

# TALKABOUT for CHILDREN

THIRD  
EDITION



DEVELOPING  
SOCIAL  
COMMUNICATION

ALEX KELLY

A Speechmark Book



ROUTLEDGE



## **Access your Online Resources**

*TALKABOUT for CHILDREN, 3rd edition is accompanied by a number of printable online materials, designed to ensure this resource best supports your professional needs*

Go to <https://resourcecentre.routledge.com/speechmark> and click on the cover of this book

Answer the question prompt using your copy of the book to gain access to the online content.



"Talkabout is working really well in our school. Every child has different needs and Talkabout caters to all of them. It's keeping them in the classroom. It's fun, it's enjoyable, and it's what they look forward to in their week."

- **Lakhvinder Kaur**, Year 9 TA, SEMH school,  
Birmingham, 2021

"Easily and quickly implemented in class and groups! Lots of fun and very enjoyable!"

- **Kirstie Davies**, Teacher, Wales, 2022

"I feel very lucky to work in a school where our pupils get the opportunity to utilise Talkabout resources and to see the benefit that this has made to them and their peers. You are making a difference!"

- **Nicole Thomas**, Teacher, 2017

"All in all, Alex, what a wonderful world for kids it would be if your social skills programme were in all schools across the continents."

- **Catherine Varapodio Longley**, Parent, Melbourne, 2013

# TALKABOUT for CHILDREN

*Talkabout for Children: Developing Social Communication*, 3rd edition is a bestselling professional workbook, designed to support educators and therapists who deliver social and relationship skills groups for children.

Social communication is an essential aspect of our quality of life and this resource helps to develop this in young children aged 4–11 years old. The book introduces the second level of the Talkabout hierarchy and provides three sections full of practical activities exploring the areas of Talkabout Body Language, Talkabout Conversations and Talkabout Assertiveness. Resources include:

- Planning and evaluation forms
- A three-term intervention plan for schools
- Over 60 structured activity sessions focusing on social communication
- Ideas for group cohesion activities to use at the beginning and end of sessions
- All the supplementary handouts and images needed to deliver the session, with resources available to photocopy or download and print.

Fully updated and revised, this third edition is presented with full-colour illustrations and handouts and includes a new introduction by Alex Kelly reflecting on her own experiences of using the resources since they were first developed. This key resource will help teachers, teaching assistants, health care professionals and parents to support children's social communication.

**Alex Kelly** is a Speech and Language Therapist with over 35 years' experience of working with both children and adults with a learning disability and specialising in working with children around social and relationship skills. She set up her own business (Alex Kelly Ltd) in 2009 providing training and consultancy work in social skills around the UK and abroad. She then set up Speaking Space Ltd in Romsey, Hampshire, a company that provides speech and language therapy and a day service for adults with a learning disability which is now being run by her friend and colleague Naomi Pearson. Alex is the author of the bestselling 'Talkabout' resources and 'Working with Adults with a Learning Disability'. She still lives in Hampshire and divides her time between her Talkabout training and personal commitments.





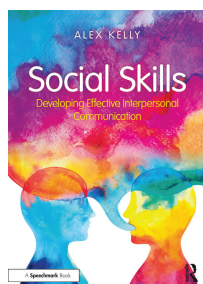
## MORE BRILLIANT PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES FROM BESTSELLING AUTHOR ALEX KELLY!

### TALKABOUT

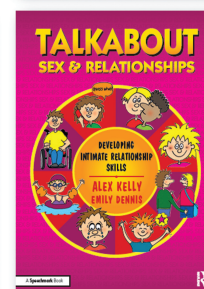
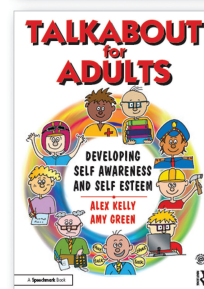
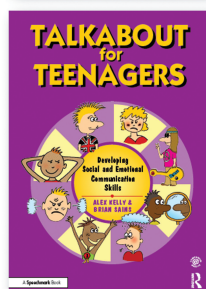
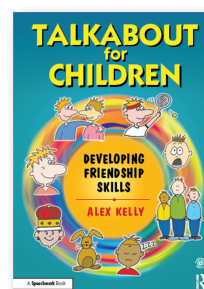
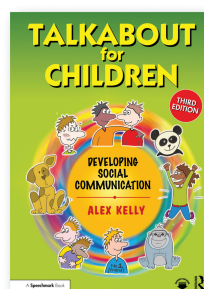
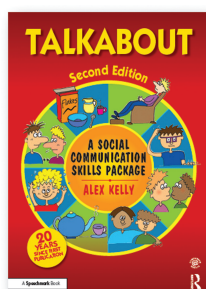
Each practical workbook in this bestselling series provides a clear programme of activities designed to improve self-awareness, self-esteem and social skills.

