



THE WORD OF THE DAY IS...

COMMUNICATION



RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

One powerful way to practice communication—and build confidence—is by taking an active role in your IEP meeting.

Why It Helps:

- You learn to speak up for yourself (This is called self-advocacy—a key life and workplace skill!)
- You get better at explaining your needs, goals, and strengths
- You practice listening, asking questions, and expressing ideas clearly
- You show teachers and support staff what matters to you

Ways You Can Be Involved:

- Share your goals (for school, work, or life)
- Talk about what's working and what's not
- Ask questions about your accommodations or services
- Introduce yourself and thank your team for their support

Even if you don't lead the whole meeting, just speaking for a few minutes can be a great step! Use the link below to help develop your script!

bit.ly/studentleadiepscript

Transition Newsletter

SEPT
2025

Making Small Talk @ Work

The ability to make small talk is an important communication skill for the workplace—and for life! Small talk helps you build friendly relationships, find shared interests, and feel more connected to the people around you. It's not just about filling silence. It's a way to show kindness, curiosity, and respect.

- **Don't Interrupt**—Listen carefully to the other person instead of thinking about what you'll say next. It shows you value their words.
- **Pay Attention to Nonverbal Cues**—Look for facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. These give you clues about how the conversation is going.
- **Use Friendly Body Language**—Make eye contact and keep your arms relaxed and open. This shows that you're interested and approachable.
- **Ask Questions That Invite Conversation**—Try open-ended questions like: "What do you like to do on weekends?" "How did you get started working here?" These kinds of questions help keep the conversation going. Avoid yes/no questions—they can end the talk too quickly.
- **Stay on Topic**—Jumping from one subject to another too quickly can feel confusing. Try to follow the natural flow of the conversation.
- **Avoid Personal Venting at Work**—If you had a tough day at home or school, it's best not to bring it into work. Keeping work conversations positive helps you stay focused and professional.

When you're getting to know someone, stick with "safe" topics:

- The weather
- Hobbies or interests
- Favorite foods or restaurants
- Music or movies
- Weekend plans or holidays



Avoid personal or emotional topics when you're just starting out. And remember—just because you enjoy a topic doesn't mean the other person does. If they don't seem interested, be flexible and try another subject.

One More Tip!

Even if you don't have time for a full conversation, a simple smile, a quick "hello," and brief eye contact can go a long way. These small actions show others that you are friendly, confident, and approachable. They help create a positive impression and make others feel comfortable around you.

If you're still working on your communication skills and want more support, there are some great videos on YouTube that can help!

bit.ly/peersforstudents



contact me

Name:

Phone:

Email:

DHS.SD.GOV



Creating a Respectful Work Experience

Staying Focused on the Job

Work can be a great place to meet people and build connections, but the main reason for being there is to do your job. Friendships with coworkers are a nice bonus but they should never take away from your responsibilities at work.

Understanding Boundaries

Everyone has different levels of comfort. That's why it's important to respect other people's personal space and privacy. What feels okay to you might feel uncomfortable to someone else—and that's okay. Respect is key.

Listening to Others' Needs

If a coworker asks you to stop doing something, like asking personal questions or giving hugs—it's important to listen. Respect their request, say sorry if needed, and make changes so everyone feels safe and respected.

Setting Your Own Boundaries

You also deserve to feel safe and respected. If someone is doing or saying something that makes you uncomfortable, you can speak up. It's okay to say "I don't like that," or ask for help from a supervisor, job coach, or support person.

Helping Everyone Feel Comfortable

When everyone respects each other's boundaries, the workplace becomes more positive, professional, and safe for everyone. This helps you do your best work without stress or worry.

Remember: You have the right to feel respected at work—and others do too. Boundaries help everyone succeed!



Sometimes, close friendships at work can change or even end—and that can feel uncomfortable, especially when you still have to work together. It's okay to feel that way. What's most important is staying professional. Even if you're no longer personal friends, you're both there to do your job.

- **Keep it positive:** You don't have to be close, but being polite helps.
- **Say hello and smile:** A small gesture can go a long way.
- **Focus on work talk:** Stick to job-related conversations and avoid personal topics that might cause tension.
- **Take a break if needed:** If you feel upset or need space, talk to a supervisor, job coach, or trusted support person.

You don't have to fix the friendship, but you can choose respect and kindness to keep the workplace calm and comfortable for both of you.