what things make them feel relaxed and happy.

Conversation starters & responses

"HOW WOULD YOU EXPLAIN THIS ISSUE TO SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T SEE IT YOUR WAY?"

"I REALLY ADMIRE HOW MUCH YOU CARE ABOUT FAIRNESS. WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU RIGHT NOW?"

"WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY, EVEN WHEN THE WORLD FEELS UNFAIR?"

"HOW COULD WE, AS A FAMILY, SUPPORT THE THINGS YOU CARE ABOUT?"

"WHAT DO YOU WISH ADULTS UNDERSTOOD BETTER ABOUT THIS?"

"HOW CAN YOU LOOK AFTER YOURSELF WHILE YOU'RE TRYING TO CHANGE THINGS?"

The Digital Native

Lives online. Friendships, identity, and interests are online on social media or gaming. Parents or carers may feel shut out of their world.

Needs

- Show interest in what they do online.
- Open up discussions about online safety through questions and scenarios.
- Talk about how their world online connects to their world offline.
- Ask them to teach you about things they do online, e.g. social media, games.
- Ask them about things they enjoy doing offline.

Conversation starters & responses

"WHAT'S THE FUNNIEST/STRANGEST THING YOU'VE SEEN ON TIKTOK (OR YOUTUBE, ETC.) THIS WEEK?"

"IF A FRIEND WAS IN TROUBLE ONLINE, HOW WOULD YOU HELP THEM?"

"HOW DO YOU THINK PEOPLE TREAT EACH OTHER ONLINE COMPARED TO IN PERSON?"

"CAN YOU SHOW ME HOW [PLATFORM] WORKS? I WANT TO LEARN FROM YOU."

"WHAT'S SOMETHING OFFLINE THAT YOU ENJOY DOING WHEN YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH OF BEING ONLINE?"

"HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHO YOU WANT TO CONNECT WITH ONLINE AND WHO YOU DON'T?"

The People Pleaser

Desperate to be liked and avoid conflict. May agree with parents or carers but struggle to assert themselves in friendships or relationships.

Needs

- Reassure them they are safe and it is ok if you disagree!
- Encourage self-expression.
- Teach them how to say 'no' in different ways.
- Talk to them about how it is ok to disagree with people.
- Remind them of the things they are really good at.

Conversation starters & responses

*"EVEN IF WE SEE THINGS
DIFFERENTLY, I'LL STILL LOVE AND
RESPECT WHAT YOU THINK."*

*"WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU WISH
PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD ABOUT YOU?"*

*"WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS IF
SOMEONE ALWAYS SAYS YES, EVEN
WHEN THEY DON'T WANT TO?"*

*"HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU'RE
DOING SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF VS.
JUST TO KEEP SOMEONE ELSE HAPPY?"*

*"WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU'D REALLY
LIKE TO DO THIS WEEK, JUST FOR
YOU?"*

*"CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME YOU
DISAGREED WITH A FRIEND BUT STAYED
FRIENDS?"*

The High Achiever

Turns everything into humour or sarcasm. Uses jokes to mask discomfort or dodge serious conversations.

Needs

- Celebrate their effort, not if they win or lose or are successful or not.
- Ask them about things they enjoy.
- Talk about healthy pressure, for example, preparing for an exam.
- Remind them that mistakes allow them to learn and grow.
- Remind them that you always have their support no matter what.

Conversation starters & responses

"HOW CAN I SUPPORT YOU IN A WAY
THAT HELPS YOU, NOT ADDS
PRESSURE?"

"IF GRADES, TROPHIES, OR AWARDS
DIDN'T EXIST, WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU
FEEL PROUD OF YOURSELF?"

"WHAT HELPS YOU FEEL CALMER WHEN
YOU'RE STRESSED ABOUT DOING
WELL?"

"WHEN DO YOU NOTICE YOU'RE BEING
TOO HARD ON YOURSELF?"