Title	Focus	Age-range
Talkabout (3rd edition)	Developing Social Skills for all ages	7+
Talkabout for Children 1 (2nd edition)	Developing Self Awareness and Self Esteem	4-11
Talkabout for Children 2 (3rd edition)	Developing Social Communication	4-11
Talkabout for Children 3 (2nd edition)	Developing Friendship Skills	4-11
Talkabout for Teenagers (2nd edition)	Developing Social and Emotional Communication Skills	11-19
Talkabout for Adults	Developing Self Awareness and Self Esteem in adults	16+
Talkabout Sex and Relationships 1 and 2	Developing Intimate Relationship Skills	11+
Social Skills: Developing Effective Interpersonal Communication	A theory book	n/a

#### *Social Skills: Developing Effective Interpersonal Communication*



Bestselling author and Speech and Language Therapist Alex Kelly draws on up-to-date theory as well as her years of practical experience to bring you a definitive overview of how social skills develop, what can go wrong, and how people with social difficulties can be supported.



# TALKABOUT for CHILDREN

THIRD  
EDITION

DEVELOPING  
SOCIAL  
COMMUNICATION

---

ALEX KELLY

Designed cover image: © Alex Kelly

Third edition published 2024  
by Routledge  
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2024 Alex Kelly

The right of Alex Kelly to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. The purchase of this copyright material confers the right on the purchasing institution to photocopy or download pages which bear the support material icon and a copyright line at the bottom of the page. No other parts of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

First edition published by Speechmark Publishing 2011  
Second edition published by Routledge 2018

*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-032-29359-2 (hbk)  
ISBN: 978-1-032-29360-8 (pbk)  
ISBN: 978-1-003-30124-0 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003301240

Typeset in ITC Flora  
by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India

Access the Support Material: <https://resourcecentre.routledge.com/speechmark>



## Contents

<b>Preface</b>		<b>viii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>		<b>ix</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	This section includes a brief introduction to the book and the key points behind working with children and in setting up and running groups.	<b>1</b>
<b>Level 1 TALKABOUT Body Language</b>	The aim of this level is to increase awareness and use of body language. It includes 21 activities which can be taught over a period of 2 academic terms or 21 sessions.	<b>13</b>
<b>Level 2 TALKABOUT Conversations</b>	The aim of this level is to increase awareness and use of conversational skills, including listening and the way we talk. It includes 21 activities which can be taught over a period of 2 academic terms or 21 sessions.	<b>79</b>
<b>Level 3 TALKABOUT Assertiveness</b>	The aim of this level is to increase awareness and use of assertiveness skills, including using body language and conversational skills when being assertive. It includes 20 activities which can be taught over a period of 2 academic terms or 20 sessions.	<b>145</b>
<b>Group Cohesion Activities</b>	This section provides a few suggestions for effective group cohesion activities to use at the beginning and end of sessions.	<b>251</b>
<b>Plan of Intervention</b>	This section provides you with a suggested plan of intervention over 3 school terms.	<b>254</b>
<b>Forms</b>	This section includes some forms that can be used for session planning and evaluation.	<b>267</b>
<b>Index</b>	An index of topics and activities.	<b>275</b>





