## How to develop:

# Ability to maintain a conversation

## Strategies

- **Build opportunities into everyday moments** – using what the child sees, does, hears everyday.
- **Use visual support** - gesture, objects, photographs, symbols to support the child to stay on topic, to ask a follow up question etc.
- Consider a whole class approach to emotional regulation e.g. "zones of regulation"

## Activities

**Emotions dice:**
Make up an emotions dice

- Children take turns to throw the dice. They name the emotion on the dice.
- Children take turns to throw the dice. They name the emotion on the dice and give a reason why people might feel like that.
- Child picks up the dice and chooses an emotion secretly. They make a corresponding face. Other children have to guess what it is.

**Pass the feeling:**
Child thinks of a feeling and makes the face to go with it. The next child copies the face and passes it on around the circle.

**Feelings photo booklet:**
Take photos of the students demonstrating different facial expressions and make a feelings booklet. Children can add personal comments in reaction to each emotion.

**Happy/sad teddy:**
Children take turns to hold the teddy and say how teddy is feeling today. You can encourage them to talk about why e.g. "It's his birthday", or "he's not feeling well"

**Feelings in everyday situations:**
Use situations in the day to elicit responses about the feelings of others. Use situations such as relaying an incident or event which has happened at school or home to elicit different feelings, for example, happy, sad, angry, scared, surprised, shocked etc. Ask the child how s/he felt about that particular event and to show you the appropriate facial expression e.g.,

Child: "Today, my friend is coming over to my house to play after school."
Response: "How do you feel about that?"
Answer: "Happy."
Response: "I would be happy too. Can you show me your happy face?...Lovely."

**Feelings in stories:**
After story time ask the child about a character in the story – how they may have felt about something that happened to them.