"CAN YOU THINK OF SOMEONE YOU
ADMIRE WHO DIDN'T GET IT RIGHT
THE FIRST TIME?"

"IF YOUR BEST FRIEND MADE THE
SAME MISTAKE, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY
TO THEM?"

The Shrugger

Responds to questions with “I dunno” or shrugs. Not necessarily disinterested, but finds it hard to articulate thoughts on the spot.

Needs

- Keep conversations casual.
- Offer multiple-choice answers instead of asking them what they think.
- Remind them that it is ok if they don't have all the answers!
- Ask them to reflect on things using their imagination.
- Reassure them that small responses are enough.

Conversation starters & responses

“WHAT WAS THE WEIRDEST OR FUNNIEST THING THAT HAPPENED AT SCHOOL TODAY?”

“WOULD YOU RATHER TALK ABOUT THIS NOW, LATER, OR NOT AT ALL TODAY?”

“SOMETIMES I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY EITHER. SHOULD WE FIGURE IT OUT TOGETHER?”

“IF YOUR BEST FRIEND ASKED YOU FOR ADVICE ON THIS, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?”

“YOU DON'T NEED TO HAVE A BIG ANSWER, EVEN ONE WORD IS FINE.”

“THANKS FOR JUST LISTENING, THAT MATTERS TOO.”

The Mood Swinger

Can be warm and chatty one moment, then shut down the next. Parents & carers feel like they're "walking on eggshells."

Needs

- Remind them that it is normal for their emotions to change.
- Stay consistent in how you respond to them.
- Try not to take their emotional changes personally.
- Use humour and lightness (when appropriate).
- Check in with them after they are emotional, calmly and empathetically. Try to understand how they were feeling.

Conversation starters & responses

"I CAN SEE YOU'RE FEELING
[ANGRY/SAD/FRUSTRATED] RIGHT NOW,
THAT'S OKAY."

"DO YOU FEEL MORE LIKE VENTING,
PROBLEM-SOLVING, OR JUST BEING
LEFT ALONE FOR A BIT?"

"WHAT SONG BEST DESCRIBES YOUR
DAY SO FAR?"

"WHAT'S SOMETHING THAT WOULD
MAKE THIS MOMENT EASIER?"

"SHOULD I BRING SNACKS OR A
SHIELD?" [PLAYFUL TONE]

"EARLIER WAS TOUGH, THANK YOU FOR
RIDING IT OUT WITH ME. DO YOU WANT
TO TALK ABOUT WHAT EMOTIONS YOU
WERE FEELING?"

The Explorer

Wants to figure things out on their own, try new things and push boundaries. Rejects advice if it feels like interference.

Needs

- Ask them questions that create curiosity and require imagination.
- Frame conversations as discovery - Let's find out about this
- Use "what if" scenarios.
- Encourage them to reflect on their experiences.
- Let them have freedom, but set boundaries within that freedom to keep them safe.

Conversation starters & responses

"IF YOU COULD EXPLORE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW, WHERE WOULD YOU GO AND WHY?"

"WHAT DO YOU THINK OTHER KIDS YOUR AGE WOULD SAY ABOUT THIS?"

"WHAT IF A FRIEND ASKED YOU TO DO SOMETHING YOU WEREN'T SURE ABOUT?"

"WHAT'S SOMETHING NEW YOU TRIED RECENTLY? HOW DID IT MAKE YOU FEEL?"

"WHAT HELPS YOU DECIDE WHEN TO STOP OR SAY NO?"

"WHAT'S ONE THING YOU'D LOVE TO LEARN ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS/FRIENDSHIPS THAT NO ONE REALLY TEACHES YOU?"

The Comfort Seeker

Craves reassurance, routine, and a sense of safety. They often shy away from change, tough conversations, or anything that feels emotionally risky.

Needs

- Remind them that they are safe with you.
- Provide clear routines which help them feel safe.
- Build confidence through small steps.
- Gently ask them to reflect on their feelings.
- Encourage resilience without putting pressure on them.