## Preface

*Talkabout for Children: Developing Social Communication* was first published in 2011 and the second edition published in 2018. So why the need for a third edition? Well, this is mainly due to the work that has arisen out of developing the Talkabout Assessment of Social Skills (TASS) (Kelly & Pearson, forthcoming). Working together with Naomi Pearson, who was completing a PhD in social skills, we updated the Talkabout Assessment (2010). There are four main reasons why the Talkabout Assessment needed updating, and three of these are explained in more detail later in the introduction (see: hierarchy, wider context and social validity) but the fourth reason was the rating scale. The original Talkabout Assessment used a 4-point rating scale, from 'never good' to 'very good'. Anyone who has attended Talkabout training will know that I have seen the limitations of the wording and the 4-point rating scale for many years and as a result, devised additional target forms to help teachers and clinicians rate children from 'never' to 'always' present using a 6-point scale, and from which assessors can set targets and measure progress. The TASS therefore uses an updated 6-point rating scale with more appropriate wording. A version of the original Talkabout Assessment used to be part of the 1st and 2nd edition of this book, and so a 3rd edition was necessary to reflect the changes in how we recommend assessment.

**Alex Kelly**  
**2023**

Please feel free to contact me for more information or for help with your Talkabout work. I continue to run training courses around the UK and can also offer bespoke training sessions, but I also now work in conjunction with Naomi Pearson, Managing Director of Speaking Space (Romsey) Ltd to enable me to also pursue personal commitments. Please contact me through my website which is [www.alexkelly.biz](http://www.alexkelly.biz).



## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their support in writing the original book:

**Jenny Savage** – thank you for your imagination, endless ideas and practical help. Gary and Brad owe a lot to you!

**Amy Wright-Green** – thank you for your continued enthusiasm and support and endless testing of games with the inevitable laminating and colouring in!

**Brian Sains** – thank you for your never ending support in everything, including writing this book. And thank you also for being the loveliest person in my life!

I would really like to thank everyone who has attended one of my training or lecturing events and given me such positive feedback on my ideas and resources. I love the fact that I am able to share my enthusiasm and passion for this subject, but the feedback I receive from everyone makes my job so much lovelier!

I would like to thank the following people for piloting this resource and for giving me feedback: Elizabeth Blutman, Deborah Goodfellow, Rachel Hughes, Sandra McGlynn, Sam Malpass, Sarah Newhouse, Sarah Sharpless and Sharon Smith. I would also like to thank the following schools for piloting the TALKABOUT resources over a year and allowing me to assess the effectiveness of this approach: Northcott School in Hull, Redwood Park School in Portsmouth, Brookfields School in Reading, Forest Park School in Totton and Oak Lodge School in Hythe.

I would also like to thank the Alex Kelly Ltd speech and language therapy team for their hard work and enthusiasm: Naomi Carter, Sean Douglas, Kathleen Hanson and Amy Wright-Green.

Finally I would like to thank my children – Ed, Peter and George who regularly have to put up with a mum who is busy, away from home or distracted. Thank you for your love and support and also for your help with some of these activities!

This book is dedicated to my mum and dad – thank you for always being there for me and for everything you do to make my world special.



## TALKABOUT for CHILDREN



## Introduction

### An overview of this book

*Talkabout for Children: Developing Social Communication* is part of the Talkabout series – a programme of intervention that covers aspects of social and emotional learning such as social communication, self-esteem and friendship skills. Each Talkabout book is aimed at a specific area for a specific age group or level of ability and there are also additional resources to supplement intervention, including the Talkabout Assessment (TASS), Talkabout Boardgame, Talkabout Card Games, Talkabout Posters and the Talkabout Video Library.

*Talkabout for Children: Developing Social Communication* is a practical resource to help teachers, teaching assistants, health care professionals, or parents (I will use the term 'facilitator') to develop social communication in children. It has over 60 activities to make up and play with children and it has been successfully piloted in the UK and Australia. It has been particularly aimed at primary school children (aged 4–11) but could also be used with older children who would benefit from a more visual and games-based approach to intervention. It is the second book of 3 resources aimed at children.

1. *Talkabout for Children: Developing Self Awareness and Self Esteem*
2. *Talkabout for Children: Developing Social Communication*
3. *Talkabout for Children: Developing Friendship Skills*

This follows the hierarchy of intervention where certain skills are taught prior to more complex skills (see next section). This means that the facilitator will need to assess whether this resource is the appropriate one to use. For example, if the children have difficulties with self-awareness and self-esteem, it may be more appropriate to use the first *Talkabout for Children* book (*Developing Self Awareness and Self Esteem*).