Conversation starters & responses

"NO MATTER WHAT YOU TELL ME, I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU."

"IT'S OKAY TO FEEL NERVOUS ABOUT TALKING, WE CAN GO AT YOUR PACE."

"WHAT'S A WAY WE CAN MAKE THIS CONVERSATION FEEL COMFY FOR YOU?"

"WHAT HELPS YOU FEEL BRAVE WHEN SOMETHING FEELS SCARY?"

"IF A FRIEND FELT NERVOUS ABOUT TALKING, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THEM?"

"CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME YOU TRIED SOMETHING NEW AND IT TURNED OUT OKAY?"

The Secret Keeper

Likes to have a private world: diaries, hidden apps, whispered friendships. Parents & carers worry about what's being hidden.

Needs

- Respect their privacy.
- Offer ways to share things with you that don't feel like you are being nosy.
- Build trust through being open and honest with them.
- Encourage independent reflection.
- Remind them that they still have independence.

Conversation starters & responses

"YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHARE ANYTHING YOU'RE NOT READY TO . I'M HERE WHEN YOU ARE."

"WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE JUST A LITTLE PIECE TODAY, AND THE REST LATER?"

"IF I ASK A QUESTION AND YOU DON'T ANSWER, THAT'S TOTALLY OKAY, I WON'T PUSH."

"WHAT'S A WAY I CAN SHOW YOU THAT YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ARE SAFE WITH ME?"

"IF YOU HAD A FRIEND WHO FELT LIKE YOU DO, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE THEM?"

"YOU GET TO DECIDE WHAT, WHEN, AND HOW YOU SHARE."

The Challenger

Loves to debate, argue, and question authority. Pushes back hard when parents & carers set rules.

Needs

- Ask them for their ideas and thoughts on things
- Encourage respectful debates /conversations.
- Remind them that they have independence.
- Use 'what if' scenarios and problem-solving questions.
- Balance challenging ideas with respecting others.

Conversation starters & responses

*"I'M CURIOUS HOW YOU SEE THIS,
WHAT'S YOUR TAKE?"*

*"I MIGHT DISAGREE, WANT TO HEAR
BOTH SIDES AND DISCUSS?"*

*"IT'S GREAT TO ASK QUESTIONS, IT
SHOWS YOU'RE PAYING ATTENTION."*

*"IF A FRIEND DID SOMETHING UNFAIR,
HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?"*

*"I KNOW IT CAN FEEL FRUSTRATING
WHEN ADULTS DON'T EXPLAIN
THINGS FULLY. WHAT WOULD
HELP?"*

*"I ENJOY HEARING YOUR OPINIONS,
EVEN IF WE DON'T AGREE."*

The Creative

Expresses themselves through art, music, writing, or play rather than direct conversation. May be seen as “in their own world.”

Needs

- Connect through using imagination.
- Use creative activities as ways to share, for example, drawing or music.
- Invite them to reflect on things through play.
- Offer choices and independence.
- Remind them that their creativity is a wonderful thing!

Conversation starters & responses

“IF YOU COULD DESIGN YOUR PERFECT WORLD, WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE?”

“IF YOUR FEELINGS WERE A COLOUR OR SHAPE RIGHT NOW, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?”

“CAN YOU THINK OF A SONG THAT MATCHES HOW YOU’RE FEELING ABOUT THIS?”

“DO YOU WANT TO DRAW OR WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS INSTEAD OF TALKING?”

“YOUR IDEAS ARE UNIQUE AND IMPORTANT. THANK YOU FOR SHARING THEM IN YOUR WAY.”

“I LOVE HOW YOU EXPRESS YOURSELF, IT REALLY HELPS ME UNDERSTAND YOU.”

The Slow Processor

Take's their time to think, reflect, and respond. They may seem quiet, hesitant, or even disinterested, but they're carefully weighing their thoughts before speaking.

Needs

- Give them time to think before talking.
- Use gentle prompts to chat.
- Offer choices for sharing, for example, sharing now or later.
- Remind them that it is ok to take their time to think!
- Encourage reflection without putting pressure on them to share.

Conversation starters & responses

*"THERE'S NO RUSH TO RESPOND;
THINK ABOUT IT AND TELL ME WHEN
YOU'RE READY."*

*"IS THERE ONE PART OF THIS THAT
MAKES SENSE TO YOU SO FAR?"*

*"DO YOU WANT TO ANSWER A
QUESTION NOW, OR THINK ABOUT IT
AND SHARE LATER?"*

*"I LIKE HOW CAREFULLY YOU THINK,
IT REALLY SHOWS YOU CARE."*

*"IF SOMEONE ASKED YOUR ADVICE,
WHAT WOULD YOU TELL THEM?"*

*"IT'S OKAY TO TAKE TIME;
THOUGHTFUL ANSWERS MATTER MORE
THAN QUICK ONES."*

The Late Bloomer

They develop at their own pace. They may appear shy, hesitant, or slower to engage in conversations or new experiences, but they often catch up in their own time / way.

Needs

- Celebrate their effort, not just results.
- Gently encourage them to talk to you.
- Build confidence through reassuring them that they are doing well.
- Encourage gradual participation in activities.

Conversation starters & responses

"WHAT'S ONE SMALL WIN YOU'RE PROUD OF THIS WEEK?"

"WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS NOW, OR THINK ABOUT IT AND COME BACK LATER?"

"I BELIEVE IN YOU AND YOUR IDEAS, EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT READY TO SAY THEM YET."

"WHAT'S ONE THING YOU WISH ADULTS UNDERSTOOD ABOUT HOW YOU LEARN OR GROW?"

"HOW CAN I SUPPORT YOU IN FEELING READY TO SHARE?"

"WHAT'S ONE SMALL STEP YOU COULD TAKE TODAY TO FEEL MORE CONFIDENT?"

The Guarded Child

They are cautious, protective of their thoughts and feelings, and may be slow to trust adults or open up in conversation. They often worry about being judged, misunderstood, or their words being used against them.

Needs

- Remind them that they are safe and that you can trust them.
- Offer controlled ways to talk, e.g. specific places or times.
- Gently ask them to share their thoughts.
- Remind them that their way of sharing is great.
- Encourage gradual trust; they can start small and share more when they feel comfortable.

Conversation starters & responses

*"YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHARE
ANYTHING YOU'RE NOT READY TO, I'M
HERE WHEN YOU ARE."*

*"I PROMISE I'M LISTENING, NOT
JUDGING, NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY."*

*"IF WE USED CODE WORDS OR SIGNALS,
WOULD THAT MAKE IT EASIER TO
SHARE?"*

*"WHAT'S ONE SMALL THING ABOUT
THIS THAT YOU FEEL OKAY SHARING?"*

*"IF A FRIEND FELT LIKE YOU DO,
WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE
THEM?"*

*"I RESPECT HOW CAREFUL YOU ARE
ABOUT YOUR THOUGHTS, IT SHOWS
AWARENESS AND STRENGTH."*

The Busy Bee

Constantly on the go, juggling schoolwork, activities, hobbies, friendships, and digital life. They often move quickly from one thing to the next and may seem distracted or too “busy” for serious conversations.

Needs

- Keep conversations short and engaging.
- Relate conversations to their interest, e.g. sports, music, art.
- Use “in the moment” reminders.
- Encourage reflection in bite-sized pieces.
- Offer flexibility and independence.