The content of this book also follows the hierarchy, so sections include:

1. Talkabout body language
2. Talkabout conversations
3. Talkabout assertiveness



This means that, if the children need work in all three areas, the facilitator should work through the book, completing sections in this order. In addition, there are resources at the back of the book to help with group planning and intervention.

### **The hierarchy**

Talkabout was first developed in the early 1990s when the author, Alex Kelly, was working as a speech and language therapist in London, UK. Over a period of four years, she assessed the effectiveness of her social skills interventions and discovered that success of intervention increased if self-awareness was taught first, and then nonverbal behaviours were taught prior to verbal behaviours, and assertiveness was taught last (Kelly, 1996). This original hierarchy then formed the basis of the first *Talkabout* book.

The Talkabout hierarchy of social communication has been developed and extended over the years to reflect increasing knowledge and understanding of the link between self-awareness, self-esteem and social skills, as well as the introduction of friendship skills into the hierarchy. Self-esteem, in particular, is linked to social communication. Firstly, social communication difficulties can be caused by many factors, such as a diagnosis, or social background, but can also be caused by 'heightened emotions, other people's behaviour, not knowing the rules, previous experience, a lack of information, illness . . . and a lack of self-confidence or low self-esteem' (Kelly, 2019). If a person has low self-esteem, then they are more likely to struggle with their social communication at some level. If we improve their self-esteem, then their ability to be successful in their social communication can improve, and a healthy self-esteem has an impact on our ability to have successful and meaningful relationships. As a result, the hierarchy was updated in 2000 to include these two areas of self-esteem and friendships.



### **The hierarchy of social communication**



### **The wider context**

When considering social and emotional learning, and in particular social communication, it is important to understand current thinking about the definition of social skills and known correlates. The Talkabout hierarchy and Talkabout resources have a focus on self-awareness and self-esteem and verbal and non-verbal aspects of social communication skills, as well as assertiveness skills. But it is recognised in a definition of social skills which has been developed in the USA (Gresham & Elliott, 2008) that there is a wider context of behaviours to consider.

There are known correlates to social skills, such as “competing problem behaviours” and “academic competence”. Research has shown that while good social skills have been linked to positive outcomes in terms of mental health, academic achievement and peer acceptance, conversely, social skills difficulties have been shown to affect both social and academic development (Rao, Beidel & Murray, 2008). The presence of internalising (e.g. depression, anxiety) or most notably externalising (e.g. aggression, impulsive behaviour) behaviours is associated with increased school absences, and has a detrimental effect on the acquisition and performance of social skills and academic achievements (Gresham, 2015).

So in order to ensure a holistic approach to a child’s needs, it is recommended that the facilitator completes the Talkabout Assessment of Social Skills (TASS) prior to intervention, which includes a rating of associated and quality of life factors as well as an assessment of self-esteem and social skills.





### **Social validity and motivation**

It is also important to consider social validity. This refers to the extent to which the child and the key people surrounding that child view the intervention targets as important and acceptable, which is naturally an important consideration in any social skills intervention. It is therefore recommended that the facilitator takes time to assess the children's priorities and goals and helps them to understand the reason for the Talkabout intervention to improve the likelihood that intervention will be 'valid' for the individual, and therefore successful.

If the facilitator has completed the TASS, then this will help, as it includes:

- Priority ratings on all assessment forms
- An importance rating on the student assessment
- A long-term goal stated by the person in the initial information section.

Linked to this, it is essential that the facilitator considers whether social communication intervention is the right intervention for the child at this time. It is important to listen to the child and to key people in their lives to help you make this decision. There are several points to consider around motivation and underlying reasons for a behaviour.

### **Is the child motivated?**

Does the child want to work on their areas of challenges? If not, are there good reasons for this? The author would not work with someone on their social communication if the child was content with who they are and with their quality of life. If this is the case, it may be more appropriate to work with other people in the person's life to understand their challenges and support their differences, rather than work with the person themselves.

### **Is there an underlying reason for a behaviour?**

It is important to consider other possible reasons for any behaviours that have been highlighted as a need. For example, if a child is struggling



with fidgeting, perhaps they would benefit from strategies they can use to meet their sensory needs, which will in turn enable them to listen better. Skills should be considered in the context of the whole person and the facilitator is advised to ask themselves the following questions:

- Does the wider context show you that social communication difficulties are impacting their quality of life?
- Does the child recognise these areas as difficult?
- Do the child and key people want support in these areas?
- Could there be other explanations for any of their challenges such as sensory needs or environmental?
- Is their social communication profile associated with a particular diagnosis?

If your assessment of a child highlights any question marks in any of these areas, you may need to consider these further before you move on to intervention.

## Using the Talkabout programme

*Talkabout for Children: Developing Social Communication* is a stand-alone resource with up to 2 years' worth of activities to develop skills. It uses a hierarchical approach to teaching skills, which means that easier skills are taught prior to more difficult ones. This means that it is recommended that the facilitator assesses the child prior to intervention, because choosing the right place to start work has to be the most important part of intervention, as it is the difference between potentially setting a child up to fail or succeed.

## Assessment of social communication

The advantage of completing an initial assessment is that it gives the facilitator information which will help them to decide which section, or book, is best to start. It also gives a base-line measure from which progress can be assessed. For more information on how to assess, please see the Talkabout Assessment of Social Skills (TASS) (Kelly & Pearson,



forthcoming). However, if this is not accessible, the facilitator is advised to consider the following chart, which summarises the hierarchy of intervention.

<b>Area to consider</b>	<b>If challenges, which book / level to consider</b>	<b>Prerequisite skills?</b>
Self-awareness and self-esteem	<i>Talkabout for Children: Developing Self Awareness and Self Esteem</i>	None
Body language	<i>Talkabout for Children: Developing Social Communication Level 1 TALKABOUT Body Language</i>	Self-awareness and self-esteem
Paralinguistic skills and conversations	<i>Talkabout for Children: Developing Social Communication Level 2 TALKABOUT Conversations</i>	Self-awareness and self-esteem Body language
Assertiveness	<i>Talkabout for Children: Developing Social Communication Level 3 TALKABOUT Assertiveness</i>	Self-awareness and self-esteem Body language Conversation
Friendship skills	<i>Talkabout for Children: Developing Friendship Skills</i>	Self-awareness and self-esteem Body language Conversation

## Measuring effectiveness of intervention

Since 2009, I have been working independently and my focus has always been to train people to work with children in the most effective way and to evidence this in the most systematic way possible using the Talkabout resources. The results have consistently proved the effectiveness of the hierarchical method of teaching social skills. So how do you do it?

### 1. Complete a baseline assessment

The first stage of analysis is to complete a baseline assessment. We recommend the Talkabout Assessment of Social Skills (TASS) (Kelly & Pearson, forthcoming), however there are other social communication



skills assessments available. From the assessment, the facilitator agrees where the child should start work, using the hierarchical model of intervention.

## 2. Set targets for intervention

Once the skills have been agreed, the facilitator can then set targets. For example:

Area	Skill	Example of a target
Body language	Distance	The child can adjust their distance when talking to someone depending on the social situation
Conversation skills	Starting a conversation	The child can start a conversation using a variety of openers dependent on the social situation
Assertiveness	Expressing feelings	The child can express their feelings assertively depending on the situation and using a number of nonverbal and verbal skills

It is recommended that there should be no more than 8 targets per child and ideally 3–6. These will all be within one area of intervention, for example, body language, or conversation skills. This then defines the area of intervention. Each target is then scored to give a baseline. If the TASS has been used to assess, you will already have a score (from 1–6). If you have not used the TASS, then it is recommended that you score each target according to a scale from ‘never meets target’ to ‘always meets target’ or wording of the facilitator’s choice. We have always used a 6-point rating, but again, this can be the facilitator’s choice.