Conversation starters & responses

*“WHILE WE’RE
WALKING/EATING/DRIVING, WHAT’S ONE
THING ON YOUR MIND?”*

*““CAN WE MAKE THIS QUICK CHECK-IN
PART OF OUR ROUTINE?”*

*“HOW DO YOU BALANCE ALL THE
THINGS YOU LOVE TO DO?”*

*“CAN YOU TELL ME ONE HIGHLIGHT
FROM YOUR DAY BEFORE IT ZOOMS
PAST?”*

*“WHAT’S ONE THING YOU’D LIKE TO
DO DIFFERENTLY TOMORROW?”*

*“DO YOU WANT TO CHAT NOW, LATER,
OR IN SHORT BURSTS THROUGHOUT
THE DAY?”*

The Identity Explorer

Curious about who they are, what they believe, and how they fit into the world. They may experiment with interests, beliefs, friendships, or self-expression, and can ask lots of questions about identity, values, or difference.

Needs

- Invite self-reflection.
- Explore their beliefs and values.
- Encourage them to experiment with their interests and ideas safely.
- Use 'what if' questions.
- Reassure them that their journey is normal.

Conversation starters & responses

*"WHAT'S SOMETHING NEW YOU'VE
DISCOVERED ABOUT YOURSELF
RECENTLY?"*

*"WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE
PERSON YOU'RE BECOMING?"*

*"WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES SOMEONE
TRULY 'THEMSELVES'?"*

*"WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU WHEN
IT COMES TO FRIENDS OR
RELATIONSHIPS?"*

*"IF YOU COULD EXPERIMENT WITH A
DIFFERENT HOBBY, STYLE, OR
ACTIVITY, WHAT WOULD IT BE?"*

*"IT'S OKAY TO CHANGE YOUR MIND OR
EXPLORE DIFFERENT SIDES OF
YOURSELF."*

The Bookworm

Loves reading, learning, and exploring ideas through books, stories, or research. They often prefer thinking and reflecting over spontaneous conversation and may retreat into their own world when processing emotions or topics.

Needs

- Connect through stories and reading.
- Encourage them to reflect by thinking about ideas as stories.
- Offer thoughtful questions.
- Provide a quiet space for thinking.
- Remind them that their quiet, reflective nature is a wonderful thing.

Conversation starters & responses

"HAVE YOU READ ANYTHING
INTERESTING LATELY?"

"WHICH CHARACTER IN A BOOK OR
STORY DO YOU RELATE TO MOST, AND
WHY?"

"WHAT DO YOU THINK A CHARACTER IN
A STORY WOULD DO IN THIS
SITUATION?"

"WOULD YOU LIKE TO WRITE DOWN
YOUR THOUGHTS FIRST?"

"WHAT'S ONE THING YOU'VE
LEARNED RECENTLY THAT SURPRISED
YOU?"

"IT'S OKAY TO PROCESS SLOWLY,
THOUGHTFUL ANSWERS MATTER MORE
THAN QUICK ONES."

The Rule Follower

Values structure, fairness, and doing the “right” thing. They often strive to meet expectations, follow guidelines, and avoid getting into trouble. While this can make them responsible, they may struggle to question authority, speak up when things feel wrong, or cope with ambiguity.

Needs

- Remind them that their sense of responsibility is a wonderful thing!
- Encourage them to think about the strengths and weaknesses of ideas.
- Explore feelings about fairness.
- Invite them to express themselves.
- Help them to balance being flexible, with following rules and structures.

Conversation starters & responses

"I REALLY APPRECIATE HOW MUCH YOU CARE ABOUT DOING THE RIGHT THING."

"ARE THERE ANY RULES YOU THINK DON'T MAKE SENSE? WHY?"

"HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHEN A RULE SHOULD BE QUESTIONED?"

"WHAT DOES BEING FAIR MEAN TO YOU?"

"WHAT'S ONE RULE YOU WISH EVERYONE UNDERSTOOD BETTER?"

"EVEN WHEN RULES ARE IMPORTANT, YOUR FEELINGS MATTER TOO."