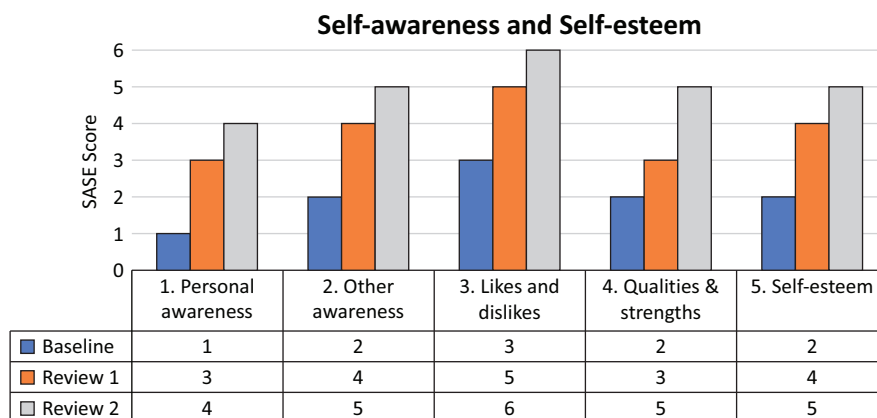
## 3. The intervention

The child then completes the intervention – usually a whole level of the *Talkabout* book. For example, if the targets are to improve body language, then the child will complete Level 1 TALKABOUT Body Language. See the sections below on setting up and running a Talkabout group.



## 4. Reassess

The final stage of analysis is to complete a reassessment. These pre and post scores can be presented either individually or in groups and can then be entered into a spreadsheet to create graphs easily. An example of progress shown after 2 reviews is shown below.



**Figure 0.1** Pre and post scores for self-awareness and self-esteem targets

## Setting up a Talkabout group

### Group membership

It is important to match the children in terms of their needs and also how well they are going to get on. A group is far more likely to gel and work well if they have similar needs, are a similar age and like each other. Group membership should also be closed, i.e. you should not allow new members to join half way through, as this will alter the group dynamics. I often work with peer groups, i.e. children from the same class or year, but it may be more appropriate to choose children from several year groups and classes. If this is the case, I try to have children who are no more than 2 years apart in age.

### The size of the group

Groups work best if they are not too small or too big, preferably between 4 and 8. I usually aim for a group of 5 or 6. You need them to be small enough to make sure that everyone contributes and feels part of the group and large enough to make activities such as role plays and group discussions feasible and interesting. Even numbers are helpful if you



are going to ask them to sometimes work in pairs. When I am asked to work with whole classes, I usually manage this by dividing the class into smaller groups and trying to find a spare classroom to use. Sometimes it is good to come back together at the end of the lesson to share one thing from each group. This does take longer though so you need to allow an extra 5 minutes for this.

### **Length of the sessions**

Timings are given at the beginning of each topic but it is important to remember that change will not happen quickly. You should really allow at least a whole academic year (39 weeks) to be able to work through all these activities. In terms of the sessions, it is important that you have enough time to get through your session plan (see next section) but not so much time that the children get bored. I usually aim for about 40 minutes.

### **Group leaders**

Groups run better with two leaders, especially as there is often a need to model behaviours, observe the children and facilitate group discussions. It is also important to remember that when working on self-esteem, children may choose to share things that require you to act and another adult in the room is very helpful. However, it is possible to run this intervention on your own, just not so much fun, and harder work!

### **Accommodation**

You will need a room that is comfortable for the children to learn in, where you are not going to be interrupted. Don't be tempted to accept the corner of the hall or library as an acceptable place to run your group – this will not help your children to relax and talk openly. In terms of the layout of chairs, I sometimes work around a table depending on the activity; however, it is usually helpful to start with the chairs in a circle for the group cohesion activity.

### **Parental permission**

Remember to get parental permission for the children to join the group. It is helpful for them to be on-board with the intervention and to see it as socially valid.





### **Support from management**

It is always helpful to have support from management. You may need to outline the objectives, benefits and requirements of the group before you start so that you can refer back to them if necessary.