The Big Personality

Bold, expressive, and often the centre of attention. They're charismatic, enthusiastic, and love to share ideas, but they can sometimes dominate conversations, interrupt others, or struggle to slow down and reflect.

Needs

- Celebrate their energy.
- Encourage reflection.
- Encourage them to listen to others and think about how other people feel.
- Use playful words and ideas in discussions.
- Encourage a balance between them talking and others talking.

Conversation starters & responses

"I LOVE HOW EXCITED YOU GET ABOUT YOUR IDEAS! WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU'RE REALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT RIGHT NOW?"

"CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME SOMEONE REALLY LISTENED TO YOU? HOW DID IT FEEL?"

"HOW CAN YOU USE YOUR ENERGY TO HELP OTHERS FEEL INCLUDED TOO?"

"HOW DO YOU THINK OTHERS MIGHT SEE THIS SITUATION?"

"I'D LOVE TO HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS, BUT LET'S ALSO SEE WHAT OTHERS THINK. HOW COULD WE DO THAT?"

"EVEN BIG PERSONALITIES NEED QUIET TIME. WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE WAY TO RECHARGE?"

The Strong Survivor

Has experienced difficult or traumatic events and has learned to be resilient, self-reliant, and protective of themselves. They often appear confident or independent, but may carry hidden vulnerabilities, mistrust, or fear of being judged.

Needs

- Remind them that they are safe and that they can trust you.
- Encourage them to reflect on how brave they have been.
- Encourage them to share things with you in small steps.
- Explain ways that they might be able to help cope with trauma.
- Remind them that their feelings are normal.

Conversation starters & responses

"YOU'RE IN A SAFE SPACE, YOU CAN SHARE AS MUCH OR AS LITTLE AS YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE."

"WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU'VE DONE RECENTLY THAT SHOWED YOUR STRENGTH?"

"BEING STRONG DOESN'T MEAN YOU DON'T NEED SUPPORT. IT'S OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP."

"WHAT HELPS YOU FEEL SAFE OR IN CONTROL WHEN THINGS FEEL DIFFICULT?"

"IT'S OKAY TO TAKE BREAKS, EVEN WHEN YOU FEEL STRONG."

"YOU CAN WRITE IT DOWN, DRAW IT, OR TALK, WHATEVER FEELS EASIER."

Empathy Mapping

An empathy map is a tool that helps us understand our child, what they are thinking and how they are feeling. It also allows us to consider how our child might be acting based on their thoughts and feelings. Empathy maps also encourage us to think about what our child needs from us as their parent.

It is all about exploring the unique personalities of our children and considering how we can best support them.

- Think about your child and write down which personas/personas from this toolkit you feel best represent them.
- Use the blank empathy maps on the following pages to write down what you think they are thinking, feeling and doing.
- Then, use the prompts from the child persona you have selected to think about what your child might need from you as their parent.
- Try to put yourself in their shoes. The true gift of empathy mapping is that we get the opportunity to try to understand the life of someone different to us.



Child 1

Child 1's persona is _____

**They may demonstrate aspects of more than 1 persona, so you can write down more than 1!*

THINK

FEEL

DO

NEED

Child 2

Child 1's persona is _____

**They may demonstrate aspects of more than 1 persona, so you can write down more than 1!*

THINK

FEEL

DO

NEED

Child 3

Child 1's persona is _____

**They may demonstrate aspects of more than 1 persona, so you can write down more than 1!*

THINK

FEEL

DO

NEED

Child 4

Child 1's persona is _____

**They may demonstrate aspects of more than 1 persona, so you can write down more than 1!*

THINK

FEEL

DO

NEED

Child 5

Child 1's persona is _____

**They may demonstrate aspects of more than 1 persona, so you can write down more than 1!*

THINK

FEEL

DO

NEED

Child 6

Child 1's persona is _____

**They may demonstrate aspects of more than 1 persona, so you can write down more than 1!*

THINK

FEEL

DO

NEED