### **Running a Talkabout group**

#### **Cohesiveness**

A group that does not gel will not learn or have fun. It is therefore important to take time to ensure that group gelling occurs. Things that help are:

- interpersonal attraction – children who like one another are more likely to gel
- similar needs
- activities that encourage everyone to take part and have fun
- arranging the chairs into a circle prior to the session
- ensuring that everyone feels valued in the group
- ensuring that everyone feels part of the group and has an equal 'say'
- asking the group to set some rules
- starting each session with a relatively simple activity that is fun and stress free
- finishing each session with another activity that is fun and stress free.

You can get ideas for group cohesion games from the back of the book, or you could use the *Talkabout Cards – Group Cohesion Games: Group Cohesion Activities* (Kelly, 2011).



## The format of the session

The format of the session will vary from time to time but there are general guidelines which should be followed:

1. **Group cohesion activity:** This brings the group together and helps them to focus on the purpose of the group. The activity should be simple, stress free and involve everyone.
2. **Main activity:** It is during this part of the session that it is most important not to lose children's interest or attention by allowing an activity to go on for too long, or one child to dominate the conversation.
3. **Finishing activity:** A group activity to reduce any anxiety and to help the children leave in a happy and positive frame of mind. It should therefore be fun, simple and stress free.

In addition, you could also use the following activities from the first *Talkabout for Children* book every week:

- **How am I feeling?** This activity encourages children to explore and discuss their feelings using a simple feeling board. I would do this after the first group cohesion activity.
- **How did I do?** I usually ask the children to think about how they found the session using a familiar traffic light rating scale: green = I did well or that was good; amber = I did OK or that was OK; red = I found that hard. I usually do this before the last group cohesion activity.
- **My record of achievement** I sometimes reward children for being in the group by allowing them to choose a sticker as they leave and to place it on their record of achievement. I then laminate this later as a certificate. A template for this can be found in the first *Talkabout for Children* book.



## Confidentiality

It is important to remind the children not to talk about what other children have shared with the group outside of the session.

## Have fun!

Children learn much more readily if they are having fun. It is important to work hard to make sure the children want to come to the sessions and a large part of this motivation will come from whether they enjoy them.






## Transference of skills

It is essential that any work that is being done within the group is backed up outside of the group. I would encourage you to get other staff on board so that they can be aware of what you are doing with the children. Look for opportunities for children to receive praise or positive feedback within their everyday environment and identify any parts of their day that are not conducive and deal with them. You should also try to involve families where it is appropriate to do so, so that skills are reinforced at home.

## References

- Gresham, F. & Elliott, S. (2008). *SSiS Social Skills Improvement System*. NCS Pearson.
- Gresham, F. (2015). Evidence-based social skills interventions for students at risk for EBD. *Remedial and Special Education*, 36(2), 100–104.
- Kelly, A. (1996) *Talkabout*. London: Speechmark (now replaced by *Talkabout 2nd ed*).
- Kelly, A. (2011) *Talkabout Cards – Group Cohesion Games: Group Cohesion Activities*. London: Speechmark.
- Kelly, A. (2019) *Social Skills: Developing Effective Interpersonal Communication*. London: Speechmark.
- Kelly, A. & Pearson, N. (forthcoming) *TALKABOUT Assessment of Social Skills (TASS)*. London: Speechmark.
- Rao, P. A., Beidel, D. C. & Murray, M. J. (2008). Social skills interventions for children with Asperger's syndrome or high-functioning autism: A review and recommendations. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 38(2), 353–361.



 Contents	Page
 <b>Topic 1: Talking body language</b>	
Activity 1 <i>In the manner of the word</i>	15
Activity 2 <i>Our bodies</i>	17
Activity 3 <i>Talking body parts</i>	20
Activity 4 <i>Think about TALKABOUT!</i>	23
 <b>Topic 2: Talking faces</b>	
Activity 5 <i>The blindfold game</i>	26
Activity 6 <i>Find a face</i>	28
Activity 7 <i>Bingo faces</i>	30
Activity 8 <i>Making masks</i>	38
Activity 9 <i>Emotional sentences</i>	42
Activity 10 <i>Why are faces important?</i>	44
Activity 11 <i>Stop and speak</i>	47
Activity 12 <i>A day in the life</i>	48
 <b>Topic 3: Talking bodies</b>	
Activity 13 <i>Walk this way!</i>	53
Activity 14 <i>Posture thermometer</i>	54
Activity 15 <i>When we are tense / relaxed...</i>	56
Activity 16 <i>Why are bodies important?</i>	59
Activity 17 <i>Give us a hand</i>	62
 <b>Topic 4: Talking space</b>	
Activity 18 <i>Space control</i>	65
Activity 19 <i>Touch control</i>	67
Activity 20 <i>What happens when...</i>	72
Activity 21 <i>Space hoppers</i>	75



### Topic 1: Talking body language

#### Activity

#### Teacher notes

**In the manner of the word** (Activity 1)

*A game to explore how we can communicate without the use of words. An exercise to introduce the areas of our face, our body and the use of space.*

**Our bodies** (Activity 2)

*The children identify all the different ways that they used their body to communicate certain emotions and actions in Activity 1.*

**Talking body parts** (Activity 3)

*The children choose a card with a body part on it and they have to use that part of their body to communicate something.*

**Think about TALKABOUT!** (Activity 4)

*A poster is prepared for the children to refer to for the rest of the level.*

## Activity 1: In the manner of the word

### Preparation

Print out the emotion cards and activity cards. Laminate the cards if you wish to use them again.

You may also want a mobile phone or camera to take some photos.

### Instructions

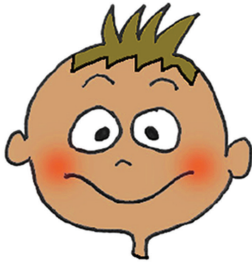
- Talk about the different emotion cards. Do all the children know what they mean? If you have just done a feelings activity – ‘How are we all feeling today?’ – you could recap on the feelings on the ‘feelings board’ (see *Talkabout for Children: Developing Self Awareness and Self Esteem* for examples of feeling boards).
- Ask the children to get into 2 teams.
- Each team, or pair, is given an activity to act and they then choose which emotion they want to act. They are both given a few minutes to prepare their mime.
- 1 or 2 members from each team performs their mime and the other team tries to guess what is on their card and how they are feeling.
- Photos could be taken at key moments to illustrate different aspects of body language (to be used in Activity 2).
- Discuss how you knew how they were feeling? What parts of the body were most important? Try to elicit: face, eyes, hands, posture, distance or space, and legs.

### Variation

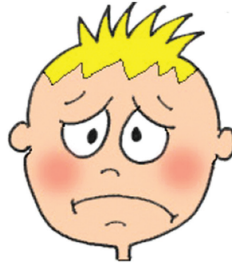
The children could do this individually. You could simplify this activity by having the activity or the emotion already known, and the others have to guess only one element.



## Activity 1: In the manner of the word



**Happy**



**Worried**



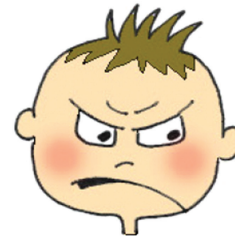
**Sad**



**Bored**



**Scared**



**Angry**



**Get dressed**



**Sweep the floor**



**Brush your teeth**



**Wash your hair**



**Eat your dinner**



**Draw a picture**

## Activity 2: Our bodies

### Preparation

Choose whether you want to use colour or black and white worksheets and print out enough for each photo you want to analyse. These are best done larger than A4, so if possible, enlarge the main worksheet to A3.

Choose which photos you are going to use from Activity 1. Try to choose a range of emotions: angry, happy, scared, worried etc. You will need one set of worksheets for each photo.

You will also need scissors and glue.

### Instructions

- Choose 1 photo to start with and stick in the middle of the worksheet.
- Ask the children to try and notice what is happening to their body.
- Use the pictures on the second worksheet to think about their face, eyes, posture, hands and distance / touch.
- The children then cut and stick the appropriate pictures onto the worksheet.
- They then move on to another photo and worksheet.
- If you are unable to use photos from Activity 1, use photos of people from the internet expressing the same emotions and ask the children to remember how they acted that particular emotion.

## Activity 2: Our bodies

## Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

This person is feeling ..... How can we tell?

